

Icebreakers, Openers and Energizers

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The goal of icebreakers or openers is to establish a social relationship between other participants and facilitator, open a dialogue and build a shared focus. The social interaction of these exercises should enhance education by creating a student-centered cooperative learning.

I added to the two exercises required, two online icebreakers are a way to encourage students interaction in an asynchronous environment, ease the concern of the loss of face-to-face classroom interaction and get the student to familiarize themselves with the online set-up.

ICEBREAKER :

Purpose: To have each participant introduce themselves to the rest of the class. The attempt is to capture the attention of the students as they settle into the learning session and learn more about their peers.

Items needed: 3x5 cards and pens

Directions: Give each individual a 3x5 card and instruct them to write four statements about themselves: one of the statements should be false while three should be true. Explain that the goal is to fool people about which one is the lie. Allow five minutes to write statements; then have each person introduce themselves and read the four statements and have the group guess the lie. Award a prize to the individual who makes the most correct guesses.

Reflection/Explanation: Ask students if they remember participants' name and one thing about them. What interests does the group have? Is there a pattern? Explain how these group

skills/interests will be important in contributing to the discussion during the topic covered in class.

ENERGIZER :

Purpose: To get participants up and moving and to re/engage them in the topic covered; get them to relax and laugh and change the mood of the learning environment.

Item needed: blank sheet of paper

Directions: Everyone stands up, and facilitator pass around a sheet of paper to each attendee. Each person has to put the piece of paper behind them holding it with both hands and closing their eyes. Facilitator give the following instructions:

1. Fold the sheet of paper in half
2. Fold the lower left corner over the upper right corner
3. Turn it 90 degrees to the left
4. Fold it again
5. Rip a half-circle in the middle of the right side.
6. Turn the paper 180° degrees
7. Rip in half from the side but not all the way.

Reflection/Explanation: Even though, all participants received the same instructions and the same starting material, most will have a different result.

- Some will have started with different bases holding the paper horizontally vs. vertically.
- Some will have interpreted ripping a piece of paper as removing a big piece vs. other a small piece.
- Having eyes closed and holding the paper behind them will have mess their spatial awareness and lack of visual feedback.

- Some instructions may appear vague for some and clear to others.

One of the conclusions that students can draw is that we all learn and process information differently.

ONLINE LEARNING ICEBREAKER 1 :

Purpose: To have each participant introduce themselves to the rest of the online class and to have students relate to other students in an online learning environment.

Directions: Ask the students to respond to these questions:

1. Where would you most likely go on vacation
2. Share the farthest distance you have traveled and where to go on a vacation

Reflection/Explanation: Students might relate to common vacation spots or might be intrigued and ask more information about other students' vacation. This promotes exchange between students.

ONLINE LEARNING ICEBREAKER 2 :

Purpose: To have each participant introduce themselves to the rest of the online class and to have students relate to other students in an online learning environment.

Directions: Have everyone take an online silly personality quiz like "What superhero are you?"

[<http://www.matthewbarr.co.uk/superhero/>], then share answers in the discussion board.

Reflection/Explanation: Students can explain if they agree or not and why, post pictures of their favorite superhero, share a good laugh.

References

Chlup, D. & Collins, T. (2010). Breaking the ice: Using ice-breakers and re-energizers with adult learners. *Adult Learning*, v21 n3-4 p34-39

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<http://www.matthewbarr.co.uk/superhero/>