

Icebreaker: Speed-Mingling

Summary

In this icebreaker activity, students rotate from one partner to another in 1-minute increments. With every new partner, a new question is posed that partners take turns responding to. It is a fun and accessible way to make students feel more connected to their peers before beginning to engage with each other in potentially more serious conversation topics.

Outcomes

Students will:

- Learn at least 3 new things about fellow participants
- Have the chance to share at least 3 new things about themselves with others
- Become more at ease in their peer group

Details

For Who?	Any age, any experience level with constructive dialogue
How Long?	This activity's duration depends on how many questions you choose to ask and how long you make every sharing period (whether 1 minute or 2).
Supplies Needed	None

Activity Purpose

Trust-building activities are important for any group work, no matter the purpose. This activity can be used when a group is newer to one another to ensure that a group is prepared to constructively navigate difficult or controversial topics.

Detailed Agenda

1 Set the Stage

Divide the group into two groups, each with the same number of students if possible. Invite them to stand in concentric circles: one outside circle and one inside circle. Students in the inside circle should face outward, and students in the outside circle should face inward.

In this arrangement, an outside person should be facing someone in the inside circle – this is their first partner for the activity.

2 Read Through Conversation Prompts

Read through the first prompt, and invite pairs to take turns responding within the allotted time frame of your choice (~1-2 minutes).

When the time is up, invite the inner circle to shift one person to the left, while the outer circle stays in place. This means everyone should be facing a new partner.

Read the next prompt, and set the timer for 1-2 minutes again. The activity will progress until the prompts run out. At least 6 rounds of prompts can achieve the outcomes of this activity.

Suggested Prompts

- What is your favorite holiday to celebrate?
- What is your favorite food or meal?
- What is the last song or musician you listened to?
- Where are you from? What is something you like and dislike about where you're from?
- What animal are you most like and why?
- What is your favorite thing to do on a weekend?
- What is your favorite place in the world?
- What is something you are proud of?
- Who is your role model?

- What is a TV show or movie you love?
- What is a dream you have for your future?

Wrap-up

Debrief Questions

Once you've cycled through at least 6 rounds of prompts, ask students to share their reflections. This can happen in the full group or in smaller groups.

- What was that like for you?
- Did you discover similarities? Differences?
- Did anyone learn something new or surprising they'd like to share?

In the full group, you might choose to prompt a deeper debrief about dialogue moving forward:

- It sounds like there are a lot of similarities, but also a lot of differences, too. How do you think our differences will affect the types of conversations we have here?

Instructor Considerations

Higher Education or Adult PD Adaptations

This activity can be easily modified by shifting the nature of the prompts to fit the audience. They can be topic-specific, or they can invite in more depth of sharing, with longer time frames for each pair.