

Our Energizers/Ice-Breakers

Day One

Speed Dating

1. Before your workshop/class/meeting write some interesting questions for your Speed Dating activity. Your questions can be related to the topic (What do you enjoy the most about teaching?) or not (When you were a kid, what did you want to do for a living?)
2. Ask participants to organize their chairs in two rows. Each person should be sitting across from one other person. If you have an odd number of participants, ask one person to sit at the end of the row (like they're sitting at the head of the table) where they will join in on the conversation with the two people on either side of them.
3. Once everyone is seated, let them know that they will have two minutes to discuss a question with their partner. Their partner is the person they are seated across from in each round. There will be 5 rounds (more or less depending on how much time you want to devote to this activity).
4. Let participants know that at the end of the two minutes, you will ask them to stand up and move one chair to the left. They will meet a new partner and you will ask a new question and another two minutes will begin. Let people know that they won't get a chance to speak with everyone but this activity will give them a chance to get to know a few of their new classmates.
5. I like to assign Coaching Partners at the end of the final discussion. It gives me a nice way to help participants build a relationship with someone new and it give me an easy way to throw people into a Think-Pair-Share throughout the day.

Unmusical Chairs

1. This is my favourite after lunch activity but I don't make everyone participate because some people really hate energizers and I don't like to make them unnecessarily grumpy.
2. Invite those who want to play to arrange their chairs in a circle. There can't be any empty chairs and the chairs needs to be a closed circle.
3. Stand in the centre of the circle. Tell people that, in a moment, you will make a statement about people (it could be about something they are wearing, something they have done, a place they have travelled, a food they like to eat, anything that is PG 13 rated). If the statement is true, people have to get out of their chair and move to one that has been vacated by someone else. The person that is displaced becomes the one standing in the centre making the next statement.
4. A lesson from the School of Hard Knocks: Try to avoid doing this activity near sharp objects, on slippery floors... Despite this warning, this activity is a great energizer and it can really change the mood of the room by making things less sombre, dull, etc.

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Famous Human Sticky Back

1. Create lots of stickers with names of famous people or cartoon characters.
 2. Put them on people's left shoulders where the individual could reach them with their right hand to move them to their front.
 3. Inform people that when the activity begins they should wander around the group and give people hints about who they are but they are not allowed to tell each other who they are.
 4. When individuals guess correctly, they move the sticker to their front and the facilitators put a new sticker on their back.
 5. The person that with the most stickers on their back is the winner. Yay! I like this activity a lot and will use it in the future. Thank you for sharing this one!
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Word Zoom

1. At the end of the day, invite participants to let a word come to mind that reflects how they are feeling about the day.
2. Ask someone to share their word. Let them know that if their word is taken or they draw a blank that they are welcome to pass.
3. Record each person's word.
4. When everyone has shared their word, draw a line under each entry.
5. Tell participants that they should come up to the chart and check any and all words that reflect how they feel.
6. At the start of the next day you can ask learners to discuss what the data means and advice they have for moving forward.

Day Two

Human Continuum

1. Put a long strip of tape on the floor (16 feet or so). Put 0 at one end of the tape, 50 in the middle and 100 at the other end. Dale calls this activity a ruler. I like that analogy and will use it. Thank you, Dale!
 2. Ask participants to stand on the ruler at a place that indicates their level of satisfaction, confidence (whatever criteria you want them to consider).
 3. Once they are in place, ask them to pair up with someone nearby and discuss what learners and facilitator(s) can do to move the group closer to 100.
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Sorting Game (Is this what we called this one? I can't remember...)

1. Create several forced choice questions: Are you a Pepsi or Coke person? Are you a dog or cat person? Are you a beer or wine person? etc.

Our Energizers/Ice-Breakers

2. Put some tape on the floor (about 5 feet) and let people know that it's a dividing line.
 3. Tell people that you will be asking them to make a forced choice.
 4. Tell people to make their choice and move to their assigned spot.
 5. What I really like about this one is that you can use it to test attitudes about your topic, i.e. For leadership styles: Is your leadership style more Kermit or Animal? (I'm still experimenting here, but you get the general idea of how it could work.)
 6. I will also be adding this to my repertoire, so thank you very much!
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Dilithium Crystal

1. Make a 12 x 12 square with tape on the floor.
 2. Put a cup (the chamber) and a ball (the dilithium crystal) in the centre of the square. (Trekkies will remember that Kryton messed with the Dilithium Crystals in the warp core and that wasn't very nice!)
 3. Inform the group that something horrible has happened. (If you have the Star Trek theme on your playlist, you get bonus points! You should start playing it at this point in the activity. Warning: the theme song is really horrible. I didn't realize how horrible it is until I started playing it recently. Maybe we are making some progress as a species because we don't write theme songs like that anymore.)
 4. Kryton has messed with the crystal and it is out of its chamber! Yikes! The group must replace the crystal in the chamber in less than 5 minutes using only: string, 1 elastic and 1 pair of scissors. The group doesn't have to use all of these but they are not allowed to use anything else.
 5. The group cannot move or tip the chamber. It has to stay in place.
 6. No one may enter the Engine Room (that's the space inside the tape).
 7. The crystal can be moved within the Engine Room but it cannot EVER be within 1 foot of group members.
 8. Ask the group if they have any questions. Start the clock and watch the doers leap into action.
 9. This exercise can be processed from a number of angles: creative group problem solving, collaboration in groups, leadership styles, group decision making, etc.
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Do Something Different

1. If the group is stressed, bring in some activities that allow them to spend some time doing something completely different. There's lots of research that indicates that taking a break from studying is exactly what the brain needs in order to process complex info.
2. Our group brought in some colouring books. They also suggested bringing in modeling clay.
3. I really like this because it helps people realize that you can't force learning and that the brain needs time to process. Creative activities, nature, exercise all help people do that. If we teach people about why doing this is important, it could really help them with their study habits. Thanks for this activity!

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Closing Circle (I forget the exact name of this one...)

1. Ask your learners or participants to think of a word that captures how they feel about the workshop. Ask them to not tell anyone else what the word is.
2. Invite them to the front of the room and to stand on a point in the circle that reflects the first letter of their word. A's will be at one point in the circle and Z's at the other end.
3. Invite the A's to begin by sharing their word and why they chose it.
4. What I really love about this one is that it makes people select their word in private. In Word Zoom, for example, people may change their word because of peer pressure but in this one they commit to word before disclosing it. Really great closure. Thank you for this one!