Icebreaker Ideas

Get to Know You

**Flash:** Participants form a circle and one person starts by posing a question that requires a short answer of an adjective. For example: 1) favorite color, 2) favorite candy, 3) favorite movie, or 4) favorite smell. Once a question is asked, it is answered by everyone in the circle starting with the person to the right of the asker and continuing around the circle. When the question reaches the original asker, he/she must answer, and then the person to the right must pose a new question. Questions cannot be repeated, but answers can. The key to the game is speed. Move it quickly and it will be tons of fun!

**High Five Unique Traits:** Participants create a large circle with one person in the middle. The individual in the center states something they feel is unique about themselves. People in the circle who share the same trait raise their hands. The individual in the center high-fives everyone who has their hand raised. The individual in the middle should stay there until he/she mentions a trait that no one else in the circle has, and then the individual picks someone else to be in the center. Play goes for as long as you’d like!

**Skittles/M&Ms (Candy needed):** People grab one, there is a guide by color: Yellow, something you’re doing this summer; green, something about work; red, an adventure you’ve had in education, etc. Pick your categories.

**Two Truths and a Lie:** You share two things that are true and one lie about yourself (as an educator or a person - decide on one) and the group tries to guess which one is the lie. “What you would like to be true?” is the follow up question.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-n5vo3CEE

**Hopes and Fears:** Have each staff member introduce themselves and talk about one thing they are excited about for the coming semester and one fear or thing they are anxious about. This gets people’s anxieties out on the table right from the start and builds an instance sense of intimacy.

**Days of Our Lives (Scrap Paper, pens needed):** Give each participant a piece of paper. Explain the following rules to the group: 1) Draw pictures that tell a story of the “days of your life” and put your name on it, 2) the drawings will be collected, 3) the drawings will be redistributed randomly, but no one can have their own original, 4) each person will then interpret the person’s drawing that they received by explaining what they think their story is enacting, and 5) upon finishing each interpretation, the original artist will tell how their story was really supposed to be interpreted.

**Makes You Think (Scrap Paper, pens needed):** Write down a fact about yourself on a piece of scrap paper that no one would be likely to guess. Don’t put any names on the paper. Read them out loud. Gives people a hook. (i.e., “I broke both my legs and arms on a ski accident.”)

**Move Your Body:** Form a circle with your chairs. Have one less chair than people. Have one person go into the center. The person in the center will say, “Move your body if [insert fact about yourself here]” (i.e. you have a dog, your favorite color is purple). If the fact the person shared is also true about yourself, then you have to find a new seat. One person will be left without a seat, and they become the new person in the middle.

**On All Sides:** Stand in an open area where they have room to move about. When I blow on the whistle and call out “On One Side,” each participant should find a partner. I will give instructions: side-by-side, back-to-back, face-to-face. The partners should position themselves accordingly. When the partners are positioned side-by-side, they should introduce themselves giving vital statistics (name, where they live or work); when
they are back-to-back, they should tell something about their extended selves (family, friends, associations); and when face-to-face, they should tell something about personal interests or hobbies.

**6 Degrees of Separation:** One person starts by saying a fact about themselves. If anyone in the group shares the fact, they link arms with the first person. This continues until everyone is linking arms, then the last person must find something in common with the first person.

**How We Are Connected Web:** I wish I could remember who taught me this one, but I cannot. You take a large piece of paper (bulletin board paper will do nicely) and then every student gets a sharpie. All students and you sit around the piece of paper and then write their name down in front of them. Students will then share something they like or dislike, if you agree with their statement you draw line from your name to their name. You then go around the paper until everyone has shared. In the end you will have a spider web image on your paper showing just how many things you have in common with each other.

**High Energy**

**Motor Mania:** Split your group of participants into smaller groups of 8 to 16. Tell each group that they have 5 minutes to truly become a motorized moving object, meaning that each individual will have to physically participate in performing roles necessary for the depiction of the object. Examples might include a blender or a fan. At the end of the five minutes, each group will demonstrate their object separately while the other groups try to guess what the other is portraying. End when all groups have performed and guessed!

**Human Rock Paper Scissors:** Participants should be split into two teams. Have teams line up in straight lines facing each other. Tell each team that in a moment they should huddle up and decide which rock, paper, scissors choice they will be: rock, paper, or scissors. Also have them select a backup in case both groups choose the same. After allowing each group to deliberate, have each group line up facing each other again. Tell them that you will then lead them in starting the game by saying “Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot!” Upon saying shoot, each team should enact their chosen choice. The team that loses should turn around and run toward a designated “safe zone”. The winning team should try to tag the members of the losing team before they reach this zone. All tagged losing members must then join the winning team, and then the game should continue. Whenever one team runs out of members, the other team wins.

**Evolution:** Have participants group into a circle. Everyone starts out as an egg and places their hands together above their head so that they look like an egg. When the facilitator says go, each person will find another egg. Once they have found that person they will then play rock, paper, scissors against them. The loser stays an egg and the winner becomes a chicken, placing their arms as wings and making chicken noises. The chicken then looks for another chicken while the egg looks for another egg. When you win as a chicken you become a dinosaur, placing your hands out and roaring like a dinosaur. If you lose as a chicken you drop back down to an egg. Dinosaurs then find other dinosaurs, where they will play to become the ultimate person. When someone wins in a dinosaur match and becomes the ultimate person, they win the game!

**Just for Fun**

**Zip Zip Boing:** Participants stand in a circle. Someone starts the game by turning to one of the people next to them and says “ZIP”. It is important that when saying “ZIP” you turn and face the person next to you. This continues around the circle until someone says “BOING”. At this point, the person who said “ZIP” turns back and says “ZIP” to the person on their other side (changing the direction of the game). In essence, “ZIP” continues travel in the same direction, and “BOING” reverses the direction of the game. There can only be two “BOING”s in a row (i.e. ZIP, ZIP, BOING, BOING, ZIP, ZIP, ZIP…). If someone turns their head in the wrong direction, OR if they BOING too many times in a row, or if they screw up who they are supposed to say a word to, they are out. The game ends when there are three people remaining!
**Ghost Chairs:** Participants form a circle. Everyone in the circle turns to their right, and then the circle is closed tightly. Participants should then lean backward until their backs are resting on the laps of the people behind them. Just for fun, laughs, and a little team building!

**Bunny:** Participants stand in a circle and one person starts the game as “bunny”. This person puts his/her hands in front of her and shakes them up and down like a bunny. The person to the left of the “bunny” raises their left hand to be the “bunny ear” and the person to the right raises their right hand to be the other ear. The individual who is the bunny then passes the bunny to another individual by sticking their arms straight out to point at a new person. This person now becomes the bunny, and the persons on their sides become the new bunny ears. If anyone puts up and/or takes down an ear incorrectly, they are “out” and the game resumes. The game continues until there are 3 people left who are deemed the winners.

**Bibbity Bibbity Bop:** Participants stand in a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle approaches individuals of the circle and tries to get an individual to go in the center and take their spot in the circle. This is accomplished in a few ways:

1.) The person in the center of the circle says “Bibbity Bibbity Bop” to a person in the circle. If the person does not say “bop” before the other person finishes “bibbity bibbity bop”, the new person goes to the center.

2.) The person in the center says “bop” and a person of the circle replies “bop”. Individuals of the circle must remember to ONLY say “bop” when the person in the center approaches them and says “bibbity bibbity bop”. They should not say “bop” at any other time.

3.) The person yells out anything (appropriately). The person they give this direction to (as well as the person to the left and to the right) act out what the person has just said. The person who yelled out the action counts to 10, and if any of the three people have not done some sort of action, they are now the person in the center. End whenever you feel appropriate!

**Screaming Heads Up:** Everyone stands in a tight circle, with their heads down looking at their shoes. When ‘Heads Up’ is called, everyone looks up and stares at someone else in the circle. If that person is staring right back at you, then you scream real loud and jump back out of the circle. If the person you’re looking at is not looking at you, put your head back down and wait for the next round. Keep going until there are two players remaining.

**Shake It Up:** Pass out Shake It Up Activity Card to each participant. Ask participants to pair up with someone they don’t know and describe each handshake: The Vise, The Pump, The Grab, The Fish, The Fingerhold, The Sway, The Milker, The Topper, The Flip, and The Thumb. Explain that each person holds a card with one type of handshake on it. The task is to walk around and shake the hands of other people. When they shake, they will take note of who else uses the same handshake they are using. They should join with those people in walking around shaking hands with others until all persons with the same handshake are grouped together.

**Human Knot:** If the group is really big, split them up into smaller groups. If there are too many people in a human knot it becomes extremely difficult. Groups of 10-12 are ideal. Arrange group members in a circle, standing shoulder to shoulder. Tell everyone to put their right hand up in the air, and then grab the hand of someone across the circle from them. Everyone then puts their left hand up in the air and grabs the hand of a different person. Check to make sure that everyone is holding the hands of two different people and that they are not holding hands with someone directly next to them. Tell group members to untangle themselves to make a circle without breaking the chain of hands. If group members break the chain they need to start over.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfSPwKnUSSI

**Song Game:** A game right out of the Pitch Perfect handbook. Split up into groups of 6 or more. Have one person be the “host” and call out a common word such as “fire.” Every group goes one by one singing a song
that has the word in it. Groups are eliminated if they repeat a song or cannot think of a song. Common words to use: baby, boy, girl, love, one, best, never, happy, young, etc.

**Name Games**

**Name Tag**: Pick a space where the entire group can stand comfortably in a circle. Have one participate stand in the center, and everyone in the circle put their hands out in front of them. Have a SOG begin the game by loudly saying someone’s name that is standing in the circle. The student in the middle then tries to tag that person whose name was called. The player whose name was called must say another player’s name before s/he is tagged by the person in the middle. When a player gets tagged before s/he can say a name, s/he switches places and goes to the middle. The player who successfully tagged a person on the outside gets to call out a name to begin the next round.

**Super Ninja Time**: First, have everyone go around in a circle and say an adjective that starts with the same letter as their name as well as their name along with with a movement. For example, Dancing Danielle with the motion of dancing. Then, begin the game by having one person start with their name and movement, and have them say the other person they want to “send” it to. Each person repeats their super ninja name/movement and then passes it to someone else in the group.