

Ice Breaker Ideas

Sharing trepidations: in pairs or small groups, have students share their trepidations about starting college. follow this by either having students introduce each other, and/or by asking the groups to share what they consider to be their most significant concerns or fears regarding the start of their first semester of college. As the group share, the group leader can validate and address their concerns as appropriate.

Draw a picture of a significant event: Have students draw a picture of a significant event that has occurred over the past six months and then have them share it with a partner. Following this activity have the students introduce each other and share a little bit about their partner's picture.

The circles of student's name here: Have students draw a large circle on a sheet of paper and other smaller circles radiating from it. Students write their name in the central circle and names of groups with which they identify (e.g. gender, age group, ethnic, social, political, ideological, athletic, etc.) in the satellite circles. Then ask students to move around the room to find three classmates who are most and/or least similar to themselves. This activity helps students appreciate the diversity in the group.

Dinner plans: Have each person complete the following sentence; "if I could have dinner with any person, living or dead, it would be, _____ because _____ "

I'm unique: Ask each person to share one thing that makes him or her unique.

Marooned: Break the students into groups of 4-7 and tell them "you are mooned on an island. What five items would you have brought with you if you knew there was a chance that you might be stranded? (You can use different number, such as seven, depending upon the size of each team)" Not that they are allowed five items per team, not per person. You can have them write items on a flip chart and discuss and defend their choice with the whole group. This activity helps them to learn about another person's values and problem solving styles and promotes teamwork.

Familiar & unique: Break off into small groups (ideally by counting off). Each small group must come up with 5 things that the group members have in common. Then they asked to share something really unique about themselves individually. The group shares their familiar and unique features with the rest of the group.

Questions: Have each student write a question they want answered about SCSU on a post-it note. Have them introduce themselves and their question. Then post all questions on the wall, during or at the end of your meeting answer the questions or have the group answer them.

Who can develop: Have participants identify someone who has contributed to their growth and development as a student. As they introduce themselves, have them explain their relationship to the person that contributed to their development.

Good or new: ask each person to share something good or new they have experience in the last 24 hours.

My slogan: Explain that many companies have slogans or mottoes which reflect their values. For example, Ford motor company uses the slogan, "Quality is job one." Ask each student to write (or borrow) a slogan to describe him or herself and share that with the group.

The best team: have each person share a description of the best team they have ever been on and why it was the best. Post characteristics on a chart or poster. Debrief this exercise by having the team identify ways to maximize the "best team" characteristics. This icebreaker would be particularly appropriate in a group where teamwork is expected.

Two truths and a lie: Give each individual a piece of scrap paper and instruct them to write 3 statements about themselves: one of the statements should be false while 2 should be true. Explain that the goal is to fool people about which one is the lie. Allow 5 minutes to write statement; then have each person read the 3 statements and have the group guess the lie. Award a prize to the individual who makes the most correct guesses.

Guess who: At the onset of your meeting has each participate complete and return a 3x5 card with 2-3 statements about him or herself. During the session, read clues and have the rest of the group guess which person is being described.

Something new: On the second day of class/orientation, ask each person to share one thing they learned about someone in the group during the previous session/day. Have the rest of the group try and guess who is being described.

Common ground: in small groups, have students come up with 6 things they have in common and have them share these with the large group.

Favorite T-Shirt: ask attendees to bring (not wear) their favorite T-shirt to the meeting. Once all participants have arrived, ask each person to show the shirt to the group and explain how it resembles their personality.

My Name: People introduce themselves and tell what they know about why they have their name (their mother wanted to name me after her great aunt Helen who once climbed Pike 's Peak in high heels, etc.) it could be first, middle or nickname.

Comic Strip Chaos: Each participant takes turn at picking a comic frame out of the large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for other with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group,

they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames is in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together.

Lollipop: Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to share something about themselves with the group.

I chose SCSU because: The group forms a circle. The first person states their name and the reason they chose to attend SCSU. You continue going around the group, repeating the names of the people preceding their name and why they chose to come to SCSU. The real trick is the last person in the group who has to name all the people and why they came.

Back to back: every group member must find a partner of approximately equal height and weight, if possible. The partners will lock arms with their backs to one another. With arms remaining locked at all times, the partners will sit down on the ground and kick their legs out straight and try to stand back up. Then groups of four will try the same thing. Then groups of eight, sixteen and eventually the whole group together.

Human Knot: the group starts out in one or two tight circles. Everyone in the group reaches across the circle with their right hand to grab another group member's right hand. The group then reaches in with their left hand to grab a different group member's left hand. The object is to untangle the group without letting go of hands until a circle is formed. If the group is having extreme difficulty, you can administer "knot first-aid" and break one set of tangled hands, otherwise group members had not let go at any time. You may have to decide as a group the knot is not solvable, after prolonged attempt.

Eye contact: Standing in a circle, ask everyone to look down. On a certain cue have everyone look up at a specific person, but not directly to their right or left. If you make eye contact with someone you must take a step back from the circle. If you do not make eye contact with the person you are still in the game. When you get down to the last three or four people you can look at whoever you want to. You are no longer limited by the previous rule about the person standing right next to you

Creative High 5's: With a partner, come up with as many creative ways to give them a high 5 as they can in 60 seconds (or however long you choose). Under the leg, behind the back, etc. Volunteers can then demonstrate them.

Silent Identification: Each participant is asked to either write words or draw pictures that describe themselves. This is done silently. They pin the pictures on their chests, walk around and have everyone look each other over. Pictures are then shuffled and participants are asked to identify the person to which the picture belongs.

Name Game: sit in a circle. One person starts by using an adjective starting with the same letter as their first name, followed by their first name (i.e. Clever Claire, Kind Karen). The next person

and following has to repeat the first person's adjective and name and then add their own. It goes around the circle and the last person has to repeat all other names in order and end with their own.

Balloon Game: Have everyone put one piece of information about them in a balloon, then blow up the balloon and throw the balloon in the middle of the circle of participants. One by one, pop the balloons and guess to whom that piece of information belongs.

Non-verbal Birthday lineup: Ask everyone to lineup according to the month and day of birth without any talking. This should inspire some interesting means of communication towards a common goal.

Paper Bag Skits: First split your group into team consisting of three to members. Give each team a paper bag filled with assorted objects. These can be almost anything (i.e. wooden spoon, a screw, a bar of soap, a computer disk, etc.) The object of the game is to present a skit using all of the props provided. The props may be used as they would be in normal life, or they may be imaginatively employed. Give each group a topic to base their skit on. When all the skits have been planned and rehearsed they are performed for the amusement of all.

Movie Ball Game: Everyone stands in a circle and bounces a ball to somebody else, and has a five second limit to do so. But before bouncing the ball the must say the name of a movie. When somebody repeats a movie name they are out of the game. It eventually ends up being a competition between two people and then there's a winner.

Self-Disclosing Train Wreck: This is a fun version of the classic "musical chairs." Students are seating in chairs in large circle. One chair is taken away so there is one person left standing. This person stands in the middle of the group and calls out an attribute, personal trait, experience, etc. Then all who share this characteristic must find a new chair other than chair immediately next to you. Whoever is left standing calls out the next attribute.

Next Chair Please: A version of train wreck, but you need to move to the next person's lap! If you all share this attribute then the pile of people need to move to the left.

Trust Me! Students needed to sit on the floor in a circle with a large ball of twine. The object is to create a web with the sting. One person begins, they need to give a response to the question, "what are small groups good for" or the person can give a piece of advice for working in small groups. As he or she makes the comment, he or she tosses the ball of string to the other side of the circle, hanging on to the end. The group continues to toss the string across the circle or to the sides holding unto their strings tightly. When the string is completely used, a large web is formed.

The leader of this exercise can then explain how small groups are stronger when held together with a purpose. Initially the string was weak and lacked purpose. Held in a group it was strong. Placing something heavy on the web to demonstrate this is ideal at this point

Stupid Human Tricks: ask each person to introduce themselves and demonstrate a stupid human trick

The Four C's: Ask students to name a cartoon character, a color, a car, and a cuisine that best describes their personality and explain why

Gossip: the group sits in a circle and gossip begins with the facilitator sharing a secret with the person next in the circle. The secret is passed as each person shares it with the next person. In telling the secret, it may not be repeated twice to the same person (so the listener must get it all the first time). When the secret is finally back to the facilitator it is shared out loud. Then the facilitator reads the original one and compares the two.

Pat on the back: have everyone draw an outline of their hand on sheet of paper, then tape it to their back. Have group members mingle and write things on everyone's back that tells them something positive.

Hometown: Post a large outline of the state or country on the wall or even tape it on the floor. Have participants put their hometowns and name on the map. Ask them to share about their hometown and how they decided to attend SCSU.

Demographics: brainstorm background data that participants would be interested in knowing about each other (age, education, birthplace, etc.) Have each participant tell who they are in reference to the demographics.

Sentence Stems: Form dyads or triads and have participants complete the rest of the sentence. The leader can read the sentence to the entire all the participants or all participants can have sheets of paper with these listed and take their own time in covering them. Here are some examples.

- Before I came to SCSU, my main interests were . . .
- The way I would describe my family is . . .
- The thing I remember most about high school is . . .
- My most unusual friend is . . .
- The things I value most are . . .
- Where I hope to be 5 years from now . . .
- The thing I would most like to accomplish this year is . . .
- The thing that concerns me most about school is . . .

For Roommates:

- The first day we met, the things I noticed about you were . . .
- Since then, some things that surprised me about you were . . .
- Something I like about you is . . .
- It appears to me that an important difference between us is . . .
- I think we might have to compromise on . . .
- What I think I will get out of having a roommate is . . .
- I think the most important thing I have learned from this discussion is . . .

The Shoe Game: Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Next have everyone remove their shoes and tie them together. At the leader's command, everybody runs to the center of the circle and throws their shoes in a pile, returning to the circle. Have one volunteer chosen a pair of shoes other than their own and make one statement about the owner of the shoes. The owner of the shoes then come forward and introduces themselves to the group and picks out another pair of shoes to introduce. Repeat until everyone has been introduced through their shoes.

Values Discussion: Grab two other people who are wearing the same color as you. Sit down in a circle a little away from other groups. Instruct them they will be talking about some issues and you will give them new topics every few minutes.

1. Talk about the most important thing you did this year
2. What are the easiest and hardest emotions for you to express and why?
3. What is something that few people know about you?
4. What do you value in a friend?
5. What do you want to be doing in five years?
6. What is one goal you have for next year?
7. What do you want to learn to do better?
8. What is a motto you try to live by?
9. What are five words a friend would use to describe you?
10. What is the greatest challenge you are facing?
11. What do you like most about yourself?
12. What do you value in a loving relationship?
13. What do you value most in life?

Hot and Cold: Two people are chosen to be "it" and are sent out of the room. The remaining people choose a task for them to do (stand on the table, do a somersault, etc.) when the chosen two return it is the group's job to encourage them to perform the task. However the only encouragement allowed is applause when they're hot and booing when they are cold.

Reception Line: Divide everyone into 2 groups; have them stand facing each other. Each person talks to the person across from him or her until signaled. At the signal, the person at the end of

one lines move to the other end, consequently everyone has a new person to talk to. Possible conversation topics include:

- What is your favorite movie/TV show/music group why?
- Who is your biggest role model and why?
- Why did you decide to enroll at SCSU?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- What is a quote that you live your life by?
- What's your favorite hobby or pastime?

Beach Ball Toss: the group's goal is to hit the beach ball 100 times in a row without it falling to the ground. In addition each team member must hit the ball five times (and no participant can hit the ball twice in a row) if the ball ever hits the group the group must start over. A group may exceed 100 hits if that's what it takes to get everyone hit the ball five times

Processing questions:

- If you were successful, what caused this success?
- What strategies did you use to make sure that everyone was included?
- What was challenging about this exercise?
- What was challenging about this exercise?
- What did this exercise illustrate to you about leadership?
- How does this activity relate to our group?

Pick a side: Students are asked to choose their preferences between the following dichotomies. They go to one side of the room or the other (designated by the facilitator) to show which one they prefer. No one can be in the middle. Discuss why people made the choices they made. Here is a list of questions to get you started:

1. Play before you work or finish your work so you can play
2. Design a car or build one
3. Jeans or khakis
4. Would you rather be a bat or a baseball
5. Texas or Montana
6. Plan your vacation or decide what to do when you get there
7. Liberal or conservative
8. Morning or night
9. Would you rather go see a play or a football game
10. Chocolate or strawberry
11. Love or money

12. Hangout with a few close friends or get together with a large group of people
13. Listen or speak
14. Country or pop
15. 007 or batman
16. Happy Gilmore or Terminator

Rain Storm: Circle the group up and one person begins by snapping their fingers. Then, one by one the rest of the circle follows suit. Once you've returned to the original snapper, the original snapper will change the sound to slapping knees, and the rest of the circle follows suit.

Extreme rock, paper, and scissors: you play this energizer in the normal "rock, paper, scissors" fashion. Have the group pair off. Once the winner and loser are established, the loser must follow the winner around for the rest of the activity chanting the winner's name. This continues until you are left with two people fighting with a large crowd of supporters behind them.

Paired Sharing: Ask participants to stand up move about the room and find a partner who they don't know or who they know the least of anyone else in the room. Once everyone is in pairs the facilitator will announce the topic that the partners can talk about, for a designated amount of time.

Ideas for discussion:

- Find three things you and your partner have in common
- Describe for you partner the first job you ever had
- What would you do if you won the lottery
- What are you most favorite and least favorite things about this school/campus?

At the end of the designated time the facilitator gets the groups attention and may invite participants or share what they talked about with their partners. You can repeat this cycle by asking everyone to switch partners for a few rounds.

What do we have in common: split the group into pairs. Each pair will have 30 seconds to think of five things they have in common. At the end of the 30 seconds put two pairs together and give the group a minute to find something all four participants have in common. Finally each group can present the list of things they have in common.

How much do you use: tell the group that you are going to pass around a roll of toilet paper and invite participants to "take as much as they will need to get the job done." After every one has had a good laugh over the amount of paper they took, explain how the game works. For every piece of toilet paper they ripped off, they must tell the group one thing about themselves.

Name Aerobics: this is designed to learn names in a fun and interactive way. Have the group stand in a circle facing each other. The first person to start will introduce themselves by doing an action for each syllable of their name. The entire group should repeat the name and motions after each person has introduced themselves.

Humdingers: Distribute a song title to each participant, and make sure they do not reveal it to others. At least 2 people should have each song title. Ask the participants to hum their song to find and meet up with the other who also have their song. Be sure to use songs that most everyone will know. This can be used to from groups or partners.

Word Songs: To energize the group, divide into at least two teams. The facilitator will suggest a word (like love, sun, happy, dance, etc.) each group will alternate turns singing a song that contains that word. The game continues until a team cannot think of any more songs, and no songs can be repeated.

Sticky name tags: have participants put on removable nametags. Then have them introduce themselves to one other person. Suggest 2-4 questions for the pairs to talk about and learn about each other. After a couple minutes have the pair switch name tags and switch partners and introduce themselves to someone else. Each person should introduce themselves according to their name tag, not their actual identity. Once participants have switched at least 4 times have each person introduce themselves to the large group according to their nametag, at this time the real person may correct any inaccuracies at this time too.

Evolution: This is a game of rock-paper-scissors. There are 4 levels of evolution: egg, chicken, dinosaur, human. All participants begin on the same level, Egg. Participants may evolve up or down a level depending on whether they win the game of rock-paper-scissors. Only similar beings may play each other to evolve. To be an egg, participants should be squatted down on their heels. To be a chicken, participants hold be hunched low with arms like chicken wings. To be a dinosaur, participants should be standing tall with arms overhead. Once a Human you have evolved out of the game.

Hickey Pickey Hokey Pokey Doo Dad: Players stand or sit in a circle with one player in the center. The player in the center points their finger at some person and says "Hickey Pickey Hokey Pokey Doo Dad". Before they have finished saying this the player whom they are pointing at must call out the name of the player to their right. If they do not call out a name they switch spots with the person in the center of the circle. If they do call the correct name of the person to their right the person in the middle has to try again with someone else.