

Icebreaker Purposes

- Facilitating Introductions - When groups first come together, interactions and discussions can be hindered by apprehension, a lack of understanding the norms of the group, and/or simple unfamiliarity among other possibilities. Icebreakers can be used to create familiarity within the group and ease everyone into the group process. The desired end result is a more open discussion forum and pleasing environment within the group in which the group process can continue.

- Prior Knowledge Assessment - One pedagogical advantage of using icebreakers is that they provide the trainer an opportunity to assess participants' prior knowledge. They can then lead to the identification of individual needs within the group while also introducing everyone and helping to create a healthy group environment as with facilitating introductions.

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- Preparation of Participants - Many learning environments (and this concept is particularly true in online education) require some form of introduction in order to be fully utilized by the participants. By structuring the icebreaker activity into the learning environment or course management system, participants can get to know one another while getting to know the course delivery method.

- Energizers - Some icebreakers are designed simply to energize the group of participants. They can still be very useful for second day/morning activities to help wake up everyone.

Icebreaker Purposes

- What's In It For Me (WIIFM) – Some icebreakers can be used as an alternative to identifying participants' training needs.