

The First Day: A Workbook (of sorts)

First, Get to Know Each Other: It's Important

Ice Breakers:

- create a warm, friendly atmosphere
- work toward setting the tone for your classroom
- introduce you to your students, and you to them
- introduce students to one another.

Things to consider:

- number of students in your class
- the amount of time you have
- the set-up of your classroom

Ice Breaker ideas:

1. To spice up the traditional introduction, have students introduce themselves by telling the class their name, year of study, major; they also must complete a short sentence revealing something unique about themselves. For example, "I am the who ..." or "My pet peeve is ..." or "My favourite food is ...". As the instructor, you can ask follow-up questions to generate a series of small conversations with each member of the class. Of course, you introduce yourself to get things going. (*Pssst ... this is my favourite ice breaker for the first day for a smaller class of 20-30 students.)
2. Have your students play a game of Bingo, where they must write down a student's name next to each item in a list. This can be done a couple of different ways: You can hand out a list of criteria or a bingo card with criteria in each square. Ask students to mingle until their card has been completed. You can offer a small prize to the first one finished.
3. Give students five minutes to interview their neighbour; each student will introduce their neighbour to the class. Be sure to encourage students to find out something interesting about their classmates.
4. Provide students with a list of five characteristics or personality traits; each student should have a list with different characteristics. Students will then introduce themselves to each other, looking for students who have the traits listed on their paper; only one name per trait, one student per list.
5. Break students into groups of two or three, and have them play *Two Truths and a Lie*. Each student tells the others two truths and one lie about themselves; the others have to guess which is the lie.

Insiders Tip: Ice Breakers are useful for more than just the first day. You can use them any time to break up a lecture, develop team building, or help with camaraderie.

Sample Bingo Criteria

Find a student who:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. likes to travel | _____ |
| 2. loves pizza | _____ |
| 3. owns a dog | _____ |
| 4. knows twins | _____ |
| 5. attended Welcome Week activities | _____ |
| 6. likes to read for pure enjoyment | _____ |
| 7. likes to watch the NFL | _____ |
| 8. drives a pick-up truck | _____ |
| 9. has watched Sesame Street | _____ |
| 10. plays a musical instrument | _____ |

Personality Traits/Personal Characteristics

absent-minded * adventurous * bored * busy * calm * carefree * careless * cautious
* cheerful * clumsy * communicative * confident * conventional * conscientious *
crafty * creative * cooperative * curious * daring * decisive * dependable * easygoing
* emotional * energetic * ethical * faithful * feisty * fidgety * forgiving * forgetful *
funny * giddy * happy * healthy * helpful * idealistic * imaginative * impulsive *
keen * kind * leader * logical * messy * moody * neat * noisy * open * organized *
outspoken * picky * procrastinator * punctual * quiet * relaxed * reserved *
resourceful * rigid * serious * shy * silly * skilled * spiritual * tall * tardy *
thorough * thrifty * worried *

On my First Day, I am going to try the

_____ ice-breaker game.

Then, Set Course Expectations and Classroom Rules

Things I expect in my classroom:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My definition of participation (with respect to the course I teach) is:

Things to think about: how will you accurately convey the volume of work associated with your class; late policy – for class and for assignments; email response time; how do you want students to address you: Miss/Mr/Ms or first name; how do you feel about email/texting during class?; is it okay to eat during your class? Try to put some thought into how you are going to balance your responsibilities with your own time management.

Be sure students know how to get in touch with you: detail your email policy and explain your office hours. It can be helpful to describe the nature of office hours and encourage students to come see you for help with specific projects or to receive clarification on key concepts. Take a couple of minutes to write the directions to your office:

If you have a course website or CLEW site, be sure your students understand its purpose. What information can they find on the site, and what should they use it for on a weekly basis?

When mentioning the required textbook(s), take the opportunity to explain the importance of keeping up with assigned readings.

Be sure students understand the grade distribution for your course.

Encourage your students to ask questions. If “Any questions?” is met with silence, turn the tables and ask questions of the students that will test their understanding of course expectations and requirements.

Give Some Thought to Your Internal versus External Teaching Identity¹

The teacher you think you are is founded in your **Internal Teaching Identity**, whereas the way students see you is your **External Teaching Identity**. The teacher you strive to be is your **Ideal Teaching Identity**, and this is something that will fluctuate and change throughout your teaching career.

My ideal teacher is:

How I can achieve this:

¹ My ideas on Teaching Identity come from Michael K. Potter’s “A Primer on Lecturing” and his Lecturing course offered at the University of Windsor’s Centre for Teaching and Learning, a course I took as part of the University Teaching Certificate programme.

On the first day, I plan to wear

Think about different ways you can humanize yourself in a manner you feel comfortable with: personal experience, mistakes you have made, your research interests.

Am I comfortable with my social media privacy settings?

Other Things I Want to Think About *Before* the First Day: