

ICE BREAKERS

When an old man with a simple ordinary face and attire, faces a group of students, the question arises: how to break the ice? Usually the head of the school or a teacher helps. A simple soul, an outsider with no great tags such as 'cine star' 'cricket player' 'army major' Nobel laureate etc etc , is rescued by the administrators by giving an introduction of the person - usually with cooked-up superlatives. Many words adjectives, attributes go above the head of the audience

In any case [with or without introduction] the outsider faces the problem viz how to break the ice.

Many movies have handled the subject t . The few which I have seen fringe on madness, imitating circus clowns or mono-acting or costume shows.

What I am suggesting here is to truly include the students in the learning process which the outsider is going to handle. Hence our title should be of value to all the teachers.

Ice breakers vary with the type of audience,. I will limit this note only to school or college level students [i.e. structured institutions]

For primary and pre-primary children:

Anything, any gesture, any soft speaking or friendly face will suffice , unless the child is already crying. For pre-primary, the level matters . i.e. the relative positions. Eye-to- eye contact is the best

For pre-primary any tangible object will do. If you want to talk about say, animals / vegetables/ water etc grab any doll or picture and start. If the subject is water you can actually drink water from a glass or pretend to do so with nothing in hand. Tiny tots are natural listeners if only the uncle/ aunt looks like a storyteller.

For primary school

Anything tangible will work. This means any item which can be ‘felt’ by cognitive senses would be enough.

When a lot of noise and jumping etc is happening in the class room I did not know what to do. My friend, the school teacher, just came in and with a gigantic shout “silence, sit down” it worked. thanks to obedience to authority. For me it will not do. , because this kind of obedient silence did not guarantee enthusiastic participation in teaching and learning, Another time the same

teacher helped me , when the class was in a similar turmoil. She came in and just said in an appropriate tone ‘ outside” [it might have been anything sinister or jovial such as an elephant, snakes, monkeys.] “She added , “Close the door and be quiet;’ and it worked. Of course there was some noise outside which she had used. Then she sent two children to see if everything was alright. Of course it was alright, since there was no elephant or anything outside to start with. The purpose of controlling commotion was achieved on both these occasions, but silence did not guarantee enthusiastic listening and participation.

Orderliness is the first requirement in primary classes. A few ‘over-active’ students would be enough to spoil the whole atmosphere.

Experienced teachers know who these disturbing elements were and made them stand outside the door of the class room [until called in which will be soon as the class becomes calm.]but this is no guarantee for cooperation in teaching and learning process.

In such a case as a guest faculty, I should call in the punished pupils and start. This new start may need an ‘ice-breaker’

In primary classes there is no need for subject specific ice-breakers .

Any activity which includes the students [all of them or only a few] will be enough.

Try any [physical]

Can you all do this?[a] make a figure with your hand [b] bend one finger or three [c] show namaskar on your back [d] touch your nose [from behind your head], You need not really do these or be good at them . Children need not learn what you do, Some may be already adept in any or all your tricks. You have broken the ice.

Try any [visual]

[a] what is this? Draw a figure or letter in the air – do it many times

]b] what is there? Point your finger randomly nothing as answer as ok. Or the wall is also fine .

[c] do you see spider-web in the corner of the ceiling ? whether it is there or not does not matter.

Try any [sound /hearing]

Can you call like a crow ? or cat, dog,
What is this sound? ha,ha etc

Who can be a drum or a drummer?

This writer had used some of his own. See the list.

For middle school students

Simple tricks may not work. The activity should involve some mental exercise also. One example; [a] Mime eating, ask a volunteer to come do. What are you eating/ answer by the doer or anyone else anything is ok, The ice is broken.

[b] Who is the tallest in this class?..... Will the tallest person stand up?What is your height?

Will the dullest student come here? , no one, If anyone names someone . No you are the one because...

[c] What do you think we will do today?

For high school students

By this time [or at these teen age years] children would have grown individualistic and any one method may not succeed. According to this writer nothing wrong in trying

Begin with a well known proverb, riddle, puzzle, brainteaser . Add your own if you have one since it would be new to the audience

[a] A friend of mine uses origami to introduce any geometry lesson, When I suggested this a maths teacher said , origami can be used to explain formulas in algebra also. The drawing madam who was around said you could have called me, children even upto college level like to cut and paste, I said I am only talking of beginning a class and not on methods of teaching

Some simple tricks this writer had used are given at the end as a list. Nothing new or special, because is there anyone who can create a new proverb or crack a truly good new joke? All are inherited by us,

At college level

This article has already become too long . so not attempted here,

**A list of ice breakers **

Pre-primary

1. make children come one by one – one monkey; two monkeys; three monkeys – now use the same terms for fingers, pencils etc Now start your number lesson or any other.
2. Pretend as if it is raining. Mimic umbrella open and use
3. Make capital letters A, C, O, V USING one or two hands - do not try Indian languages

Primary level

Teach one child the following trick

Show one finger. What is this ? If answer is 'one' the demonstrating child says, "No it is English I"
Next day show two fingers. Naturally it will be index and middle fingers One says 'two' Another says English V, You say, " No, no these are twee fingers."

Show c by fingers of one hand ask what is this?
All say English C, That is right. What else? No answer . . You give the answer; c for coffee

Then show c with two hands. Whatever be the response by the children the teacher says
CandC Come take Coffee

If there is enthusiasm teach a child to show C and T. Now ask. Quite often you will get the right answer: Come and take Tea

If the subject of the day is some poems or simple English say the first line or syllables of nursery rhymes . Many would have heard whether taught in school or not, You say ba,ba or twinkle twinkle. happy birthday Many children will continue. The class is ready for any learning or work

Write the name of one of the children present. Big letters on the blackboard, Hiding the board erase one letter. Now show. The owner of the name will find the mistake. Ask him/her to corrects it . Now you are ready to teach cat then c..t

Middle school

In our current educational system classes 5,6 and 7 come under this category. Here is a group where one can find students coming forward to volunteer , try anything suggested . When you ask who wants to do? many [almost the whole class] hands will be raised, since experimentation is possible in this age group, the teacher can go with some preparation

[a] English class; this is a new word, let us guess and write the spelling – oh! It is right etc
[b] Let us try rhyming words – local naam- kaam Raama, soma then English right, fight . go to good, bad

[c] In maths period, guess if a number is divisible by two – many will give correct answer .

[d] In social science [history, geography, economics] sketch map of India or Africa

HIGH SCHOOL

At this level even the juniormost teacher would not like to waste time [is it a waste of time , to include the students in the lesrning process?] In maths class any book in the library on ‘ fun with mathematics; can be taken and any page can be told to this audience : e.g multiplication table of 9 upto 9

Write as below

1	2	3	4	9
9	8	7	6	1

Combine you get the table for 9

Geography

Babu was seeing cricket match at --- hrs [odd time]. Where was the match being played?

I have tried to write here

1. The teacher and the students should come together for a teaching and learning program
2. To make this possible 'ice-breakers' can be used.
3. Four types of starters are given – pre-primary, primary, middle , high schools
- 4, A few examples are given , good teachers will have their own ways of achieving the aim viz, synchronizing teaching and learning

Your suggestions to engoneforall@gmail.com