

Musical Ice Breakers for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I.D.E.A.)

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Ice Breakers Defined:

- ❖ Any activity or game that allows participants to get to know one another better/feel more connected to one another
- ❖ It encourages people to initiate dialogue outside of rehearsal time, and people discover things about one another about that wouldn't have come up in casual conversation
- ❖ Participants find out they have more similarities/common interests than apparent at first glance. They also learn about what makes others unique.

Why are Ice Breakers Important?

- ❖ It fosters community and cohesiveness among class members. They become more invested in the program.
- ❖ Participants realize they can be themselves around their peers
 - People don't feel alone or singled out.
- ❖ Students collaborate better when they trust one another/feel accountable to others
 - If you can get them to do silly/vulnerable ice breakers, you can get them to learn anything
 - Can lead to better performances

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I.D.E.A.)

- ❖ ***Inclusion:***
 - Creating a safe environment in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, represented, supported, and valued to fully participate.
- ❖ ***Diversity:***
 - All of the ways in which people differ.
- ❖ ***Equity:***
 - All having the opportunity to fully participate. It encompasses the policies and practices used to ensure the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for everyone, while at the same time trying to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups.
- ❖ ***Access:***
 - A commitment for everyone to be included in all activities.
- ❖ ***I.D.E.A. in a nutshell:***
 - Designing activities that everyone is able to participate and engage in. Not only do we tolerate differences, we **celebrate** them.

I. Ice Breakers by Category

A. Name Games/Activities

❖ *Partner Interview:*

- Pair students and give them 2 minutes to interview one another. After, each participant has to share what they learned about their partner to the rest of class.
- *Variation:* Have them sing their answer/rap it as the class does a rhythmic ostinato

❖ *A My name Is:* (Kodaly Game Song)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzHmV21nvGY>
- Musical mad lib: A my name is _____, my best friend's name is _____, we come from _____, with a basket full of _____

❖ *Equity Cards:*

- Have students decorate a large index card with their preferred name
- *Extra:* Take a photo of them with the card and place them all over the room
- On the back, write down info such as: Legal name, favorite song(s), favorite movie, do you play any additional instruments, hidden talents, foreign language(s), two truths and lie (wish), etc.
- Use these cards throughout the year to call on people and place them into groups.

❖ *Bippity Boppity Boo:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKHDaDQAaLQ>
- Circle Game where the "It" person is in the middle. The "It" person goes to a person in the circle and says one of four words: "me, you, left, right." They have to say the correct person's name before "It" can say/sing Bippity Boppity Boo. If they fail, they become the new "It" person.
- *Variation:* Sing it

B. Short Activities/Brain Breaks

❖ *"Chaotic" Warmups*

- E.g. Give a fist bump to 7 people as fast as possible and come back to your spot
- E.g. During vocal warmups, give a new person a high five on each key changes
 - *Variation:* Modify to high five to bear hugs, high "foot," happy salmon
- E.g. Use the words "Hello (name)" to existing warmup.

❖ *Categories*

- Sheet Music in Google Drive Folder
- Kodaly Circle Game: Students chant/sing to a rhythmic ostinato about items in a category determined by a leader (e.g. desserts). One an item has been said, it cannot be repeated. When a person messes up, the game restarts, and they get to choose the next category.

❖ *I like people who....*

- Circle Game with chairs: The "It" person in the middle says: "My name is: _____." Everyone responds with: "Hi _____." "It" person says, "I like people who _____." The

people whom that apply to need to get up and find a different seat. The “It” person runs to fill an empty seat and the next person without a seat is the new “it” person.

❖ *Balloon Solfege*

- <https://youtu.be/rYWr8PZS2iE?t=332>
- Have your students sing a scale on solfege. Every time a student hits the balloon, change to the next note in the scale. This can be done in harmony.

❖ *Speed Friending*

- Form a double circle, so that every person has a partner. Give them a prompt to talk about (e.g., favorite movie, song, celebrity crush). On your cue, the outside circles clockwise one person and talks to their new partner
- *Variation 1:* they have to sing their answer, or speak while performing a rhythmic circle
- *Variation 2:* Have the outer circle walk to music like in musical chairs. Whoever they stop in front of, they have to discuss/analyze the song with.

❖ *Learn a Foreign Language!*

- Teach the class a new salutation in a foreign language. Ask some bilingual students to teach some as well.
- I ask students to teach numbers in a foreign language (e.g., Spanish). Then I refer to measure/page numbers in that language for a week so we all learn to get more comfortable with it.

C. Medium Length Activities

❖ *Photo/Video Scavenger Hunt*

- Instructions in Google Drive Folder
- Place students in small groups and give them 20-45 minutes to take photos/videos in silly categories.

❖ *Group Skits*

- Create an infomercial with everyday object(s) that is now something different
- Make a music video with prop(s)

❖ *Happy Birthday Song*

- Teach it and make them memorize it
- Teach them how to conduct the basic pattern and give a cue for pickup
- Throughout the school year, sing it to every person on their birthday and have the birthday person conduct it.
- Variation: You can have students conduct your Alma Mater/Star-Spangled Banner as well.

❖ *Show and Tell*

- Have students share some item/photo/talent they have

D. Long/Vulnerability Activities

❖ *One Minute Spotlight*

- Students perform for one whole minute a cappella in front of their peers, no more no less. They can choose any song and genre, as long as lyrics are appropriate

- *Variation:* The Voice (audience is facing away from performer with eyes closed. They can only turn around and look when they've identified who the singer is)
- *Instrumental Variation:* Perform on any instruments (can be secondary)

❖ ***Trust Walk***

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbwL_h-nf2k
- Pair up students. One is blindfolded while the other is their guide who can only give them verbal instructions. Can be done indoors with obstacles or outdoors.
- *Variation:* The helper can only give instructions with sound effects (can be an instrument)

❖ ***Cross the Line***

- <https://www.svsd.net/cms/lib/PA01001234/Centricity/Domain/785/CrosstheLinePart2.pdf>
- Students cross a line if a prompt applies to them. The prompts start relatively simple, but become very personal by the end of the activity. This activity has the ability to make students empathetic to one another and to show them that there's much more underneath the surface.

❖ ***Spider Web***

- <https://guideinc.org/2015/11/11/team-building-activity-web-of-reflection/>
- Circle Activity: One person with a ball of yarn shares an anecdote. I ask them to share about why they joined this group this semester and what they can bring to the ensemble. After sharing, they pass the yarn to another person who shares their answer. This continues until a web is formed.

❖ ***Asking for Help***

- <https://eatteachblog.com/team-building-activity/>
- Students are blindfolded, then placed within a "maze" of rope. They must always have one hand on the rope and need to find a way out of the maze. At any point, they can raise their hand and ask for help. The trick is, the rope is a giant circle, there is no way out unless they ask for help.

❖ ***Shoulder Affirmation***

- Great closer to a vulnerability activity. Students sit in a circle facing inwards with their eyes closed. Ask some of the students to stand and perform prompts like the ones below. Have students switch spots so everyone has a chance to place their hands on the shoulders of others.
 1. "Place your hands on the shoulders of someone you've gotten to know more today"
 2. "Place your hands on the shoulders of someone you want to get to know more"
 3. "Place your hands on the shoulders of someone you would be there for them if they needed someone to talk to"

- ❖ In the end, everyone gets affirmed anonymously. They don't know who did the affirming, but they know that there is someone in the ensemble that cares about them and will be there for them.

❖ ***In this category of ice breakers, the debrief is as important if not more important than the activity***

II. Reimagining Past Favorites

● ***Name/Word Alterations***

- A My Name is Abbie (see above)
- Change "Indian Chief" to "Follow the Leader" or Secret Drum Major"

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAz6i7bIUo>
- ***How to Play Games Where People Get Out***
 - Make being Out/”It” a positive thing
 - “Punishment” Box
 - Variation: Compliment Box
 - The out person needs to pull a compliment out from the box and read it aloud
- ***How to Make it More Musical***
 - *Variation:* Add a rhythmic ostinato/Have to speak in rhythm
 - *Variation:* Instead of speaking, they have to sing it

General Strategies

- Grouping
 - Vocal/Instrumental Sections
 - Pairing Newer with Older Students
 - Clump Up or Order Up
 - E.g., Order up alphabetically by first name, Clump up with people with the same birthday month as you, Order up in order of how many languages you speak
- Assign/Elect a Social Chair
- If students see that you care about them as people, you’ve already well on your way to creating a safe classroom environment

V. Additional Resources

- ***Google Drive with My Resources***
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CgsHyet4lHa1UdyFcC2QzYefA0JeM6lO?usp=sharing>
- ***Ice Breakers (60 Fun Activities to Build a Better Choir) by Valerie Lippoldt Mack***
 - *There’s a second book too!*
- ***Ultimate Camp Resource***
 - <https://www.ultimatecampresource.com/>
 - Large Resource for Games with Descriptions and Videos
 - Games by Category (E.g. Circle Games, Indoor Games, Water Games, Adaptive or Special Needs Games)
- ***Just Playin’ - FMEA Presentation by Nick Powers***
 - <https://padlet.com/nbodino/gvpzrlnw7r9o>
 - Has modifications for online icebreakers
- ***Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians*** - Two Volume Text by Jeffrey Agrell