

ICEBREAKERS For *Emerging* Leaders!

Association of Leadership Educators

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Icebreakers are activities designed to make learning easier for participants involved in workshops, courses, conferences, skill-development seminars and other educational programs, both formal and informal. As tools to stimulate creative thinking and challenge basic assumptions, icebreakers contain structured activities that span an unlimited range of topics. Workshop activities are selected to promote group interaction and individual learning.

Icebreakers are designed to reduce anxiety and increase group energy. They can provide excellent opportunities for feedback and disclosure. When used as catalyst for exploring thoughts, feelings, perceptions, impressions, and reactions, these activities become tools for reducing barriers to learning. They enhance and impact the relevance and meaning of the course content under study. Demonstrating that learning can be both meaningful and enjoyable, experiential activities set the stage for increased interaction and intellectual curiosity. Creative exploration of personal and professional development is essential for presentations on topics that include leadership, supervision, team building, assessment, motivation, problem solving and more.

Keep in mind that an icebreaker is not an end in and of itself. Icebreakers are activities with training implication when appropriately applied, capture the essence of specific program goals, and become potent aids for teaching and learning.

Learning is a process that involves participants in a variety of strategies and approaches. When used with sensitivity to individual and group needs, these strategies can become effective resources for developing authentic teaching and learning opportunities. Activities that nurture the human needs of participants also strengthen their innate ability to strive and achieve. Icebreakers help ensure that participants understand and are receptive to the information and/or skills presented during the learning program. Icebreakers provide a natural lead into content-based materials. Their effective application can enhance almost any educational event.

The activities contained in this workshop can be used with a variety of audiences. Training applications will vary as the facilitator takes into account the specific needs of an audience, conditions, and appropriateness of an individual activity. Modifying activities as needed to more effectively meet the needs of a particular group or program is encouraged. *When*

used as an effective learning tool, the skill of teaching becomes an art! Teaching that is transformed into an art enables educators to assist in shaping within the learner a new sense of reality, and the discovery of additional possibilities.