



## Teaching and Learning Online Foundational Badge Artifact

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### **Artifact Description**

Please share what your FAVORITE icebreaker is and explain why. Explain the rules of the icebreaker and what you liked about it. Then, discuss its impact on a community--in what ways can this icebreaker in particular support the building of an online learning community? Why?

Then, please share your LEAST FAVORITE icebreaker and explain why. Similar to above, explain the rules of the icebreaker and what you disliked about it. Discuss its impact on a community--do you find it to be detrimental to community building? If so, why?

### **Artifact**

My favorite icebreaker: I learned this trick from an online meeting and found it very effective. I separated students into groups of 3-4, and then asked everyone in the group to share some facts and lies about themselves, small things, such as: I love swimming. My dog's name is Rosie. This small group sharing would typically take 10 mins. And then every group would do a presentation in front of the whole class, where within a group, they would take turns introducing each other with 2 facts and 1 lie, and asked the whole class to guess which is the lie.

This icebreaker always worked wonders, but for a large class, the downside is that it would take too long, so I only do it when the class size is small.

My least favorite icebreaker: I asked everyone in the class to take turns and say something that would help others remember themselves. Quite a number of students would just say: Hi! My name is... My major is... and then nothing. :/

### **Artifact Reflection**

The artifact I chose for this assignment is from Module 1: Icebreakers!: Discussion, where we were asked to share our favorite and least favorite icebreakers and explain why. I very much enjoyed reflecting on my own icebreaker strategies and learning about others' experiences.

My goal in teaching is to instill self-confidence in students and foster their desire to learn. As a math teacher, I believe that mathematics can be understood and not just memorized, provided that it is

delivered in a clear and effective manner. As an instructor, this belief has always been a motivating force in how I structure and focus my teaching.

Day One is often considered a most exciting day in an academic term, and I am constantly thinking about creative ways to come up with nice icebreakers. Besides the favorite icebreaker I shared in my post, I have also specifically designed some that would bring out the passion in my students which are also in line with course content. For example, I routinely teach a first-year seminar on mathematical modeling. The inspiration for this seminar comes from my personal experience. I participated in multiple major international modeling competitions in college and later on served as a peer mentor. Those fun and stimulating experiences ignited my passion and enthusiasm for math, which I hope to convey to the next generation of students. The seminar provided students with illustrations of how modern mathematics was employed to solve relevant contemporary problems. This has fostered curiosity and creativity in freshmen by providing them with an active and engaging learning environment. In a recent icebreaker activity for the class, I asked my students to construct an equality that uses the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once each and some usual math symbols +, -, \*, / and one other “magical” operation of their choice. Within minutes my students came up with more than 10 answers, including  $\int_1^5 (3 - 2) dx = 4!$  The sparkle in their eyes makes me realize that it is so awesome to be a professor and that I will not trade it for anything else.

Reading through others’ icebreakers has definitely been an eye-opening experience for me. There are some teaching philosophies that I could totally relate to, such as giving students options on what they want to share with the whole class and making sure students feel comfortable sharing. The various creative icebreaker questions that were tried out by others were so much fun, for example “What is your favorite pasta shape and why?” and “When we plan a heist to liberate Iraqi antiquities from the British Museum, which role will you play on the team?” Lexi’s comment after I shared my least favorite icebreaker “I can resonate with the discomfort when asked to share something about me to help others remember me. My brain instantly thinks ‘well there is nothing that interesting that other people would want to remember!’” brought such a smile.

I will carry away all this new knowledge with me when I welcome my next cohort of students to DU in a couple of weeks!