**Welcome to your (Global) Community Online Icebreaker Facilitator Guide**

**Introduction**

This interactive online session is designed to create an inclusive and supportive online environment for participants to connect and learn about each other. It can be used to help build a sense of community and belonging at the beginning of the academic year or used in other contexts.

There are two options for the facilitator to choose from for the final activity. In version 1 participants are asked to share an object, while in version 2 they are asked to share their journey.

The workshop can be delivered in 1 hour. If there are over 80 participants or if participants are given time to think of an object/ draw their journey during the session, then the timing should be extended to 1 hour 15 minutes.

The framing and narrative can also be adapted depending on the aims and audience. For culturally diverse groups the benefits of learning in an intercultural environment can be highlighted or alternatively where groups are less diverse the framing can focus on getting to know each other and the title can be changed e.g. ‘Welcome to your Community’.

The session is designed to be delivered using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra but could be adapted to other platforms.

**Session description**

The blurb should be shared with participants prior to the session and can be adapted depending on which activities the facilitator decides to deliver, whether participants prepare the object/journey in advance or during the session and whether the culture sharing element of the session is highlighted.

Title: Welcome to your (Global) Community workshop, [insert date time and time zone]

Blurb: Join [insert team name / role of facilitator] for a fun interactive ice-breaker workshop. You’ll meet new friends (from around the world), share different (cultural) perspectives and learn about others. To prepare for the session / during the session you will be asked to...

Version 1 object activity: ...think of an object or image that is important to you / that represents an aspect of your (cultural) identity that you’d like to share with others. It can be anything from a food or musical instrument to a photograph or a piece of artwork. If you can have the object or image with you in the session, then that’s even better!

Version 2 journey activity: ...draw a picture or map of your life journey. You could include anything of significance to you, this could be where you were born and grew up, friends and family, education or important life experiences. Bring the drawing or an image of the drawing to the session ready to share with others.

To take part in the workshop, follow this link: [insert link]

We suggest you access the session 10 minutes before it begins so that we can help you with any technical issues. For the best experience, use the most recent version of Google Chrome or Firefox browsers, as Internet Explorer is not supported. Please make sure you are in a quiet space with good Wi-Fi connection and have a pen and paper to make notes.

**Technical set up**

Set up the session on blackboard collaborate, giving students permissions as presenters and allowing them to enter the session early, then add the guest link into the text above and promote the session.

Save the powerpoint as a pdf ready to upload before the session.

**Facilitator roles**

Facilitator 1 (F1): Interacts with participants using the microphone and by showing their video and introduces the sessions aims, ground rules and activities

Facilitator 2 (F2): Interacts with participants on the chat, notifies facilitator 1 of any relevant questions or comments in the chat, works on the technical aspects of the workshop e.g. sharing slides, organising breakout rooms, offers support to students who have technical issues via the chat

Information on break out groups: <https://help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra/Moderator/Moderate_Sessions/Breakout_groups>

Black = workshop content

Green = technical actions

**30 mins before session begins**

Enter the course room early and upload any files you will be sharing – this includes the full set of workshop slides and individual slides for each activity to be shared into the breakout groups

Make sure both facilitators have permission set to moderator

Display the welcome slide

Separate the participant list by detaching it from the panel using the settings button

Make a note of the phone number in case you need to call in for audio

Close down emails / teams or mute any notifications so there are no interruptions

**As participants enter the session (10 minutes before it begins)**

F1 and F2 to share their webcams and have mic on while they welcome participants to the session as they enter. F1 To welcome using the microphone and F2 to welcome people using the chat function.

Invite participants to check that their audio and microphones are working, and webcams if they feel comfortable, and encourage them to introduce themselves in the chat

Ask participants to mute their mics for now, and to raise their hands if they would like to contribute via the mic

Let participants know that if they have tech issues during the session we will do our best to help, but we may not be able to solve all issues

Make some small talk or play some music before the session begins to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere

**Session begins – Welcome (5 mins)**

Stop sharing slides so webcams are visible. Welcome to the session and thank you for joining us – we're going to get started.

F1 introduction: Hello, my name is [name] and I work in the [team name] at the University. My role involves [role description]. [Facilitator encouraged to share some more background information e.g. professional background / hobbies and interests]

Today I’ll be talking you through two of our favourite ice breaker activities that we like to use when working with groups of students (from lots of different places/ backgrounds) who are getting to know each other.

F2 Introduction: Name, role. Today, I’ll be responding to any comments or questions on the chat and manging the technical side of the session to ensure it runs smoothly.

(F2 can begin organising the breakout groups while F1 introduces the session and the name activity)

If there are fewer than 8 participants at this point, the facilitators can run the activity as a whole group activity without the breakout rooms

1. Open the Share Content panel from the Collaborate panel and select Breakout Groups.
2. Select **Randomly assign**.
3. Do not select to include moderators in group assignment.
4. To change how many attendees are in each group, select the number of groups from the Number of Groups menu. Put 4 students into each breakout group (one group could have more or less depending on number of attendees).
5. If you don't like how the attendees are grouped, select Reassign attendees.
6. Make a note of who is in which group, so that you can assign them to the same group next time.
7. Wait until F1 has introduced the name task before you select Start.

Note: You can create up to 20 breakout rooms. For more than 80 participants the number of participants in each room will increase and groups may need more time.

**Session aims and ground rules (5 mins)**

Share slides. Before we begin, we’re going to share some aims and ground rules for the session.

We’re going to facilitate two activities today, with the aim of helping you to...

* Get to know each other better
* Share different (cultural) perspectives
* Learn from each other
* And, most importantly, have fun!

We also want to share some ground rules that will be useful for this session, and for group work in future. It’s useful to agree ways of working together before starting a group activity, particularly when we’re working in diverse groups.

The first is to speak in the ‘I’ form. speak from your own experience only. None of us have the whole picture and it is hard for one individual to entirely represent groups of people.

The second suggestion is to listen with big ears. We can try to go beyond just hearing and waiting our turn to speak and really listen to understand new and different perspectives.

Finally, give everyone the chance to contribute, remembering that people with different personalities and from different (cultures or language) backgrounds may take different amounts of time to share their thoughts and ideas.

We encourage you to be really bold and share your experiences today, so that we can get to know and learn from one another. I know this isn’t always easy [relate to own experience] but it can be easy to assume you might be the only person who finds this challenging, or to overlook the benefits. But, please participate at your own comfort level. You decide what you want to share, if you want to take a break please do, and please be respectful of others’ comfort zones.

Remember, you can contribute at any time using the chat to share comments and questions while I’m speaking, or you can raise your hand using the icon at the bottom of your screen if you want to be invited to contribute via the microphone.

This online group environment is new for most of us and it’s important to remember that we can’t always see each other's body language and facial expressions like we would in a physical setting, so it’s important to be kind and sensitive to each other as we work through the activities.

**Name activity (15 minutes)**

Let’s move on to our first activity and begin by introducing ourselves starting with something as simple as our name.

In a moment, we’ll put you into small groups of 4 and we’d like you to talk for 1 minute each about the story behind your name

We have some suggestions for questions you can answer, these include:

* What's your name?
* How do you say it?
* Why are you called this?
* What does your name mean?
* How do you feel about your name?

To give you an example, I’ll share some information about my name. (F1 models activity).

We’re now going to put you into a small group break out room. Once you’re in the room, share the story behind your name with others by speaking using your microphone and sharing your video if you feel comfortable to, or if you prefer you can use the chat function. If this is the first time you’ve been in a breakout room, don’t worry if it feels a bit strange at first and remember to be kind and supportive to yourself and each other.

We’ll share this slide into the group so you can see the questions. Once you're in your groups, the first task is to nominate a timekeeper to ensure everyone gets a chance to speak. If everyone introduces their name before we bring you back to the main room, then you can discuss what the activity made you think and feel. We’ll ask you to share some of these reflections later.

As facilitators we will come in and out of the different groups so that we can listen in on the discussions – if you see us enter the room, please continue speaking or if you have a question about the activity then feel free ask.

**Small groups (8 – 10 mins)**

F2 presses Start to begin the breakout groups. Make a note of the time that the breakout groups begin, and the time that you will bring them to an end (giving up to 10 mins).

Once the groups have started, share pdf file of powerpoint slide for the name activity with the breakout groups by

1. Selecting Share Files.
2. Open the File options menu of the file you want to share.
3. Select Share with groups.
4. Choose the groups you want to share the file with (share with all groups).
5. Select Share Now.

Facilitators to enter the breakout rooms and listen in on conversations/ check everyone is ok/ help solve any issues. Split groups between facilitators. From the Attendees panel, select Join group.

Be aware that if any participants are disconnected during this time they will return to the main room. If this happens, put them back into their breakout group.

Any chat text in the main room will be posted to all groups. Facilitators to give groups a 1 minute warning in main room chat, then count down 5 4 3 2 1, before bringing them back to the main room.

To stop breakout groups and bring everybody back to the main room, select End breakout groups. You can find this at the top of the Attendees panel or beside Breakout groups in the Share Content panel. After you select End breakout groups, all attendees are moved back to the main room.

**Debrief:** Welcome back to the main room. Apologies if we cut any of you off mid-sentence! It was fantastic to hear some great stories being told about your names, thank you for sharing those with one another.

It might seem obvious but knowing people’s names is an important first step in building a community. Our name is an important part of our identity and not knowing someone's name, or feeling unsure of how to pronounce it, can be a barrier to making a connection and developing a good relationship. It can be hard to remember lots of new names at first, so don’t be afraid to ask again! Some of us might think that our name is boring or easy to say, but not everyone will agree.

F2 organises the break out groups for the next task, but doesn’t press start yet

1. Open the Share Content panel from the Collaborate panel and select Breakout Groups.
2. Select **Custom assignment** to create your own groups. Assign attendees to the same group they were in before.
3. You can either select the attendee's options menu and select the group or you can also select the attendee and drag them to the right group.
4. Select Create a new group to add more groups.
5. Wait until F1 has introduced the next task before you select Start.

**Option 1: Share your object (25 mins)**

**Set up (5 mins)**

Share slides Now we’ve got to know each other a little better, let's move on to our second activity.

We asked you to prepare for the session by thinking of an object or image that is important to you / that represents an aspect of your (cultural) identity that you’d like to share with others.

There’s no right or wrong way to do this activity, so don’t worry if you weren’t sure about what to choose or even if you haven’t chosen anything yet. It can be anything from a food or musical instrument to a photograph or a piece of artwork, so you can have a think about what you want to share while we introduce the activity.

In a moment, we will put you back into the same groups of 4 so that you can share your objects with one another. We’d like you to talk for 2 minutes each about your object.

If you can share a weblink to a picture of your object using the chat or show it using your webcam, that’s great – but if not, you can just describe it.

Once in your groups, you could share:

* What is your object and why have you chosen it?
* What (cultural) significance does it hold for you?

I’ll share my own object as an example. [Facilitator 1 models activity]

So now you’ll have the opportunity to share your object. Again, nominate a timekeeper to make sure that talking time is shared equally.

If you have all shared your object then move on to share some reflections on the activity – what did you think and feel during the activity? When you come back to the main group, we’ll ask you to share your reflections on the activity, so you may want to take some notes of any observations you make during the activity.

Facilitators will come in and out of the different groups so that we can listen in on the discussions

F2 presses start on break out rooms

**Option 2: Share your journey (25 mins)**

**Set up (5 mins)**

Share slides Now we’ve got to know each other a little better, let's move on to our second activity.

We asked you to prepare for the session by drawing a picture or map of your life journey that you’d like to share with others. This can include anything of significance to you, for example where you were born and grew up, friends and family, education or important life experiences.

There’s no right or wrong way to do this activity and you can choose what you want to include that you are happy to share with other people.

In a moment, we will put you back into the same groups of 4 so that you can share your journeys with one another. We’d like you to talk for 2 minutes each.

If you can share a picture of your journey using the share option or show it using your webcam, that’s great – but if not, you can just describe it using your microphone or the chat option.

I’ll share my own journey now as an example. [Facilitator 1 models activity]

So now you’ll have the opportunity to share your journey. Again, nominate a timekeeper to make sure that talking time is shared equally.

If you have all shared your journey then move on to share some reflections on the activity – what did you think and feel during the activity? When you come back to the main group, we’ll ask you to share your reflections on the activity, so you may want to take some notes of any observations you make during the activity.

Facilitators will come in and out of the different groups so that we can listen in on the discussions

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**Small groups (15 mins)**

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**Debrief (5 mins)**

Share slides Welcome back to the main room. Again, it was fantastic to hear some interesting discussions taking place. Thank you for sharing the meanings behind your objects.

To finish the session, we’d now like to take some time to reflect on the activities we’ve done today. What did you think and feel whilst taking part in these activities? You might want to think about whether there was anything you found particularly surprising, anything you learnt about others or maybe something you learnt about yourself or just something that you enjoyed?

Take some time to reflect, then when you are ready you can use the text icon in the top left hand corner to write your anonymous feedback on to the blank slide. (If time allows or the group is small, can also welcome participants to raise their hand to contribute using the microphone.)

Facilitators to contribute some ideas to the slide as well. If text is written over other text, select the arrow button to move the comments to a free space so that all can be read.

Facilitators to acknowledge and summarise comments. Participants may express that they enjoyed meeting new people or that they felt shy or nervous. They may cite that they were interested in or surprised about particular aspects of someone’s experiences. Others will cite that although there were differences in their experiences, they had things in common as well.

**Summary, what next and goodbye (5 mins)**

While the two activities we’ve done today might seem on the surface to be quite simple, it’s an example of the kind of experience that can help us develop our interpersonal / intercultural skills, which are valuable both personally and professionally.

Interpersonal option: There are many more opportunities to meet new people from different backgrounds and on different programmes across the University. Here are some of the examples of events and activities you can get involved this year.

Intercultural option: There are many other people considering intercultural skills, so if you’ve enjoyed this workshop then you might like to look at these TED talks and resources to continue to explore these topics.

We’ll make sure that these slides are shared with you so that you can follow these up.
Thank you for taking part, if you have any questions about today, you can contact us at (email)

We’d also love to hear your feedback. This is the first time we’ve run this workshop, so we’d love to know what you enjoyed and how we could improve it. We’ll post a link to the feedback form in the chat.

Post in chat: [insert online feedback form link]

Best wishes for the rest of your time on your programme, and thanks again for joining us today!

Instruct participants on how to leave the workshop and respond to any questions or comments of thanks.