

Building a Learning Community in Your Classroom

Version 4

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A positive and enjoyable learning community is central to student engagement, motivation, and success. This is especially true in online learning, where physical distances make it harder to connect. Humanizing the learning experience can help online students feel more at ease, reduce the sense of anxiety and isolation, and develop supportive study habits with their peers.

A simple way to build a community in the classroom or online is incorporating icebreakers, energizers, and closers into your lessons. These short activities are not only fun and social, but can help you learn more about your students and their understanding of course concepts.

- **Icebreakers** are short activities at the beginning of a course or class that make introductions, create the desired learning climate, gather information about students and their prior knowledge, or communicate class norms.
- **Energizers** are short activities in the middle of a lesson or class that re-focus student attention, stimulate cognitive activity, or restore momentum.
- **Closers** are short activities at the end of a class or lesson that gather feedback on the lesson, check for understanding, summarize concepts, introduce critical thinking problems, or bridge to future lessons.

Learn more about icebreakers, energizers, and closers in the [Building a Learning Community with Icebreakers, Energizers, and Closers](#) article in the Teaching and Learning Centre's Academic Newsletter.

Here are some resources for icebreaker and warm-up activities:

[20 ready-to-use icebreaker templates for every occasion](#) from Mentimeter

[Icebreakers for Online Classes](#) from the University of Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence

[Icebreakers for the College Classroom](#) – a collection of articles from Faculty Focus

[Examples of Classroom Assessment Techniques](#) from MGH Institute of Health Professions
– for each activity, they explain how it works, why you should use it and when, and offer alternate versions and how to do each activity online

[First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning](#) from the Teaching Professor
(search for this publication through Seneca Libraries to read the entire article)

[10 Warm Ups for Lesson Plans](#) from About Education

[10 Party Games to Energize Your Classroom](#) from About Education

[Networking “BINGO” activity \(.docx\)](#) – feel free to modify this activity to use in your class

[Airplane Icebreaker](#) from Edutopia

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