

Developing an Inclusive Environment

Relationship and cohort building
through icebreakers and interactive
activities

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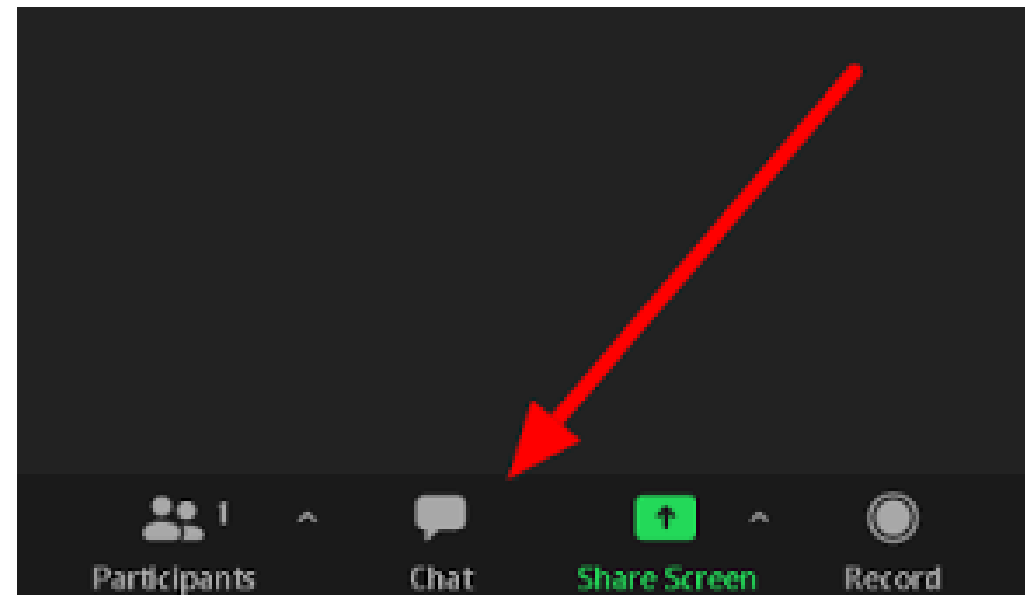
Objectives

Describe strategies for helping class/group members learn about one another at three different levels of vulnerability/risk: low, medium, and high

State basic instructions for facilitating the strategies in a class or other group context – in-person and online

Introductions

1. Speakers/attendees
2. Name
3. Subject area
4. School or unit
5. Answer question in chat



More on the VECoP at the end of
the session.

Presenters are members of the Virtual Exchange Community of Practice

Leslie



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Frank



What can we achieve through breakers and interactive activities?

1. Help students get to know each other
2. Can be used strategically throughout the semester
3. Build trust and relationships between students
4. Develop a cohort, rather than just individual students in seats or on or behind screen
5. Collectively determine class norms and expectations
6. Concepts of low, medium, and high risk



When to use low risk



1. **Low vulnerability – low risk to student – not revealing too much**
2. **First day of interactions**
3. **First day of a module/To introduce a concept**
4. **First in a progression within an activity – low, medium, and high**

When to use medium risk



1. A bit more vulnerable for some -
Revealing a bit more about self or thoughts
2. 2nd session/After a few sessions
3. In a progression during a class activity
4. Earlier on in a context where students know each other

When to use high risk

1. Much more vulnerable -
Revealing something that could be controversial or considered personal
2. After a few class sessions – once students feel more comfortable
3. Earlier on with appropriate guidance and preparation



Low Risk Activity: Pose a common question

1. Choose something easy
 - Anyone should be able to answer
 - Non-controversial
 - Can be answered quickly
2. Can be related to class topic/Does not have to be
3. Example: “What’s your favorite food?”





Why this activity?



Classic icebreaker

Relaxes students in a new environment



Question all can answer



Doesn't require a ton of time



Reveals commonalities and differences

How it helps to facilitate inclusion...



Favorite foods are influenced by our cultures



Allows sharing about characteristics represented in the class

Cultural
Geographical
Behavioral



Includes all perspectives



Connects class members



Similar questions can do the same

Facilitation- In-person and online

1

Be sure, as an instructor, to share yours so they know you are engaged.

2

Don't give any restrictions-All answers welcome (within reason, of course).

3

Ask questions or make positive comments and encourage the students to do the same

Facilitation- Online

Synchronous

- Ask students to put responses in chat immediately

Synchronous

- Use the “chatter fall” strategy – ask students to type their response in the chat, but DO NOT press send until the instructor/facilitator says “Go”

Asynchronous

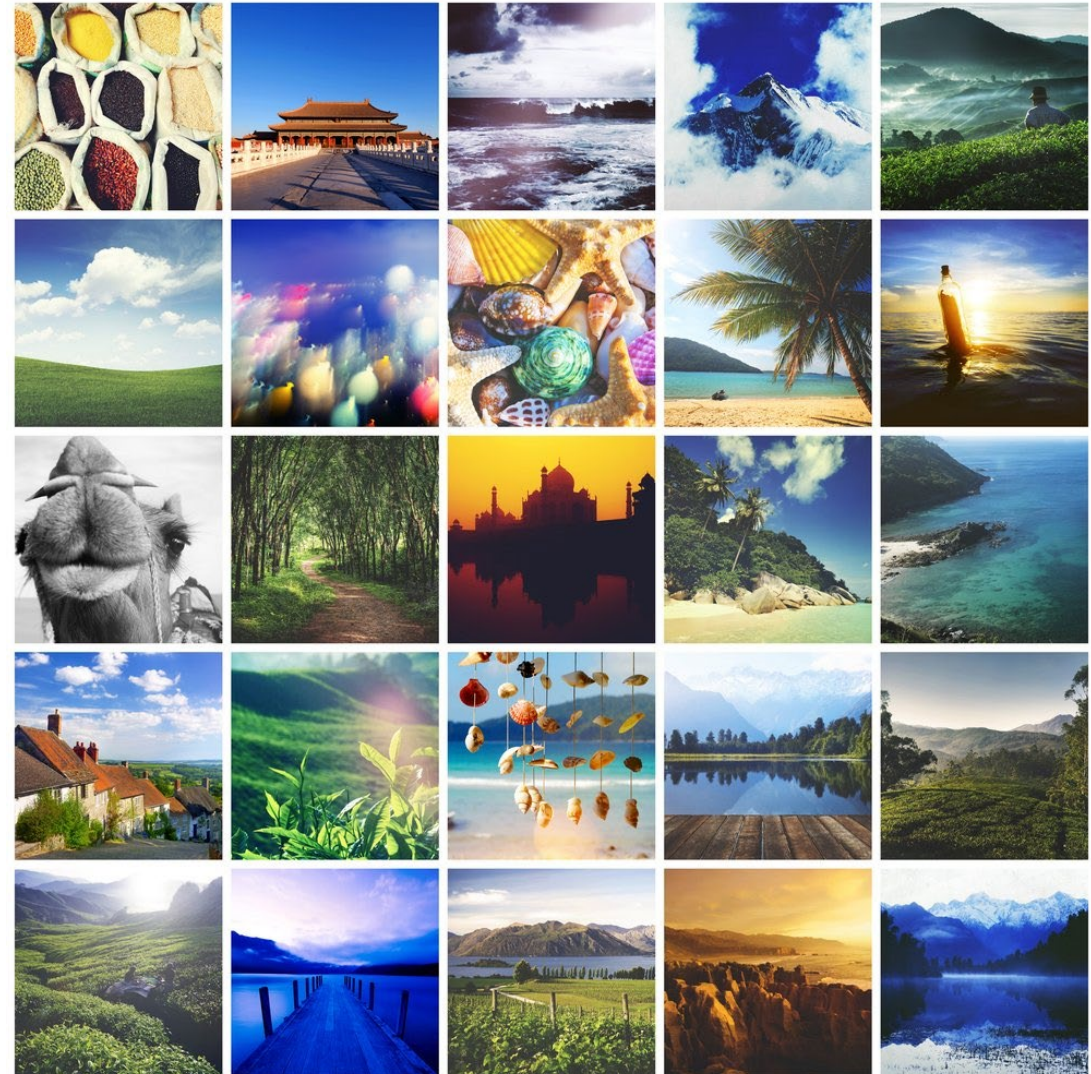
- Use a collaborative tool to collect responses like “Padlet”

Medium Risk Activity:

Using images

Example 1: Cultural Mosaic

1. Encourage students to think about their own cultural identity
2. Give them an opportunity to learn about cultural identities represented in the class
3. Create a photo collage that represents cultural characteristics of all class members



Why this activity?

Expand understanding of
cultural identity

How it helps to facilitate inclusion...

Allows each class member to

1. Communicate something about themselves and to be seen/acknowledge by the entire class.
2. Give students an opportunity to practice these components of Intercultural praxis:
 - Interest in learning, growing, and understanding others
 - Willingness to suspend judgement

Facilitation- In-person and online

Prepare students by conveying the following:

1. Everyone has different cultural group identities that influence different facets of our lives.
2. Think about the groups that you belong to that share common behaviors, beliefs, or knowledge that differ from others, e.g. Colts fans, Hoosiers, Midwestern identity, etc.
3. Select one of these cultural groups that are important to you and that you feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Facilitation- In-person

Ask students to:

1. Bring something (i.e. an image or item) to class that represents a cultural group that they are a member of and feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Alternate option: Use Mersive Soltice (image-sharing software available in some classrooms) or collaborative document in a cloud platform like Google or Microsoft.

2. Introduce self with name, a brief description of what the image represents, and how it ties to their cultural identity.

Facilitation- Online

Instruct students to:

1. Share an image in Google Jamboard that represents a cultural group that they are a member of and feel comfortable sharing with the class.
2. Post in Google Jamboard the image plus a sticky note next to the image with their name, a brief description of what the image represents, and how it ties to their cultural identity.

Facilitation- Additional Tips

1. Discuss with students strategies for responding to peers in an appropriate way
 - Words but also body language matters
2. Explain concept of cultural relativism
 - “understanding a group’s beliefs and practices within their own cultural context while suspending judgment.” (Guest 2020)
3. Keep in the “learner zone”
 - Foster respectful curiosity; pause and reflect - approach the interaction as an opportunity to learn about each other and different cultural practices
4. Avoid microaggressions

Medium Risk Activity:

Example 2: Cultural Geography

- Encourage students to think about their own cultural geography
- Give them an opportunity to learn about the cultures represented in the class
- Share a photo that represents cultural characteristics.



How it helps
facilitate
inclusion...

Class members communicate something about themselves seen/acknowledged by the entire class.

Students share something personal about themselves.

Facilitation – In-person and Online

Submit a picture of a cultural object that they are a member of and feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Students introduce themselves and share something about the cultural object in their picture.

Facilitation – Online

In Facebook or LinkedIn private group sites, submit a photo or video of a cultural object that they are a member of and feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Students introduce themselves and share something about the cultural object they shared.

High Risk Activity— Human Barometer

*Not an icebreaker

Use a scale, groupings, or a continuum to express a stance on an issue

This activity can be used to share opinions on controversial topics.

Also for low-risk for less controversial topics



Why this activity?

Helps students share their opinions and hear the opinions of others

Useful to discuss an issue about which students have a wide range of opinions.

Because a barometer activity gets many perspectives out on the table, it can be an effective pre-writing exercise before an essay assignment.

How it helps to facilitate inclusion...

Incorporate/Demonstrate multiple perspectives

Helps students identify others who think like them so they don't feel isolated

Gives students an opportunity to be heard

Break silos

Teaches students how to react and respond to differing opinions

Facilitation- In-person

Set up room

1. Paper/sign, marker, tape
2. Self/student worker/students
3. Determine if students will line up for a continuum or use 4 corners of the room

Explain instructions well

1. Purpose
2. Handouts
3. Physical movement

Facilitation- In-person

Instructions:

1. Identify a space in the classroom where students can stand in a line or a U-shape
2. Set expectations for reacting appropriately to others' opinions
3. Read statements aloud one at a time
4. Ask students to form an opinion about the statement/prompt

Facilitation- In-person

Instructions:

- 5.To indicate their opinion, tell students to form a line or a “U” or go to a specific corner of the room
- 6.One side of room is SA, the other is SD for the continuum or SA, A, D, SD for the corners of the room
- 7.Students then explain their opinion
- 8.Debrief the activity with the class

Example statements

1. Morning classes are the best for me.
2. All accounting graduates must take the CPA Exam.
3. Carrier Global should move Indianapolis operation to Mexico.

Facilitation- Online

Instructors you will...

Determine a scale that makes sense for the issue and statements

Ex:

1 “not important”-10 “very important”

Or 1= “Strongly disagree”, 5=strongly agree”, etc.

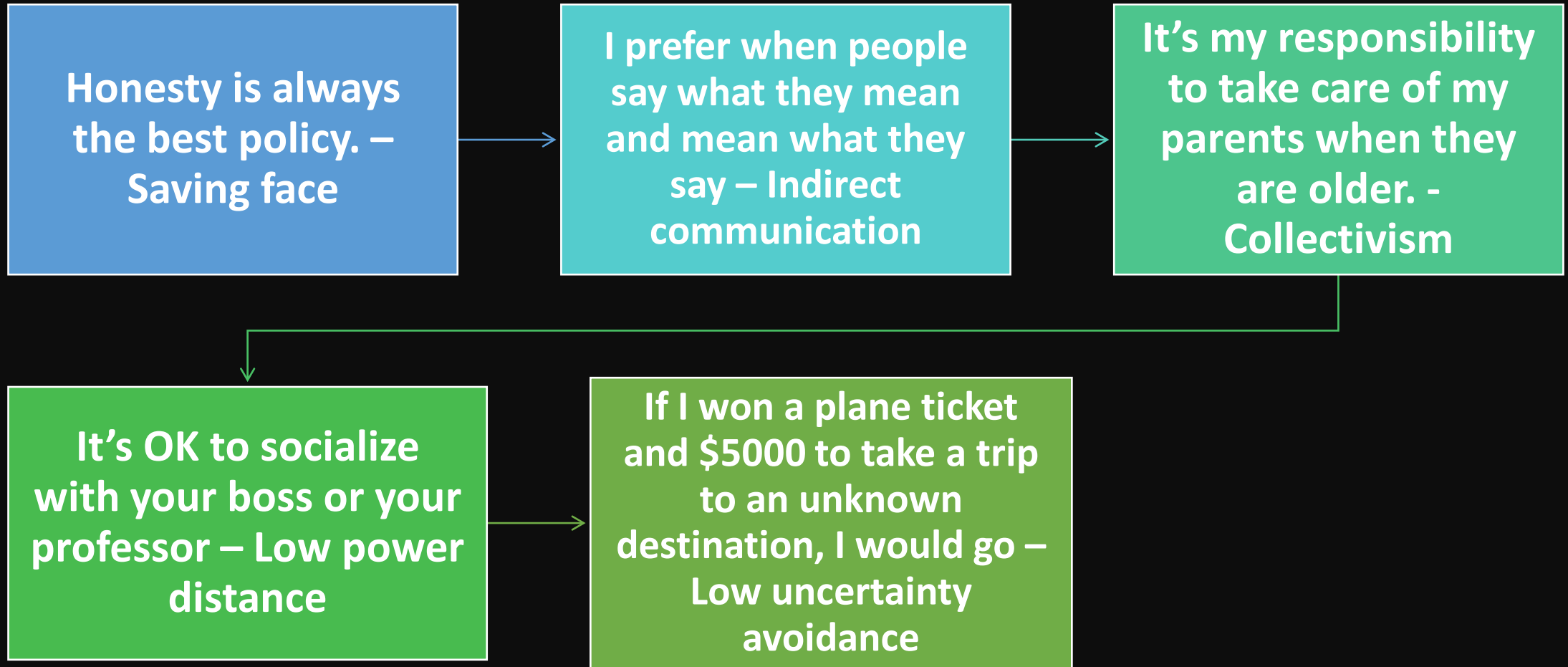
Show students how to rename themselves in Zoom window

Read a set of statements relevant to your course topic

Facilitation- Online

Tell	Indicate	Prompt	Explain	Debrief
<p>Tell students to form an opinion and align it with a # on the scale</p>	<p>Then, indicate their opinion by changing their name to first name and the #</p>	<p>Prompt them to look at classmates' Zoom windows or "click participants"</p>	<p>Students explain their opinions.</p>	<p>Debrief-reflect on responses, etc.</p>

Example statements:



Keep in mind...

- One step in facilitating inclusion
 - General idea is to facilitate meaningful interaction
 - Low-risk communication to higher risk communication
 - Activities can be adapted to context
 - Can be done in-person and online
 - There are people who can help you.
-



Some helpful links:

Padlet

<https://padlet.com/>

Google Jamboard

https://edu.google.com/intl/ALL_us/products/jamboard/

Human Barometer

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/barometer-taking-stand-controversial-issues>

Soltice

<https://kb.iu.edu/d/amsl>

VECoP:

Virtual Exchange
Community of Practice

- By and for faculty and staff
- Primarily IUPUI and IUPUC
- Sponsored by OIA and IEL
- Offering:
 1. Support
 2. Collaboration
 3. Funding

Accomplishments

First-year (AY 2020-21)

- 6 community members
- 300+ IUPUI students
- 7 countries/regions
- 2 weeks to 8 weeks

VECoP

Interested in joining, contact:

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