These are a gathering of various icebreaker/get to-know-you activities that may be useful in trying to encourage groups to work together and also useful when it is time to take a creative break.

By no means is this a complete list, it is only meant to give facilitators some basic ideas to work with.

1) Name Games

There are wide variety of names games that can be done to introduce people to one another. One of my favorite is to have everyone sit or stand in a circle and have them say their name with an adjective that begins with the letter of their name, such as "Happy Harry" and then go around the circle. You can also have people repeat it after each other, although this can get boring.

- Other variations include using a motion with your name and having people go around and say the other people's names and motion.
- It is also possible to use a ball, such as a Koosh Ball, and throw this around the circle and say the person's name that you are throwing it to.
- Another example is to have people stand shoulder to shoulder and then one person starts by calling at someone's name and takes that person's place in the circle. As soon as that person's name is called that person then leaves their spot and calls out someone else's name and takes that person's spot and this continues. It is also possible to do this with two or three people at the same time.

2) Pair Interviews

This is a fairly simple exercise that can be used in small groups to learn more about people. Each person in the group should pair up with someone that they do not already know. Then you should instruct people to sit in pairs and interview each other. You can give them questions, such as find out your pair's favorite ice-cream, or places they wish to travel or allow them to create their own. Afterwards, they can introduce each other to the group, by highlighting some of the most interesting things about their partner. If people are shy, they can introduce themselves.

3) Knots

Most people probably know this activity. A group of about six to ten stands shoulder to shoulder. Ask people to stick out their right hand and grab the right hand of someone else in the circle, aside from the person next to them. Then ask them to stick out their left hand and grab the left hand of someone else. Then the group has to untangle themselves without letting go.

4) Zip-Zap-Zub

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To start this activity ask everyone to learn the words zip-zap-zub and repeat this numerous times. The group should stand shoulder to shoulder. This activity starts of with one person saying zip and pointing to another person while clapping their hands. Then this next person should say zap and point to another person, and so on. After they catch a hold of the game it is possible to go quicker. If someone says the wrong part of the phrase then they step out of the circle.

5) Forced Choice

In this activity a list of choices should be prepared in advance, such as beach or mountains, Madonna or XTC, etc. The leader should then explain to the students that choices will be called out and the students have to choose which is their choice among the two categories and move to the side of the room that the leader points out.

6) Human Bingo

This may be difficult to do with new students, although it could be worth trying. A piece of paper should be divided like a bingo board, with each piece filled in with something about people in your group, such as travelled abroad, likes ice-cream, etc.

The students are given the paper and have to find the people who fit the categories until they have filled their paper like in Bingo.

7) Funny Face Passing

Participants should stand shoulder to shoulder and the leader asks everyone to relax and imagine the silliest or ugliest face that they can picture (leader can demonstrate). The leader should explain that one person will start by making a face and then pass that to the person next to them. The next person should assume the face given to them for a few seconds and then can transform it to a new face and pass it to the next person who repeats the steps. This should be done as quickly as possible.

This activity can also be done with motions or movements, such as chewing gum that can be passed and transformed.

8) Laughter Chair

One person sits in a chair and the group tries to make the person laugh. If they are successful, then a new person sits in the chair.

9) The Cat and Rat

The group should sit in a circle. The leader ask for two objects from the participants and names one object the cat and the rat. The leader then demonstrates by handing the cat to the person to the left and explains the following dialogue. The leader says "This is a cat". The person receiving the object has to ask the leader "A what?" The leader replies “a cat”. Then the 1st person to the left hands the cat to the 2nd person and says "This is a cat?" The second person says "A what?" The first person turns to the leader and says "A what?" The leader says "A Cat:, which the first person says to the second person. At the same time, in the other direction the leader passes the rat following the same scenario. The basic rule is that after each person receives the cat/rat they have to ask a what, which is then forwarded to

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the leader who says cat or rat which is then passed back along the circle. The challenging part of the activity is when the cat and the rat cross in the middle of the circle.

10) Animal Game

Pick an animal and the "it" must remember which person is what within the circle. Someone in the circle calls out an animal name and "It" (the person in the middle) must locate that person and tap them on the head with a newspaper before another animal is called out. Object is speed and memory testing.

11) Hand Slapping Game

In a circle, participants place hands on the floor and cross them with the person sitting next to them. Object is to slap hands in order although they do not correspond to owners' seating order. Can reverse direction by slapping hand on floor twice, but otherwise, one hand slap on the floor is a simple pass to next consecutive hand.

12) Worry - Question Bag

This can be used to try and generate questions from the participants without making them feel uncomfortable. Give each participant pen and paper and ask them to write down a question or worry that they have concerning the topic at hand, such as study skills. Then walk around the

room collecting the questions in a bag. Pick out a few random questions and use this as a basis for discussion.

13) Build a Story

Have everyone sit in a circle and instruct the group that everyone will create a story together, going in a circle. You can do this in a variety of ways, such as one or two words or sentences per person. You can make the story relate to a topic concerning new students.

14) Counting from 1-10

Everyone sits in a circle. The goal of this game is to count from 1-10 as a group. The trick is that there is no order and anyone in the group can call out the number. If two people call out a number at the same time, then the group starts over at 1.

15) Dividing Students Into Groups (Conflict and Communication p.367)

There are lots of different activities that can be used to divide students into groups. A few options are:

1) Have the students count off in numbers, all people with the same number are in the same group.

2) Have students find someone with piece of clothing that is same color.

3) By number of siblings.

4) Randomly divide the groups.

16) The Guesser (Taken from Conflict and Communication p.351)

Students sit in a circle. One person, the "Guesser", leaves the room. A leader

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from the circle is chosen. Whenever the leader makes a motion, everyone imitates him/her. So, for example, if the leader scratches his/her head, all students scratch their heads. The "Guesser" returns to the room. The leaders makes many discrete motions and everyone follows her/his motions. The "Guesser" tries to figure out who is initiating the motions. When she/he guess correctly, the "Guesser" names the person who gave away the leader. That person becomes the new "Guesser".

17) The President (Conflict and Communication, p.310)

Have the entire group sit in a circle. Designate one person in the circle as President. The President squeezes (applies hand pressure to) the hand of the person to her/his right. That person squeezes the hand of the person to his/her right, and so on, until the squeeze has gone around the circle, reaching the President's left hand. Tell the group that you are now going to time how quickly everyone can get the squeeze around the circle. When you say "Go" the President starts the squeeze around the circle. When the President feels the squeeze arrive at his/her left hand, he/she screams "Stop". Inform how long it took the group for the squeeze to go around the circle.

18) Ooh-Aah

This is very similar to the president. The groups sits on the floor with one leader who asks everyone to close their eyes and hold the hands of the people next to them. Then the leader explains the she/he will squeeze the hand of the person next to them and say ooh or ahh and the person should then pass this squeeze on with the sound.

19) Pass the Ball/Orange

The groups stands in a circle and has to pass the orange around the circle without using their hands. They can pass it from neck to neck.

20) Ideal Day

Divide up the group. Ask some of the groups to brainstorm an ideal day at college, while another group brainstorms a typical day. Ask the two groups to share their ideas and lead a discussion.

2*1*) Water Balloon Toss - Good for Hot Days

Fill up a number of balloons with water. Have the group stand in a relatively small circle and explain that the balloon will be thrown around the circle from left to right (person to person). After this is successfully completed have everyone take a large step backwards and repeat. Try to see how big the circle can become before the balloon breaks.

22) Two is Company - Three is Crowd

This is a form of tag. Everyone has a partner, with whom they hold hands and move around the space - except two people who are on their own, one being the cat and the other the rat. The cats chases the rat and the rat may latch onto one person of the set of pairs which comprise the participants. The person chosen by the rat thus becomes the rat and must flee from the cat.

23) Freeze Theater

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Two people begin to act out a spontaneous scenario. At anytime someone can yell freeze and the two remain frozen. The person who yells freeze takes the position of one person and starts a new scene from the old positions. This activity works best when the scenes are changed relatively quickly.

26) Shoe Exchange

This will only work with the appropriate groups. Have everyone take off their right shoe and throw them in the middle of the room. Then ask them to take off their left shoe and throw them in the middle of the room. Then have each person take two different shoes and put them on their feet. Next, they should walk around and try to find the people who are wearing the mates to their shoes. When the mates are found the matching feet are kept together so that all the shoes are in proper pairs (1989 RA Conference).

27) Rain

Sit in a circle. Everyone should close their eyes. The rain begins with the leader, rubbing his/her palms together and this is continued person by person to the left, until everyone is doing this. Then the leader begins to snap her/his fingers, same person, each person switches one by one. The next step is hand clapping, thigh slapping and foot stomping. Then work backwards as the storm subsides (1989 RA Conference).

28) I never....

This is a short activity to get to know people. Participants should feel in the sentence, I have never.... but always wanted to. Go around the circle and ask each participant to fill in the sentence.

29) The Big Wind Blows..

Stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. One person should stand in the middle of the circle and the activity begins with the sentence "The Big Wind Blows for everyone...." the person in the middle should say a trait that is true for him/herself as well as other people in the circle. Such as the Big Wind Blows for everyone who likes ice-cream or who is wearing a ring. Then if the statement is true for anyone in the circle, these people should step out of their place and find a new place in the circle. The person left is the next person to start...The Big Wind Blows.

30) Dragon's Tail

For this activity you need a bandanna. Have the group stand in a single file and everyone put their hands around the waist of the person in front of them. The last person in the line tucks the bandanna in their back pocket. The object of the game is that the head of the line wants to catch the tail, while the tail wants to avoid being caught.

31) The Bear of Poitiers (Games for Actors and Non-Actors)

One participant is designated the bear and the rest of the team the players. The goal of the game is for the bear to make the other players laugh. If they do, then that person also becomes a bear. The players are not allowed to move. The game ends when everyone has become a bear.

32) Streets and Alleys

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Have the group form four lines, single file, and then stand arm-length apart from each other both length and width wise. A cat and a rat are needed as well as a caller.

The object of the game is for the cat to catch the rat, while they are running through streets and alleys. The participants stretch their hands out almost touching the people next to them. When the caller calls out streets, then everyone turns horizontally and forms streets (neither the cat or rat, can run through arms) and when the caller calls out alleys, the participants, turn the opposite direction and form alleys.

33) Bridges

The group forms four single lines. Have two of the lines turn and face each other and this is one team and the other two lines do the same. The participants should hold out their hands in the air and touch the hands of the person facing them. The object of the game is for the people at the end of the line to run under the bridge and then continue to form the bridge until they have reached a designated spot.

34) Trust Circle

Ask for a volunteer to enter the center of the circle, who should cross their arms and close their eyes. The members of the circle should all stand with their hands out and relatively close to one another. The person in the middle will let themselves fall and be gently pushed around the circle by the hands of the participants.

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