



ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

ARCHITECTURE • CONSTRUCTION • ENGINEERING

ICE BREAKER ACTIVITIES

OPENING EXERCISES

Interactive games can be an enjoyable, informal way for students and mentors alike to start becoming familiar with each other. Several possible activities are briefly described below.

Structure/Designer Match-up The Nashville affiliate creates two sets of cards, one showing a famous building and the other the designer of the building. (This information can be easily downloaded from www.GreatBuildings.com.) The building cards are given to mentors, and the designer cards to students. Choose well known structures and designers (e.g., Thomas Jefferson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller, Gustave Eiffel, Frank Gehry, I. M. Pei).

Once mentors and students find their match, students can tell mentors something about the building or their reaction to it. Mentors in turn should tell students something about the designer and their impressions of the designer's work. In addition to trading information about the structure and the designer, students and mentors should learn each other's names and one interesting fact about each other. Finally, students and mentors will introduce each other to group as well as their structure and its designer.

Who Is It? The Portland, Oregon affiliate recommends an activity that takes about 45 minutes. Mentors and students are each given an index card on which they should clearly write: their name; some pertinent identifying information about themselves (e.g., for students, name of their school; for mentors, their profession); plus five fascinating facts about themselves (e.g., I love to play baseball, I own a pink cell phone, my parents were married in Hong Kong). Next everyone pairs up with someone they do not know. Each pair exchanges cards and over the next 3-4 minutes, they ask each other about the information on the cards.

A moderator of the game announces that people should move on and pair up with someone else. Each person in the pair introduces the person he/she just met in the first encounter. Upon a signal from the moderator, the two people in the pair exchange cards and then move on to meet another person and repeat what they did in the second meeting round.

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After three or four rounds of meetings, depending on the size of the group, the moderator collects all the cards and launches a quiz-show-style game of "Who Is It?". Without revealing the name of the person on the card, the moderator reads out the interesting facts about the person on the card, one by one, until the entire group can guess who it is.

Mapping the Territory This game is a modification of an activity developed by the Greater New York affiliate. Divide the group of students into pairs who do not know each other or do not know each other well. Each student should draw a simple map relative to their home showing the location of their school and their favorite place in the neighborhood or city. After five minutes, each student in the pair should explain the map and favorite place to his/her partner. Based on this information, the partner then will introduce the other member of the pair to the entire group.

What Is It? (Tools and Building Materials) A mentor prepares index cards with pictures of unusual building materials, unusual design and construction tools of the trade, or bizarre construction equipment. Find examples that are not readily known even by mentors. These cards are put into a hat, and both students and mentors draw one out. They have two minutes to think of the function or purpose of the object and how it is used. Fanciful answers are encouraged, but the point of the game is to be as convincing as possible. Before announcing his/her answer to the entire group, each student or mentor should give their name, school or work affiliation, and reason they have become involved in ACE. The mentor who prepared the index cards can give the correct answer.

What Is It? (Famous Buildings in a Community) A variation of the "What Is It?" game described above is to use pictures of famous buildings or well-known places (e.g., park) around the city where students live. After students draw cards out of a hat, in pairs they explain to each other what they know about the place or structure, whether they have been there or not, and what they like and/or dislike about the design. Students should introduce their partner and the structure or place to the entire group. The entire group could be asked to comment on the structure or place. To facilitate group discussion, Power-Point projection of the image would help.