

# S E C T I O N 1

## Getting Started



*“We do not stop playing because we grow old! We grow old because we stop playing.”*

—Anonymous

### Overview

The activities and games that you will find in this section are designed to help you start your learning events on a high note, get things moving related to your program or class content, or have people introduce themselves in fun and interesting ways.

## Games and Activities in This Section

Title	Time Required	Page
1. Changing Paradigms	25 minutes	25
2. Silent Engagement	20 minutes	28
3. Sweet Anagrams	30 to 35 minutes	32
4. Fantasyland	45 minutes	36
5. I Can Identify with That	45 minutes	39
6. High Card	10 to 15 minutes	42
7. What Were You Doing?	30 minutes	44
8. Meeting Nose to Nose	45 minutes	46
9. Scavenger Hunt	25 minutes	49
10. Making the Rules	10 minutes	52
11. Characteristic Card Swap	45 minutes	55
12. Who Am I?	25 minutes	61

Before you can share information or teach anything to your learners, you must first capture their attention. In the *implementation* phase of the traditional instructional design model known as ADDIE (assessment, design, development, implementation, and evaluation), this element is often referred to as the “gain attention” portion of the program under the “introduction” section of a training program, class, or presentation. Typically, you will want to do something during this phase that grabs and briefly holds the attention of learners so that you can share learning objectives and the purpose of your program. Often, this can be a short personal story related to the topic, a startling statement or fact, a topic-related joke, or some other creative way of tuning learners in to the topic. It can also be done in some fun, innovative manner using activities that engage and energize a group while allowing them to get to know one another. This chapter will share ideas for creatively opening any session. There are also tips for modifying each activity to allow them to serve as energizers or for other functions. You can reduce the suggested time required for many of the activities when you have smaller numbers of learners.

# 1. Changing Paradigms

<b>Time Required</b>	Approximately 25 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	This activity can be used to introduce virtually any topic by getting learners to see that preconceived ideas sometimes get in the way of successful completion of a project, attainment of a goal, or acquisition of new knowledge or skills.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through the use of magic and novelty, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce concepts related to a session topic;</li> <li>• Engage learner brains by challenging them to think about how the trick works; and</li> <li>• Deliver ideas in a creative manner.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Up to thirty, depending on room and seating configuration (all learners must have a clear view of the facilitator) and option chosen.
<b>Process</b>	<p>Have one inflated balloon and two deflated backups, the needle, and magic wand ready.</p> <p>By using a little “magic,” you can sometimes show learners that perhaps there are things that you have to say that are worth listening to as you tie into session topic concepts.</p> <p>Pick up the inflated balloon and magic wand. Wave the wand above the balloon as you say something like, “First let me turn this ordinary balloon into a magic balloon with the wave of a wand.”</p> <p>Following this, put the wand down and pick up the needle, and put the tip near the inflated balloon as you ask, “How many of you know what happens when you put a sharp object, like this needle, into contact with an inflated balloon?” Many people will put their hands to their ears and will say “pop.” Agree that they are probably right and then pop the balloon.</p> <p>Say, “I guess your beliefs are correct.”</p> <p>Explain that there are many learners who have preconceived ideas similar to their belief about balloons that can hinder their ability to accept or obtain information.</p>

Ask, “What if I can prove to you that your beliefs about the needle and balloon are incorrect? Would you be interested in hearing about other things I might be able to share with you?”

Without letting learners see you, dip the tip of the needle in the petroleum jelly (or insert it into the magic wand that contains petroleum jelly if using such a wand).

Blow up and tie the end of a second balloon and, as you deliver the following dialog, start working the needle through the balloon from the base (tied end). To do this, place the sharp tip against the rubber near the tied-off portion (where is it thickest and least stretched) and slowly start rolling or rotating the needle back and forth between your forefinger and thumb while applying a small amount of pressure to force it through the balloon. Once it is through one side of the balloon, push it through and continue rolling the needle until the point punctures and exits the top portion of the balloon.

Take it easy to prevent the balloon from popping. If it does, laugh and say, “I guess you were right about what happens when sharp objects contact inflated balloons,” then blow up another balloon and continue without stopping.

Continue your dialog as you force the needle through the balloon by saying something like, “Many times preconceived ideas come from previous training or life experiences that cause learners to think that they have the answer or know what you are talking about before you say it. These preconceived ideas are known as ‘paradigms.’”

Tie in a session concept that is related to a standard paradigm (for example, in a class on change management you might talk about how people sometimes believe that “We’ve always done it like that” is the way something has to be).

Explain that to dispel such ideas you sometimes will have to be willing to open your mind to other possibilities and not go through life limiting the way you think about or do things.

Hold the punctured balloon up with the needle still through it from both sides and say, “Just like this balloon activity demonstrates, things are not always black or white; often there is a lot of gray area if you just look for it.”

To show that it is not a trick balloon, pull the needle out and pop the balloon.

Form equal-sized groups.

Have learners spend 10 minutes discussing what session-topic-related concepts they could teach in the workplace with such a needle-through-the-balloon technique.

**Process Follow-Up** Take a minute to explain how the trick works so learners will not be distracted trying to figure it out and can then focus on what you are saying next. Tell learners that this is an excellent way to show others who train, educate, present, or speak or are sharing information with others, when their goal is to get people to think outside the box, to be creative and use various techniques to present ideas and teach skills (magic, games, activities, or props).

*Ask:* “What thoughts do you have as a result of this activity?”

“What concepts that might be taught with this technique did your group come up with?”

**Option** If time permits, form small groups, give learners needles and balloons and allow them to practice the technique, then think of one topic they could use it to teach if they were the facilitator.

**Props/Tools Needed**

- 18-inch needle through the balloon, or a sharpened metal knitting needle (enough for all groups, if the optional format is used);
- (Optional) Magic wand (special magic wands that have a hollow center and contain petroleum jelly);
- Petroleum jelly (if not using a wand that contains it); and
- Different colored balloons.

**Possible Topic Application** Unlimited

**Why It Is Brain-Based** Engages on a visual, kinesthetic (optional activity), and auditory level;  
 Uses magic (novelty) to grab and hold attention;  
 Adds fun;  
 Uses color (balloons), which can stimulate the brain; and  
 Stimulates the brain (as learners try to figure how you did it).

## 2. Silent Engagement

<b>Time Required</b>	Approximately 20 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a creative approach for grabbing the attention of a team or group and to involve them early in a session.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through a humorous introductory approach, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help group members get to know others in the room;</li> <li>• Encourage participation; and</li> <li>• Generate a level of curiosity that can later be satisfied during the activity debriefing.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Up to thirty
<b>Process</b>	<p>Prior to the session starting, create slides, transparencies, or flip-chart pages with the following questions on them. The appropriate media format will be determined by the size of the group. Color and humorous graphic images or borders should be used to enhance the text and to add a bit more levity while attracting attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your name?</li> <li>• Why are you here?</li> <li>• What one thing do you most want to learn today?</li> <li>• What are you thinking at this point?</li> </ul>

When the time to start the session comes, either have someone else introduce you while you enter from behind learners, or enter from behind them using some form of noise or attention-getter (train whistle, coach's whistle, bike horn, hand clappers, or whatever to draw attention to yourself). You should also be wearing some outlandish prop (for example, a Groucho Marx nose and glasses, rubber animal nose, Cheese Head top hat and bow tie, or trick nail through the head).

Do not say a word as you proceed to the front of the room, smile, wave, and turn on the projector or turn to the flip chart to display the first prepared question.

Turn, smile, and gesture to someone in the front row and then motion to the question on the slide, transparency, or flip chart to indicate the question they should answer (e.g., What is your name?).

Randomly select four or five other learners, one at a time, and have them introduce themselves in the same fashion, all the while smiling and remaining silent.

Present the second, then third question until 3 to 5 minutes have passed, at which time you should project the final question (What are you thinking right now?) and with open arms gesture to the entire group to indicate that anyone should respond.

Typically at this point, someone will say something like, “This is different” or “This is strange.” They might also ask, “Are you ever going to speak?”

Remove your prop(s) and respond, “I was wondering if you wanted me to talk.” (If the question is not asked, remove the glasses, introduce yourself, explain that, while you do not take yourself seriously, you do take the topic so [stress the importance of the topic over yourself] and debrief the activity).

If the question is asked, introduce yourself and then review the activity as indicated under Process Follow-Up.

Following the process follow-up, have all learners turn to those around them and introduce themselves if they do not already know one another.

### Process Follow-Up

Spend 10 minutes reviewing the outcomes of the activity.

*Ask:* “What was I just able to accomplish through this activity without ever saying a word?”

“How can you likewise use silence, gestures, and other nonverbal communication to effectively interact with . . .” (customers, co-workers, peers, friends/relatives, etc.)?

If the following points do not come out, point out:

- You introduced fun, humor, and a lighthearted approach to the learning environment;
- You created an atmosphere of expectation and piqued their interest;
- Without saying a word, you gained their attention;

- You intrigued and interested them;
- You got active involvement;
- You gained information about your learners that could be useful later in the program;
- You discovered which learners potentially might become actively involved and which ones might be reluctant (through the use of the open-ended questions in which you invited the entire group to give input); and
- You tied into key program concepts.

*Ask:* “How might some of these outcomes be applied on the job or in other environments?” (for example, to gain answers to work or session-related topics in training or in a meeting)

You may want to give small toys or candy as rewards for those who answer questions or otherwise participate during the activity.

#### Option(s)

1. Instead of using the activity as an opener, use it as a review following lunch or a break in which the questions are based on session content to that point.
2. The activity might be used in a team meeting or training session on virtually any topic by changing the questions in order to add a bit of novelty and get people thinking before actually beginning a presentation or meeting.

#### Props/Tools Needed

- Flip chart, slides, or transparencies;
- Assortment of colored markers (not needed if using slides);
- Projector and screen (not needed if using a flip chart);
- Groucho Marx nose and glasses, animal nose, or other similar prop;
- Noisemaker (whistle, bell, or clapper); and
- Small prizes or candy.

#### Possible Topic Application

Any session in which interpersonal communication plays a part.



- Why It Is Brain-Based**
- Engages visual and auditory learners;
  - Involves use of novelty to gain and hold attention;
  - Introduces humor and fun;
  - Gives learners an opportunity to become actively involved;
  - Causes learners to think outside the box by getting them to think of ways in which they might apply the activity to other environments; and
  - Involves learners.

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### 3. Sweet Anagrams

<b>Time Required</b>	Approximately 30 to 35 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a fun approach for getting a team or group into the mindset for problem solving.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through a lighthearted activity, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help learners get to know one another and stimulate communication;</li> <li>• Encourage active participation;</li> <li>• Generate a high level of energy; and</li> <li>• Prompt learners to start thinking about problem solving.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Up to thirty
<b>Process</b>	<p>Create a slide, transparency, or flip chart (depending on Group Size and resources) that has the anagrams shown at the end of this activity on it.</p> <p>Form learners into equal-sized groups (see Creatively Forming Groups in the Introduction).</p> <p>Have a leader designated for each group (see Creatively Selecting Volunteers in the Introduction). Explain that their role is to monitor time and assist the group throughout the process.</p> <p>Explain that people sometimes need a “nudge” to get started with creative problem solving.</p> <p>Display the list of anagrams.</p> <p>Tell learners that each of the anagrams is the scrambled name of something they probably see regularly.</p> <p>Explain that they will have 15 minutes to try to solve all the anagrams.</p> <p>Say that when any group leader thinks his or her group has all the correct answers, the leader shouts out, “We have it!”</p> <p>Verify responses and, if correct, proclaim that group as the winner. If they have incorrect responses, tell everyone to continue until time is up.</p>

After 15 minutes, use some form of noisemaker (bell, whistle, horn, music, or other loud device) to signal time is up.

Show a slide, transparency, or flip-chart page with the correct responses, if desired.

Reward the winning team members with all the correct answers with incentives (for example, First Place ribbons, candy, small toys, or whatever). If no team found all the responses in time, reward the team with the most correct answers.

Reward all group leaders for “volunteering” and stress that with active involvement comes reward throughout the session (assuming you plan to use incentives during your session).

### Process Follow-Up

*Ask:* “What process did your team use to come up with the correct responses?”

“What did and did not work?”

“What role did communication play in the process of solving the anagrams?”

“What role did the leaders play in the process? How does this relate to your experience in the workplace?”

“How can your approach(es) used in this activity be applied in the workplace?”

Explain that by harnessing the brain power of many people in a group, better ideas and solutions can often be gained, thereby potentially saving time, effort, and money and reducing errors.

### Option(s)

1. Use as an individual activity to energize learners following a break or lunch or a period of tedious work or study to give them a mental break and lighten the atmosphere;
2. Use as an interim or final review activity by creating anagrams from key words or concepts used in a session; and
3. Customize the activity by selecting your own terms (from your session, industry, company, product/service line, etc.) and create your own anagrams (see Resources for a free online anagram site that scrambles words for you).

- Props/Tools Needed**
- Anagram slide and solution slide or transparencies (if used);
  - Laptop PC with PowerPoint® (if used);
  - LCD or overhead projector and screen (if used);
  - Flip chart with pad (if using one or not using slides or transparencies); and
  - Rewards for teams and leaders.
- Possible Topic Application** Any session in which problem solving, interpersonal communication, and team building are important.
- Why It Is Brain-Based** Engages learners' visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles;
- Adds fun to the session;
- Actively involves learners;
- Adds an element of eustress (good stress) through competition;
- Stimulates interaction and communication (if doing as a team activity); and
- Provides a vehicle for introducing, reinforcing, or reviewing content, which aids memory and learning.

## Candy Types and Anagrams Solutions

Milky Way	yawilk my
Snickers	cress kin
Hershey Kisses	sees hers hi skys
Butterfinger	be return gift
Nestle Crunch	clenches turn
Almond Joy	joan old my
Junior Mints	i jim son runt
Milk Duds	mild dusk
Raisinets	a sinister
Sno Caps	cap sons
Sugar Babies	sara be big us
Whoppers	perp show

## 4. Fantasyland

<b>Time Required</b>	45 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To encourage learners to think of ways that they might immediately apply session content to their workplace.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To provide a vehicle through which learners can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key issues facing them in the workplace; and</li> <li>• Develop a list of possible things that they need to address in their workplace or life.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Thirty
<b>Process</b>	<p>Form equal-sized groups of five or six learners (see Creatively Forming Groups in the Introduction).</p> <p>Randomly select a leader (speaker, facilitator, and timekeeper) and scribe (note-taker) for each group (see Creatively Selecting Volunteers in the Introduction).</p> <p>Have everyone close their eyes and relax.</p> <p>Turn on easy-listening instrumental music (see Suggested Music/Visualization/Relaxation in the Resource section).</p> <p>Tell learners that they have magically been transported to Fantasyland, where anything in the workplace is possible. For example, they can change anything they dislike in their workplace (boss, customers, peers, job tasks, or the environment), they can add things to enhance their current environment, and they can modify their job tasks or customers.</p> <p>Encourage them to think of <i>positive</i> workplace or other situations they have experienced and the qualities that made them so.</p> <p>After 3 minutes, have everyone open their eyes and jot down elements of their ideal positive workplace environments (for example, a boss who listens and really cares about employees) on a piece of paper, number them in order of what they believe to be importance, then share their top items with team members.</p>

As learners share their key elements, the group scribe should capture a list of the top items shared by each person. Then the group should identify any that were similar. If none were alike, have group members select the one item that is most common among all of their environments.

Have each group spend 10 minutes discussing how their organization already makes or would make the key element identified by their group a reality. You may want to have a scribe capture the ideas on a flip-chart page for later use.

Next, randomly ask group leaders to spend no more than 3 minutes sharing the key element of an ideal workplace that their group identified and how it might become a reality in organizations with the rest of the groups.

After all groups have reported, suggest that, based on what they just heard, they now have a checklist of what makes an ideal workplace in the minds of many people and that they might want to strive to change their own workplace to mirror this fantasy environment.

Reward group leaders and scribes.

Have everyone give a round of applause for their great ideas.

Later in the program, you may want to revisit the lists from this activity and have groups create action plans for making changes. This will give them a tangible result that they can take back to their workplaces and adds value to the training.

### Process Follow-Up

Ask: “What ideas did you think of or hear that might realistically be applied in your own workplace?”

“Who can you enlist to help you make some of these changes a reality?”

“What would need to be done to make some of the changes you’ve thought or heard about?”

### Option(s)

1. To shorten this activity by approximately 20 minutes, you can make this purely an individual activity, which eliminates the needs for group discussion and voting;
2. You can modify the topic that learners address in this activity to focus on any issue you desire that relates specifically to your program topic; or

3. The activity can be used as a discussion starter when change is proposed or occurring in organizations.

**Props/Tools Needed**

- Paper;
- Pencils;
- CD player; and
- Easy-listening music (see Suggested Music in the Resource section).

**Possible Topic Application**

Any session in which change is an element of desired outcomes.

**Why It Is Brain-Based**

Involves use of music and mental visioning;

Engages learners on a visual and auditory level;

Ties into several of the eight of Gardner's multiple intelligences (interpersonal, intrapersonal, and linguistic);

Brings learners together to exchange and discuss ideas; and

Uses rewards/incentives to potentially help motivate and involve learners.



## 5. I Can Identify with That

<b>Time Required</b>	45 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a humorous means of having people introduce themselves and to identify characteristics, strengths, knowledge, or skills possessed.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through use of common items, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a means of introduction and information sharing by learners or group attendees;</li> <li>• Create a non-threatening environment conducive to communication; and</li> <li>• Potentially identify people who are better communicators, quicker thinkers, or more open to sharing if these traits will be useful later in the program.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Twenty-five
<b>Process</b>	<p>Use this activity at the beginning of a session.</p> <p>Put a variety of items of similar types (common household utensils, toys, articles of clothing, assortment of fruits or vegetables) in the center of each table and tell participants to select one that they prefer.</p> <p>Give them 2 minutes to “get to know their item.”</p> <p>At the end of 2 minutes, have learners in turn introduce themselves and then describe one feature or aspect of the selected item that is “just like them” and represents a characteristic, strength, knowledge, or skill they have that will help them be successful at whatever knowledge or skill set the program they are attending addresses. For example, in a program on customer service, someone might say he is personable and gets along well with others.</p>
<b>Note</b>	<p>Start this off by selecting an item and introducing yourself in the manner described to provide an example of what is expected.</p> <p>After all learners have done a self-introduction, have them give a round of applause in unison to celebrate their willingness to share and their new knowledge of what they can appreciate in one another.</p>

- Process Follow-Up** *Ask:* “How might this activity process be used in other environments (for example, team meetings)?”
- Option** At the beginning of a session, form groups of three to four participants (see Creatively Forming Groups in the Introduction); randomly select a group spokesperson (see Creatively Selecting “Volunteers” in the Introduction);
- Have each group select one item from the pile on the table;
- Tell them they have 5 to 10 minutes to get to know their items intimately—size, shape, weight, features, texture, or whatever else applies—and to identify one aspect of the item that relates to all group members. For example, if you were conducting a session on change management using toys and someone picked up an eight-inch foam die, all members of the group might identify that a die is usually associated with the game of chance. They might all then agree that, from a change perspective, they are all willing to take a chance that the new process, policy, procedure, or whatever being implemented in their organization will work;
- At the end of 10 minutes, have participants introduce themselves to the others in the room by sharing who they are and what they do for a living, or as an alternative, who they are and something that others do not generally know about them;
- Have the group spokespersons introduce themselves last;
- The spokesperson is to then describe the one common feature or aspect of the group’s selected item that is “just like them” and represents a characteristic, strength, knowledge, or skill all group members share and that will help them be successful at whatever knowledge or skill set the program they are attending addresses;
- After all spokespersons have done this, have everyone give a round of applause for their insights, creativity, and willingness to “share intimate details” about themselves (do this in a humorous fashion);
- Reward spokespersons with a small prize related to the program topic or give candy.
- Props/Tools Needed**
- Assortment of items so that each person will have something and a few items will be left over (to allow choice); and
  - Small prizes or candy.

**Possible Topic Applications** Any session in which group interaction, interpersonal communication, and team building are desired outcomes.

**Why It Is Brain-Based**

- Engages visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners;
- Gets learners actively involved and communicating;
- Creates an open environment for sharing;
- Involves movement;
- Adds novelty and humor;
- Stimulates both the left and right brain through language and creativity; and
- Involves use of recognition, incentives, or rewards.

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## 6. High Card

<b>Time Required</b>	10 to 15 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a fun way to allow for individual introductions in classes, training sessions, or meetings where people either do not know one another or do not know one another well.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through a short icebreaker activity, the facilitator will provide a means for learners or group members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know one another;</li> <li>• Learn facts about their peers that they possibly did not know; and</li> <li>• Create an atmosphere of openness that can later assist during meaningful program topic discussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Unlimited
<b>Process</b>	<p>Prior to your learners' arrival, gather enough card decks so that each person will receive one card. Select only the cards numbered 1 through 3 from each of the four suits per deck. Using higher-numbered cards will bog the process down as people try to think of things to say.</p> <p>As each person arrives, greet him or her and have the person pick a card randomly from a deck without looking at it.</p> <p>As an alternative, you can randomly place one card on each learner's seat (face down) so that they can retrieve them as they arrive.</p> <p>Tell learners that they should stand up, in turn, do a brief introduction by sharing names, what they do, and a number of non-work-related things about themselves that others would not know. The number of items they should disclose is based on the numbers on their cards (have them display the card to the group as they begin).</p> <p>Ask for a volunteer to begin the introductions.</p> <p>Reward this person with candy or small prize and tell the group that "with effort and initiative comes reward" throughout this session.</p> <p>Tell the group that the volunteer will start the process by introducing him- or herself and then the introductions will proceed left or right (as you designate).</p>

Explain that information they provide can be related to hobbies, family, favorite memories, education, vacations, favorite books, or whatever they choose.

**Process Follow-Up**

At the end of the activity ask:

- “What did you hear about your fellow attendees that you are surprised or impressed by?”
- “How many of you heard something identified that you share and that might form the basis for a discussion with someone later (shared hobby or interest)?”

**Option(s)**

1. Instead of cards, you can create colorful strips of paper with the numbers on them;
2. Instead of individual introductions, create equal-sized small groups and allow small group introductions. If time permits and the concept of sharing and getting to know one another better is important, you might have everyone rotate to different tables to form new groups and repeat the activity. This will take a bit of planning and designating each attendee by a number, color, or some other means before or at the beginning of the session to ensure that when rotation occurs people do not end up sitting with people they already met in the first round;
3. Use the activity as an energizer sometime during the day, without introductions, rather than at the beginning of a session or meeting. This will provide a means of having people get to know one another better.

**Props/Tools Needed**

- Playing card decks or colored paper strips with numbers; and
- Prizes or candy.

**Possible Topic Application**

Any topic or meeting where introductions are needed or where you want people to share information about themselves in order to improve communication.

**Why It Is Brain-Based**

Fun;

Novel;

Stimulates learners from a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic perspective; and

Helps create a non-threatening environment.

## 7. What Were You Doing?

<b>Time Required</b>	30 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide learners with an opportunity to get to know one another and to share a bit of information about themselves with others.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	<p>Through a non-threatening, fun activity, the facilitator will provide a means for learners or group members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start the session off in a positive manner;</li> <li>• Get to know one another;</li> <li>• Learn facts about their peers that they possibly did not know; and</li> <li>• Create an atmosphere of openness that can later lead to meaningful program topic discussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Twenty-five
<b>Process</b>	<p>Prior to the start of a session, collect twenty-six coins with a variety of dates that are no older than ten years prior to the start date of your session.</p> <p>At the beginning of the activity, pass out one coin to each learner.</p> <p>Explain that each person is to introduce him- or herself and tell what his or her function is in the workplace (or elsewhere if the session is not being held in a workplace).</p> <p>Tell learners that they are also to tell something about their lives in the year that their coins were minted (attending college, working at . . . , having a baby, etc.).</p> <p>Start the activity by introducing yourself and telling something that was happening in your life, based on a coin you chose.</p>
<b>Process Follow-Up</b>	<p><i>Ask:</i> “What did you learn about another learner that you thought was interesting, that you did not know before, or that was surprising to you?”</p> <p>Encourage learners to network during break/lunch with someone who told something that is of interest or that is a shared interest.</p>

Explain that, by knowing more about one another, the workplace can be more effective because personal strengths and areas of preference can be drawn upon and relationships can grow.

- Option(s)**
1. Use as an energizer activity to increase communication during a session;
  2. Have learners select a life event that prepared them for the session topic (for example, if they are attending a class on problem solving, they might choose a prior life experience that will aid them in problem solving); or
  3. Use in a train-the-trainer session in which learners can share something about themselves that will enable them to become a better trainer (for example, someone might reveal that she took a course on effective listening in college and that will aid her as a trainer or educator).

**Props/Tools Needed**

Twenty-six coins dated within the past ten years.

**Possible Topic Application**

Any session in which desired outcomes include networking, enhanced interpersonal communication, or teamwork.

**Why It Is Brain-Based**

Adds fun to a session;  
 Incorporates novelty;  
 Causes people to reflect on previous life experiences (accessing memory); and  
 Non-threatening.

## 8. Meeting Nose to Nose

<b>Time Required</b>	45 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a means to allow learners to get to know one another and to share their goals for the session.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	In a humorous and novel manner, the facilitator will help learners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become acquainted with one another;</li> <li>• Share information about themselves with others; and</li> <li>• Discuss the learning goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Up to forty-eight
<b>Process</b>	<p>Purchase enough rubber animal noses so that each learner will have one and that there are an equal number of each type, based on group size.</p> <p>Prepare small paper bags by writing “Do not open until told” with a colored marker, placing one nose in each bag, then stapling the bags closed.</p> <p>Either place bags in a pile in the center of learner tables or give each person a bag as he or she enters the room.</p> <p>When you are ready to start the activity, tell everyone to open their paper bags, reach in, take out what they find, and then put the item on for the duration of the activity.</p> <p>Explain that learners are to stand up and find others who are wearing the same type of nose or those who “look like” them and form small groups with these people.</p> <p>Select a group leader (spokesperson, facilitator, and timekeeper) and scribe (note-taker) for each group (see <i>Creatively Selecting Volunteers</i> in the Introduction).</p> <p>Give each group a sheet of flip-chart paper and a variety of colored markers.</p> <p>Tell learners that they have 20 minutes to introduce themselves to their peers and then brainstorm a list of things they want to gain from the session.</p> <p>When time has elapsed, sound a noisemaker (whistle, bell, or gong) to regain attention.</p>



<b>Process Follow-Up</b>	<p>Have scribes post their groups' lists on the wall for viewing by everyone.</p> <p>In turn, have group leaders present their groups' lists to the rest of the groups.</p> <p>If appropriate, add any of the items identified to the program objectives list.</p> <p>Once all group lists have been presented, have everyone give a round of applause for their great ideas and effort.</p> <p>Reward group leaders and scribes with candy or small prizes (toys related to the program topic).</p>
<b>Option(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instead of passing out individual bags, get bags large enough to hold up to eight noses (depending on group size) Place noses in bags, staple them shut and place them in the center of round learner tables. When you are ready to start the activity, have someone at each table open the bag on that table, reach in, and select an item without looking and then put it on to wear for the duration the activity. Have other learners at each table do likewise until everyone is wearing an animal nose. Continue with the rest of activity as in the Process section.</li> <li>2. Use the format described in the original activity above but discuss key session concepts after forming groups.</li> </ol>
<b>Props/Tools Needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assorted rubber animal noses;</li> <li>• Paper bags;</li> <li>• Assorted colored markers;</li> <li>• Flip-chart paper;</li> <li>• Masking tape; and</li> <li>• Candy or small prizes.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible Topic Application</b>	<p>Any session with a desired outcome of networking, interpersonal communication, or team building.</p>
<b>Why It Is Brain-Based</b>	<p>Involves use of humor, fun, and novelty;</p> <p>Engages learners in group activity;</p> <p>Causes physical movement;</p>

Involves visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning;  
Causes learners to reflect and generate ideas;  
Uses color (markers and noses); and  
Potentially stimulates learning.

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## 9. Scavenger Hunt

<b>Time Required</b>	25 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To create an opportunity for learners to become actively involved at the beginning of a learning event.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	By hiding program content around the room, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start learners thinking about session concepts before the presentation of content actually begins;</li><li>• Generate friendly competition between learners; and</li><li>• Provide a novel way for learners to introduce themselves.</li></ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Twenty-five
<b>Process</b>	<p>Prior to learners arriving for a session, create a series of session-topic-related tips written on 2-by-3-inch colored strips and post these tips in various places around the room (under chairs, under saucers of a coffee cup, taped to the side or back of a flip-chart easel, at the bottom of a poster or chart posted on the wall). You may want to make a list of where you hide these to ensure all are found. When creating the strips, make a few duplicates to throw learners off and require them to search a bit longer.</p> <p>As part of your opening introduction, tell learners that “Before you introduce yourself and we start, we’re going to go on a little scavenger hunt for some tips about the content of today’s session.”</p> <p>When ready, tell learners that they have 5 minutes to locate a list of [<i>number</i>] tips on 2-by-3-inch colored paper strips that you have posted in various places around the room.</p> <p>Tell them to write down the tips they find on a sheet of paper and leave the strip where it is for others to find.</p> <p>Explain that the first person getting all [<i>number</i>] of different tips should call out “Finished” and, if he or she has them all, he or she will receive a prize.</p> <p>Tell them that there are some duplicates hidden.</p> <p>Make sure that each learner has a pencil/pen and sheet of blank paper.</p>

Shout “Go,” turn on some upbeat music (Mexican hat dance or other selection from the Suggested Music listing in the Resource section) and watch the fun as learners scurry to find the tips.

At the end of 5 minutes or when someone has all the tips, sound a noise-maker and ask learners to have a seat.

Reward the winner with a small prize or toy related to the session topic.

Starting with the winner and proceeding to the person’s right or left, have each person introduce him- or herself and share one tip he or she found. Do this until all tips have been exhausted, at which point learners should just introduce themselves.

Give everyone a piece of candy (to replace the brain cells and calories they burned up!).

### Process Follow-Up

Show a slide or flip chart with all tips listed so that everyone can compare their listings;

Go through each of the tips and ask why learners think it might be helpful; and

Have everyone give a round of applause for their efforts.

### Option(s)

1. Instead of tips, use the strips to introduce actual points from your presentation content (depending on the session topic, this could be something like the five most important things to remember about delivering quality service, Gardner’s eight multiple intelligences, or Kirkpatrick’s four levels of evaluation);

2. Use the activity as either an interim or final review; or

3. Instead of tips or key session points, put numbers on the strips of paper.

Explain that [*total number*] of numbered strips have been hidden around the room and that in a minute they will have an opportunity to search for them.

Tell them that as soon as they find one strip to bring it to you.

When ready to begin, turn on some upbeat music (an Irish Jig or a selection from the Suggested Music listing in the Resources section).

Have learners search for the strips.

When you receive a numbered strip, hand the person giving it to you a 3-by-5 card with a corresponding number (same as on the strip) and one key session concept on it and have the person sit down.

After all learners have either received a strip or all strips have been recovered (depending on how many there were) have everyone sit down.

In turn, have each person who has a 3-by-5 card read his or her concept and define it. Reward those who successfully define the concept with a small prize or candy. If someone does not know what the concept means, ask for a volunteer to explain it and reward that learner.

After all concepts have been reviewed, have everyone give a round of applause for their efforts.

Give everyone a piece of candy (to replace the brain cells and calories they burned up!

- Props/Tools Needed**
- 2-by-3-inch colored strips of paper with tips on them posted around the room;
  - 3-by-5 index cards (if using option 3);
  - Masking tape;
  - Pen/pencil for each learner;
  - Blank paper;
  - Music and boom box; and
  - Small prizes.

**Possible Topic Application** Any session in which group interaction, team building, networking, and interpersonal communication are desired outcomes.

**Why It Is Brain-Based**

Adds fun;

Generates excitement and stimulates the brain;

Physically and mentally engages learners;

Uses color;

Adds music or sound to the environment;

Incorporates rewards; and

Causes reflection and memory recall (option 2).

## 10. Making the Rules

<b>Time Required</b>	10 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To allow learners an opportunity to generate a list of session or meeting “rules” that will make the event more productive.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through the use of a group activity, the facilitator will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve learners early in a session;</li> <li>• Capture learner thoughts related to how an ideal learning event or meeting should progress; and</li> <li>• Provide guidelines for order and procedure that will be used during an event.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Twenty-five
<b>Process</b>	<p>Prior to learners or attendees arriving, create a flip-chart page (you may need several depending on the number of guidelines developed) titled SESSION GUIDELINES.</p> <p>Cut additional sheets of flip-chart paper horizontally into 3-inch-high strips so that there are enough strips for each learner to have one.</p> <p>At the beginning of the learning event or meeting, introduce yourself and give opening comments. Explain that for any event to run smoothly and be productive, guidelines are helpful.</p> <p>Hand out the 3-inch-wide strips of paper and masking tape.</p> <p>Give out various colored markers.</p> <p>Tell learners that they should print one idea they have on acceptable behavior in a learning event (meeting) on a strip. Suggest that they use short phrases rather than long sentences. Encourage them to add clever graphics if they like. If necessary, have them put a piece of blank paper under their strips as they write with the marker so that the ink does not come through onto tablecloths or furniture.</p>

After everyone has written down their thoughts, ask for a volunteer to introduce him- or herself, then come forward and tape his or her idea to the flip-chart page you created earlier.

Reward the volunteer with candy or a small prize.

In turn, have all other learners do likewise.

If there are duplicates of something already posted, a learner does not need to come forward, just state that the idea is already posted and introduce him- or herself.

Add any additional important guidelines that the group may have missed. Suggested guidelines include:

- Turn off all electronic devices;
- Get permission before speaking;
- Respect the views of others;
- Refrain from interrupting others;
- No side conversations with others—direct all comments to the facilitator or group;
- Get involved in the learning process;
- Return from breaks on time; and
- Clean up after yourself.

### Process Follow-Up

After all learners have posted their suggested guidelines, explain that these are the guidelines that will be followed during the session (meeting).

### Option(s)

Instead of session guidelines, you can have learners create a list of session-specific issues or answer a question that you have posted on a flip-chart page, slide, or writing surface. For example:

- “What one thing do you most want to learn today?”
- “What do you hope does NOT happen in today’s session (meeting)?”
- “What one thing can you do to personally contribute to the success of today’s session (meeting)?”
- “What concerns do you have related to today’s session (meeting)?”

<b>Props/Tools Needed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flip-chart paper;</li><li>• Easel;</li><li>• Scissors;</li><li>• Masking tape;</li><li>• Various colored markers; and</li><li>• Candy or small prizes.</li></ul>
<b>Possible Topic Application</b>	Unlimited
<b>Why It Is Brain-Based</b>	Engages learners mentally and physically; Involves everyone in the learning process; Appeals to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners; Adds color with the markers, which stimulates the brain; and Uses rewards, which can stimulate involvement and potentially motivate learners.



# 11. Characteristic Card Swap

**Time Required** 45 minutes

**Purpose** To energize learners at the beginning of a session, generate discussion, and aid introductions.

**Objective(s)** Through the use of a small group activity, the facilitator will be able to:

- Prompt introductions among learners;
- Encourage the exchange of information; and
- Gain insights into how learners view themselves.

**Group Size** Twenty-four

**Process** Prior to the session beginning, create a deck of cards with the terms shown on the list of characteristics at the end of this activity using 3-by-5 index cards.

Create flip-chart pages with the first name of each person (use last initials too if there is more than one person sharing a name) listed vertically down the left side of the page(s). Leave enough space so that each person can tape a 3-by-5 card next to his or her name. Tape these pages to the wall somewhere near the front of the room or wherever they are most visible.

Additionally, have a spare empty table somewhere in the room for displaying extra cards during the activity.

When ready to start the activity, have each learner pick four cards from the deck.

Explain that they are to assemble in the rear of the room and spend 15 minutes introducing themselves to one another as they compare cards.

Their goal is to keep four cards at all times, while obtaining the four cards that they feel most accurately identify characteristics about themselves.

They can swap cards as many times as they like until they have four cards that they feel most closely describe their own characteristics. For example, if two learners meet and one has a card needed by the other person, they can swap one card, then move to other learners in search of more cards to complete their sets.

Give a 2-minute warning before time is up.

At the end of 15 minutes, sound a noisemaker to regain attention.

*Ask:* “Who does not feel that he or she has cards that adequately describe him or her?”

*Say:* “Like many organizations that experience change, the rules for this activity have changed. You now have 3 minutes to review the additional cards on the table (point to them), and you may exchange any of your cards for ones that more closely describe your own personal characteristics.”

After 3 minutes, have everyone sit down.

*Say:* “Once again the rules have changed for the activity. You have 1 minute to select the one card (from the four that you have) that best describes you.”

At the end of 1 minute sound a noisemaker.

Ask for a volunteer to introduce him- or herself and to share what one characteristic best describes him or her and why that is true.

Once the volunteer has finished, have the person tape his or her card next to his or her name on the posted flip-chart pages containing learner names.

Reward the volunteer with candy or a small prize.

Have all learners in turn introduce themselves and place their cards on the flip-chart page(s).

After everyone has finished, you may want to introduce yourself and share what characteristic best describes you so that learners feel a bit more comfortable about you.

### Process Follow-Up

Explain that knowing one another better can aid communication during the session.

*Ask:* “How can knowing information about co-workers, such as that shared in this activity, aid you in your workplace?”

“What did you learn about yourself as you had to whittle down your card selections to only one term?”

“How did you feel when you had to let go of the characteristics and define yourself with just one?”

“How do you feel about the one term you ultimately kept?”

*Possible answers:* Can help build and strengthen relationships and form stronger teams;

Allows you to tap into peer strengths for projects; or

Allows you to share your strengths to help others in areas in which they may not be strong.

Have everyone give a round of applause for their efforts.

- Option(s)**
1. Create four card sets and place each in a separate large manila envelope. Form four equal-sized teams and have learners work in their teams.  
  
Follow the process outlined above except that they may go back to remaining cards in their envelopes to trade cards after their original selection, rather than going to one large table area. This will help to cut down on chaos if you have a large group.
  2. Instead of doing the activity as an opening icebreaker, build it into session content and use it to reinforce issues such as team support and understanding, acceptance of others, versatility, diversity, or other topic related to people skills.

- Props/Tools Needed**
- Flip-chart paper;
  - Flip-chart easel;
  - Various colored markers;
  - Masking tape;
  - Extra table;
  - 3-by-5 multi-colored index cards; and
  - Candy or small prizes.

**Possible Topic Application** This activity can be used as an energizer during sessions dealing with relationship building, team building, interpersonal communication, customer service, and orientation. It can help to bring out issues related to the need for effective communication, team building, and consensus building that can be tied to a session topic.

**Why It Is Brain-Based** Fun and novelty added to the environment;  
Engages learners mentally and physically;  
Involves several of Gardner's multiple intelligences;  
Provides opportunity to reflect and do self-analysis;  
Incorporates rewards; and  
Adds additionally color to the environment, which can aid the stimulation of brain neurons.

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## Characteristics for Card Swap

Humble	Risk-Taker	Charming
Patient	Analytical	Daring
Admirable	Confrontational	Methodical
Persuasive	Approachable	Indirect
Generous	Insensitive	Resistant to change
Bold	Team player	Indecisive
Diplomatic	Individualistic	Thorough
Kind	Direct	Conscientious
Forceful	Inspiring	Perfectionist
Impulsive	Enthusiastic	Avoid details
Predictable	Pessimistic	Good communicator
Accurate	Optimistic	Demanding
Competitive	Disorganized	Good time manager
Sociable	Organized	Poor time manager
Deliberate	Good listener	Honest
Agreeable	Poor listener	Cooperative
Decisive	Empathetic	Avoid deadlines
Logical	Systematic	Dependable
Tactful	Focused	Avoid ambiguity
Contented	Well-disciplined	Respectful
Precise	Fearful	Controlled
Detail-oriented	Gentle	Careful
Articulate	Critical thinker	Courteous
Challenging	Popular	People-oriented
Task-oriented	Joyful	Charming

Entertaining	Friendly	Talkative
Fun-loving	Cheerful	Outspoken
Persuasive	Extroverted	Introverted
Persistent	Advent	Humorous Pioneering
Stubborn	Aggressive	Timid
Bold	Argumentative	Insistent
Problem solver	Strong-willed	Forceful
Determined	Confident	Independent
Daring	Self-assured	Practical
Helpful	Energetic	Trustworthy
Loyal	Easygoing	Conservative
Liberal	Objective	Subjective

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## 12. Who Am I?

<b>Time Required</b>	25 minutes
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide learners with a fun opportunity to introduce themselves and get to know their peers a bit better.
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Through a relaxed approach to introductions, this icebreaker will allow the facilitator to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage learners early in a session;</li> <li>• Reduce anxiety by allowing learners to get to know one another better; and</li> <li>• Encourage learners to start communicating openly early in a session.</li> </ul>
<b>Group Size</b>	Up to twenty-five
<b>Process</b>	<p>When ready to start the activity, hand out blank stick-on name tags to learners.</p> <p>Explain that they are to write four or five short bits of information about themselves on their nametags that should include non-visible aspects (high school or college graduate, father or mother, only/oldest/youngest/middle child, author, or pilot).</p> <p>Tell them that, once they complete this task, they should turn their nametags in to you.</p> <p>Once everyone has finished, place the nametags in a pile on a table and tell everyone to come up to get one (making sure not to take their own).</p> <p>After everyone has a nametag, they are to spend 15 minutes searching for the person it applies to, introducing themselves, and getting to know the person a bit.</p> <p>Stress that they should not become too engulfed in the introductions because someone else has their nametags and needs to meet them.</p> <p>At the end of 15 minutes, sound a noisemaker to regain attention.</p> <p>Determine whether there is anyone who has not found the owner of the nametag he or she selected.</p>

If so, have those people match up for introductions and continue for 5 more minutes.

At the end of 5 minutes, sound the noisemaker and ask everyone to have a seat.

### Process Follow-Up

Stress the value and importance of networking and getting to know one another since there is so much knowledge in the room.

*Ask:* “Was anyone surprised about what you learned from other participants? If so, by what?”

Let learners know that they will have breaks and other opportunities to get to know one another during the session (if this is applicable to your session).

### Option(s)

1. Instead of having learners put characteristics or personal aspects on the nametags, have them write three or four strengths that they have related to the session topic. Then conduct the remainder of the activity as outlined above; or
2. Use as a closing activity conducted in the same way except that, instead of introduction, learners should write one thing that was covered in the session that they are confident about being able to do. When learners locate the owner of the nametags they selected, they should ask for tips on how they too can be more comfortable with the knowledge or skill identified.

### Props/Tools Needed

- Nametags; and
- Noisemaker (bell, whistle, hand clapper, or gong);

### Possible Topic Application

Any session in which interpersonal communication, networking, and team building are desired outcomes.

### Why It Is Brain-Based

Engages learners mentally and physically;

Appeals to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners; and

Uses sound, which can stimulate the brain and attract attention.