

Overview

Two cohorts of international students will participate in one large on-line session to get to know all the other students in their group. The ideal group size is limited by the number of students that can actively participate in a one-hour dialog. size of the group participating in the international outreach. At least 4 students (2 from each institution) and as many as 20 (10 from each institution) is workable.

This icebreaker activity has the entire group of international students together in one on-line platform. Without a lot of pre-planning, students will pose open-ended questions to one of their counterparts relating to the lifestyle or aspirations. A preliminary list of questions is available about things like leisure activities, lifestyles, or family relationships, but the questions aren't necessarily limited to that. The goal is a free-flowing exchange of ideas, where students take turns getting to know a little bit about each other and hopefully allow collegial working relationships to develop. In addition, students will begin to recognize the cultural similarities and differences with their international partners. After this friendly on-line exchange, students may be asked to make a journal entry reflecting on similarities, differences, and any other surprising information they learned.

Although this activity is normally accomplished in-person, during a traditional study abroad experience, it is also well suited for a virtual international exchange. In this case, the on-line activity will be done using video conferencing medium like Zoom. In this situation, it is best to set up the computer screen in Gallery View so that all students can participate. There is no official moderator, a student at one institution will ask one open-ended question from the list and receive an initial response from one international participant. The initial question (e.g. What is your hobby?) may lead to follow-up questions and that is fine. The main goal is to get students interacting in an unofficial way and learning a little about the other group's lifestyle. When one line of questioning has run its course and the conversation dies down, students will move to another question. This online activity should take approximately one hour. In that time, the goal is to achieve broad participation from all the students in attendance. Everyone should have the opportunity to either pose a question or offer a response to a question posed by someone else.

Materials

Copy of questions to distribute to participants (see original tool #479 download)

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of this activity, participants will: 1. Increase their level of curiosity about others and 2. Develop active listening skills.

Recommended follow-up

Students will reflect on the similarities and differences they have with their international partners in a journal entry that addresses the following prompts:

1. What surprised you about the responses from your international partners?
2. What responses were similar to your own life experiences?