CHAPTER TWO

A POSITIVE START: First-day Classroom Activities and Icebreakers

The Beginning

The first class meeting of the semester is the most important one of the term! It sets the tone for the entire course — for better or worse. The first few weeks of the course, meanwhile, are crucial in helping students connect to the course, motivate themselves to learn, and discover how to persevere.

Starting the semester with *icebreakers* and other activities to get students comfortable in the classroom is becoming more widely accepted, as the research piles up showing the importance of helping students bond with their classmates so that they stay in school and graduate. One of the most significant factors that will determine whether students will persist at an institution is whether or not they feel a sense of "belonging" and "community" (Frost 1999; Tinto 1998; Wagener and Nettles 1998). How does a sense of belonging or community develop — particularly at commuter institutions? If it's going to happen at all, it will most likely happen in the classroom. Clubs and activities help students bond with the institution and with each other. But many students will merely come to campus to attend their classes, and then leave.

If you look back to your own college days, the first day of class was the day you were probably most intimidated. The instructor gave you the course syllabus, told you what was expected of you, warned you of the difficulty of the course, and, in many cases, encouraged you to withdraw from the course if you had any doubts about your level of commitment. Did this

approach help you or hurt you? Did it motivate you to learn? Did it increase your commitment to the course? Whether this approach had value or not is a moot question. The fact is, it's an approach that is no longer viable and doesn't work with today's students! What does seem to work quite well for today's students is to use the first class of the semester as an opportunity for them to learn about one another. Icebreaker techniques encourage student interaction and will influence the quality and extent of future class discussions.

Today's students are different in so many ways from the students of a few decades ago. Peter Sacks (1996), a journalist and, for a short time, a college faculty member, suggests that the differences we see in today's students and in their behavior are rooted in a variety of factors. One factor is the attitude of "consumerism" among students: They tend to see themselves as "customers." Many of them believe that, because they're paying money for a degree, they're running the show. Indeed, as Howe and Strauss (2000) note in their recent book, *Millennials Rising*, one "distinguishing trait" among members of the new "Millennial Generation" or "Generation Y" — which consists of youths and young adults born after 1982, according to the authors' definition — is their high level of confidence, which some see as bordering on a sense of entitlement.

Additionally, the demographics of the United States are changing such that we have much greater diversity in our classes than we did decades ago. We are seeing an increasing number of nontraditional students, students from foreign countries, and students from an increasing variety of ethnic backgrounds. And, according to a recent report from the Educational Testing Service (Wilgoren 2000), college enrollment will expand by two million students in the next fifteen years or so. This swell in enrollment will arise from the upsurge in births in the U.S., increased immigration, and a growing belief that a college degree is an absolute necessity for a good job with a decent salary.

The ETS study suggests that 80 percent of the projected growth will be due to the expanded enrollment of minority students. Analyzing the twenty-year span from 1995 to the projections for 2015, the study finds that the presence of white students on campus will decrease from 71 percent to 63 percent. Meanwhile, African Americans' presence on campus will remain stable at 13 percent, the number of Asian Americans will increase from 5 percent to 8 percent, and the number of Hispanic Americans will rise from 11 percent to 15 percent. (Although minority college student enrollment is mushrooming, the statistics are deceiving in the sense that the numbers of Hispanic Americans and African Americans in college will not reflect the overall populations of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds within these groups.)

College retention rates for many groups of minority students, particularly Hispanic Americans, lag far behind those of white students. Our colleges and universities, and we as faculty in particular, must make special efforts to bring minorities into the fold of higher education, and to increase the likelihood of their success in college. One approach to encourage persistence among all students is to create an inclusive atmosphere where students from diverse backgrounds feel safe within the classroom atmosphere. For that reason, many of the icebreakers I describe here are also effective as diversity education tools. You'll also notice that many of the exercises involve students' names. Learning students' names, and having students learn each other's names, creates a classroom environment that is hospitable to learning and dialogue. Your use of students' names also helps students meet and interact with each other more easily (Wolcowitz 1984).

Let's take a look at some suggestions for getting the semester off to a great start in your classroom(s).

Family name exercise

To help students get to know each other better, to help them (and you!) remember each other's names, and to create a sense of community in the very first class, give the Family Name Exercise a try.

Directions: Talk about the importance of our names for understanding our identities. When we learn how we were named — that is, who made the decision for our name and how that decision was made — we actually learn a lot about our histories. (Note: If there are students who don't have a clue as to how they were named, you can easily broaden the exercise to include them by asking some questions about their names other than how their names were selected.) I usually ask students to sit back and listen to some questions that I pose:

- Who named you?
- How was the decision for your name made?
- Are you named after someone?
- Do you know, or know of, the person who is your namesake?
- Do you like your name?
- Do some people in your life call you by a different name?
- Have you ever gone by a different name?
- Do you have a nickname?

After posing these questions, I ask the students to connect to whatever questions are most meaningful for them and to create a story about their name. I then ask them to introduce themselves to their neighbor and to share their stories with each other. This helps them meet another student and loosens them up for the large-group sharing that follows.

Before asking students to introduce themselves to the class, I get the ball rolling by sharing my entire name and telling my own story. The students then do the same.

The Family Name Exercise — which I first learned when I participated in a family therapy clinical training program — offers a remarkable memory strategy, since we all must use association to remember each other's names. The activity usually takes about 40 minutes.

"What's in a name?" exercise

Penfield (1998) suggests that names are both personal and cultural. She says that our stories about our names are not only autobiographical, but also cross-cultural.

The "What's in a Name?" Exercise is a useful tool to help students recognize and appreciate their similarities and differences while learning each other's names.

Directions: Have students pair up with someone they don't know. Ask the students to interview their partners to find out the personal and cultural reasons for their first and middle names. Tell them they'll be responsible for introducing their partner to the whole class when the large group reconvenes.

Allow a few minutes for each member of the dyad to conduct the interview. When you reconvene, ask the students to introduce their partners to the class, sharing any interesting information they've gathered about their partners' names.

Write down each person's name on the blackboard or on newsprint, along with a symbol or note of something personally or culturally interesting about the person's name. After everyone has had a turn, ask the students if they've learned anything about cultural patterns in naming people, and process this information with the whole class.

Penfield (1998) suggests that, for a class of thirty, the "What's in a Name?" Exercise may take about an hour — fifteen minutes for students to work in pairs and forty-five minutes for the large-group process. You may be able to conduct the exercise in a slightly shorter amount of time, since students may need only a few minutes to conduct their partner interviews and the large-group process may not take as long as Penfield suggests.

Stand up-sit down exercise

The Stand Up-Sit Down Exercise (Penfield 1998, citing Rutgers University 1989) is essentially a diversity-training icebreaker. The assumption behind the activity is that when you bring any group of people together, there will be both similarities and differences in their backgrounds and in other information about them. The Stand Up-Sit Down Exercise can help participants see those similarities and differences so that they can begin to appreciate them. Participants start to realize what they share with other students and how they differ.

Directions: Seat your students in a way that lets them see each other — a closed circle usually works best. The instructions and the actual activity take six or seven minutes for a group of any size. After the activity, allow an additional fifteen minutes to process and debrief.

Give the following directions and then read one category at a time, allowing time for students to stand up and sit down. (Note: You participate in the activity as well.) Here are the instructions as they appear in Penfield's (1998, 51) book:

> The purpose of this activity is to identify what we share and how we differ societally and in other ways through this activity. When I read a category with which you identify even partially and feel comfortable sharing with the group, please stand up and then sit down. Some of the categories are light and may seem humorous but others are more serious. Please treat the entire activity seriously. Our task is to recognize what we share with others in the group, but also to recognize those voices which are absent or outnumbered in our group.
>
> One more thing: Since this is a self-identification activity, each person will determine his or her

own identification. None of us should determine this for another. If someone does not stand, it may mean that they do not identify with the category or they do not feel comfortable sharing this identification in this group. Please do not laugh or pressure anyone into standing. OK. Please stand up and sit down if you identify with and feel comfortable with sharing the following categories.

Penfield (1998, 51-52) uses the following list of categories:

- love chocolate
- brown-eyed
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are Jewish
- divorced
- over 30 years of age
- a man
- blue- or green-eyed
- a person of color
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, American Indian
- a parent
- a woman
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, Arab American
- vegetarian
- married or living with a partner
- care for an elderly or sick parent
- fluent in a language other than English
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, lesbian or gay
- left-handed
- have a twin
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, Hispanic American
- agnostic or atheist
- raised poor or working-class

- raised Roman Catholic
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, of European descent
- under 30 years of age
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, African American
- have a close family member who is, or you yourself are, Asian American
- raised in a Christian denomination
- have a disability, or have a close family member who has a disability
- Muslim
- born in a country other than the United States

Please offer anything I haven't mentioned that is important to your identification.

Obviously you can tailor these categories or create your own for your own classes according to what you believe is most appropriate and comfortable for your group.

Penfield does a good job of explaining the debriefing process that follows the activity. First, she says students will have reactions to the activity itself. Did the students expect certain categories that were excluded? Were they surprised by the categories that were included?

Another discussion that usually follows the exercise involves the recognition of how any one of these categories, by itself, limits our understanding of our whole identities and the identities of others. Through this activity, your students have an opportunity to look at the assumptions they make about people in certain categories. You can ask students if they have any observations and learnings they'd like to share with the whole group. Penfield says she also asks participants to notice if there were categories for which there were no student representatives. She points out that, if certain groups aren't "spoken for" in the class, their perspectives will be missing from future discussions.

"What's in a Name?" and Stand Up-Sit Down are just two of many wonderful diversity training exercises you can find in Penfield's (1998) *Respecting Diversity, Working for Equity: A Handbook for Trainers.*

I should mention that the Stand-Up-Sit Down Exercise also works without a formal diversity perspective. Some instructors use it solely as a fun and light icebreaker, with lifestyle categories like these:

- Eat pizza more than once a week.
- Go to the movies at least twice a month.
- Drive more than 30 minutes to get to school.
- Listen to the "oldies" station(s) on the radio.

Activities that help students find commonalities

The following exercises are all aimed at promoting bonding by helping students find things they share in common.

Directions: Ask students to raise their hands in response to a number of questions like these:

- How many of you have moved three or more times in your lifetime?
- How many of you have three or more siblings?
- How many of you were born in another country?
- How many of you have traveled outside the United States?

Let your imagination be your guide as to the questions you ask.

After each question, pair up students who have raised their hands. Once the whole class is in pairs, tell the students that they've each found a classmate with whom they have at least one thing in common. Tell them they'll have two minutes to talk to find out how many other experiences or traits they share.

Directions: Ask students to raise their hands in response to questions like the last four questions in the Stand Up-Sit Down Exercise above. Add some academically oriented questions, such as, "How many of you plan to major in history?" or, "How many of you are planning a career in teaching?" After students have raised their hands in response to five or six questions and observed their classmates' responses, have them form four-person groups that you select either randomly or by some design. (Some instructors move students around in what appears to be a random fashion, but they're actually creating groups that are gender and culturally diverse.)

Next, hand out newsprint and magic markers to each group. Tell the students in each group to find four things they share in common, and to depict these commonalties any way they choose: They can draw pictures, use symbols, or, as a last resort, use words. Encourage the students to be as creative as possible. Tell them that each member of the group will introduce himself or herself later to the class, and will describe one of the four things he or she shares in common with the other students in his or her group. (Instead of having the group select a "spokesperson," asking students to each speak for themselves is a way to get all of them speaking on the first day of class.)

After 10 minutes of group work, reconvene the class.

Within the small groups, the students usually have fun and some bonding occurs. But the students are also interested in learning what the other groups have to say. This activity allows for both; it's a great way to set a comfortable, sharing tone for the rest of the semester.

Directions (adapted from Berko and Aitken et al. 1998): Ask the students to arrange themselves along an imaginary line, either along a side wall or down the middle of the room. Tell the students they need to arrange themselves in single-file along this line according to questions that you're about to give them. Some sample questions:

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- If you could be any animal, what would it be?
- How athletic are you?
- How creative are you?
- Do you play a musical instrument? If so, which one?

For some questions, you can show the students what the front of the line represents and what the end of the line means. For example, for the first question about brothers and sisters, you could say that the front of the line is for only children and the back of the line is for "the birth of a nation" (as Berko and Aitken call it).

After the students have arranged themselves along the line —a process that will take quite a bit of negotiation and interaction! Ask them to count off by twos. Have each Number 1 stand on the right side of the line facing the

Number 2 behind him or her. Ask each pair to exchange names; then, the Number 1's can share anything about the topic they'd like with their partners, for one or two minutes. The Number 2's can then talk about the same topic with the same partner for the same amount of time.

After each question, the students rearrange themselves in the line according to their responses to the next question. You can use many questions so that the students will get a chance to meet several people in the class. Just be sure the students are meeting different students with each pairing.

Directions: Have your students fill out the Personal Reference Inventory (PRI) on the first day of class. (You'll find the PRI at the end of this chapter. You could also develop your own questions tailored to your own classes.)

After students complete the inventory, have them pair off by numbering themselves as "1" or "2" and asking the 1's to join the 2's. Then, ask them to discuss their responses to the questions with each other. (Note: I always tell my students that it's completely up to them to decide what to share with each other and at what level or depth.) For each pairing, both students can respond to the same question, starting at the top of the list.

After a two-minute period, interrupt the proceedings and ask the 1's to pair up with new 2's to share with each other on the next topic.

Introduction by identities exercise

Another excellent icebreaker that promotes diversity is the Introduction by Identities Exercise.

One of my colleagues teaches an English class to international students. She begins her first day by asking the students to tell a little about themselves. She starts the exercise by role modeling examples of what the students might share. (Again, in all of these activities, you need to make it clear to students that they can decide what to share about themselves and at what depth.) My colleague tells the students her name, with a related anecdote about how she was named. She says that, obviously, she is female, that she is Italian American, that she was raised Catholic, and that she was born in the United States.

Within her extremely diverse class, the students then start to share something about themselves, and some early bonding begins to take place.

Student disclosure exercises

In order to encourage interaction among your students, consider these ice-breakers or variations on them:

Directions: Give a 3x5 index card to each student. Have the students write their names on one side of the card and, on the other side, something distinctive or special about themselves that they would not mind others in the class knowing. Then, ask the students to circulate, introducing themselves to each other and sharing what they've written about themselves. You can participate in the circulation as well.

Next, collect the cards and read the backs of them aloud. You can then either ask the students to introduce themselves as their cards are read, or ask the student who met the person whose card is read to introduce that student to the class.

As a variation on this activity, once the student circulation around the room ends, have the students introduce themselves to the class and describe something distinctive about themselves. Each student must say his or her own name, then the names of the previous student(s), and then repeat his or her own name and share something unique about himself or herself. This variation uses the mnemonic devices of association and repetition to help students learn each other's names.

Directions: Put three or four questions on the blackboard or on an overhead transparency. Here are some examples of questions you could use:

- If you were invisible, what would you do for a day?
- What is the most frightening thing that's ever happened to you?
- If your house was burning down, what item(s) would you save and why?
- Who has been the most positive influence in your life?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

Ask the students to respond in writing to whatever question they choose. Then, have students pair up, introduce themselves to each other, and share a response to any of the questions. After a couple of minutes, ask the students to introduce themselves to the class, sharing their names and any information concerning their responses to the questions. (As in all self-disclosure exercises, remind students that it is always their choice as to what to share and at what depth.)

Dyadic interviews.

Dyadic interviews are designed to help students get to know each other well enough to introduce each other to the rest of the class.

Directions: Ask students to jot down three questions they wouldn't mind being asked about themselves. Explain that the questions can be at any level of self-disclosure they choose, and that their responses may become public information for the class (so they shouldn't reveal any information they want to be private). You can let students select their own partners — in which case they usually pair up with students sitting next to them — or you can pair up students in what appears to be a random fashion, but that really reflects pairs of diverse students according to gender, race/ethnicity, or age.

Tell the students to switch papers with their partners so that the students have their partners' questions to ask. The students can then conduct short interviews and jot down their partners' responses on their sheets. (Be sure to remind the students to get their partners' full names and correct pronunciations.)

You serve as timekeeper for the activity. If you have an uneven number of students in your class, you can either participate in the activity yourself or ask one dyad to work as a triad.

After a few minutes, interrupt the students so that the interviewers and interviewees can switch roles.

Once all of the students have had the opportunity to interview and to be interviewed, reconvene the large group and ask each student to introduce his or her partner to the

class. Be sure the students introduce their partners by using their full names, and that they share with the class any information they've learned from their interviews. Their partners may add to or clarify anything that is shared.

Dyadic sharing using drawing or writing.

Directions: Ask each of your students to draw or write three things that help describe who they are. Then, put the students in pairs and have them share what they've produced with each other. You can then ask the students to introduce themselves and explain to the class what they've drawn or written, or have the students introduce their partners and explain their partners' productions.

Informal sharing exercise. In an informal sharing exercise, students pair up, introduce themselves to each other, and share any information about themselves that isn't obvious to others. You can use this activity as a warm-up for students to introduce themselves to the class, or ask the students to introduce their partners to the class.

You'll want to be sure to participate in this exercise in some way. You can pair up with a student if there are an uneven number of students in the class, or you can simply introduce yourself to the class when the students are finished with the large-group process. You might also invite students to ask questions about you or the course.

"Walk around the room" exercise.

The "Walk around the Room" exercise can take many forms. Students can simply walk around the room and meet as many other people as possible within some limited time frame.

Directions: You can ask the students to share just their names, or you can create a theme that students can talk about in addition to sharing their names. The theme can relate to your particular course. For example, in a social psychology course in which one of the topics we cover is friendship formation, I sometimes have students share their names and the qualities they most value in a close friendship. In a math course, you might ask students to share their names and their first experience with math in grade school.

Try to select something straightforward so that all of the students will have something to say. Silberman (1996) suggests an exercise he calls "Trading Places." For it, you give students "sticky" notes on which they write something either about themselves or about their opinions and their thinking. The students then walk around the room, introducing themselves to a number of other students and trading notes with other students who possess some idea, opinion, or experience they'd like to acquire. The trades have to be mutual, and students may trade as many times as they like.

When you reconvene the whole class, have the students share the trades they made and their reasons for doing so.

Scavenger hunt.

Directions: Ask students to circulate around the room looking for people who fit certain categories. For example:

- Someone who is an only child.
- Someone who has lived abroad.
- Someone who speaks more than one language.
- Someone who has many siblings.
- Someone who has the same major or program of study as you.

You can also include statements that revolve around class content or personal background information.

Tell the students that when they meet someone who matches a category, they should write down the person's name. Encourage the students to meet different people, even if the same person might fit more than one category.

When you reconvene the whole class, process the exercise by asking the students to introduce the people they've met and share what they've learned about them.

(Note: This exercise is an adaptation of one suggested by Silberman [1996].)

"Wheel within a wheel."

"Wheel within a Wheel" is an exercise designed to help students meet several other classmates, as well as to build self-esteem and create energy in the classroom. The exercise is also known as the "Circle-to-Circle" icebreaker, and is described in detail by Joesting (1978).

Directions: Ask half of your students to sit in a circle in the center of the room, facing outward. Next, have the rest of the students form an outer circle, facing the other students. With an even number of students everyone will have a partner.

The inner group remains seated throughout the exercise; the outer circle rotates to the right, one person at a time, for each part of the activity. (Note: If you have a small class, you may want to have the students in the outer circle rotate until they reach their original partner. Otherwise, you may ask them to rotate only until they've met several other students.)

With each new pairing, ask the students to discuss a new topic you suggest. Select topics that will get the students thinking about and sharing things that will raise their self-esteem. Give each pairing about two minutes to share with each other. Then, ask the students to rotate and introduce themselves to the next person.

Some topics that are self-esteem boosters:

- What do you consider to be one of your biggest accomplishments in life?
- What person have you affected in a positive way? How?
- What goal have you achieved that you found particularly difficult?
- What person has most affected your life in a positive way? How?
- What do you consider to be your most positive personality traits?

If circles are too cumbersome for your classroom, you can do the same exercise by simply asking students to pair up with a different partner for each topic. (Note: This exercise is adapted from Joesting [1978].)

Alphabetize exercise.

Directions: Have the students alphabetize themselves, by first name, along one wall of the classroom. In order to do this, the students must interact with each other. You can then have each student introduce himself or herself to the class.

For variety, you might ask the students to name one, two, or three other students so that all of you can learn by repetition.

Introductions and repetition.

Directions: In this activity, students volunteer to introduce themselves to the class and share something about themselves that might help the other students remember them. (Note: It usually works better to have students volunteer rather than to go around the room in seating order, because students may "wait their turn" with anxiety and tune out other students' names and stories.)

Encourage the students to listen carefully to each other's names, and tell them they'll have to name three other people at the end of the exercise.

After all of the students have introduced themselves, have each student introduce three other students to the class, stating each student's name and what the student has revealed about himself or herself. The students can choose any three people they'd like, but they can't name students who have already been introduced. The repetition helps everyone remember each other's names — though, at the end, you'll run out of people for the last several students to introduce. Even so, the exercise still energizes the students as they leave the room.

Introducing yourself

To show your students that you're a human being, you might want to share some things about yourself. For example, you can talk about the story of your interest in your discipline or your interest in the particular course you're teaching. You might tell the students about when you studied the same course, what you expected, what you worried about, how you studied, any great wisdom you gained, or any other anecdotal information they

might find interesting or helpful in some way. In many surveys, students say they appreciate teachers who are approachable. By disclosing some information about your interests, hobbies, and leisure activities, your students will — from the very first class — see you as more than just their instructor.

You can achieve a similar objective by having your students ask you their own questions about you. Have the students write their questions on index cards. You can then read and respond to them in class (thus giving yourself the chance to screen the questions as well).

You might also simply ask your students if they have any questions they'd like to ask you about yourself. You could joke with them and say, "You can ask me anything at all. Of course, I may choose not to answer, depending on what you ask." I've found that students often ask pretty mundane questions, such as "Are you married?" "Do you have children?" and "What are your interests and hobbies apart from teaching?" Occasionally, though, they'll ask more thoughtful questions, such as "If you could do something else with your life apart from teaching, what would it be?" or "Why did you choose college teaching?" You can even have students work in groups of four to develop questions that a group reporter will ask for the group.

Course expectation activities

Directions: Write the name of your course on the blackboard. Ask the students to write down three expectations or questions they have about the course. Then, put the students in four-person groups and tell them they must reach consensus about their expectations. Have each group pick a recorder who will take notes and report to the whole class what the group has agreed upon.

After all of the groups have reported, discuss the students' expectations and describe what the course is (really) all about.

Directions: Give each student a 3x5 index card and ask them to write down any questions they have pertaining to the course they're about to start. Then, collect the cards and read the questions aloud, commenting on them in terms of when and how the course might address them.

To make the exercise more interactive, ask the students to share their questions first in four-person groups or dyads.

Directions: Many instructors hand out the syllabus on the first day, go over it briefly, and ask students if they have any questions. This is often followed by silence. Robert Magnan (1990) suggests a variation that gets students more engaged with the course and with you. He recommends handing out the syllabus and then giving students some time to read it privately. You can then divide the students into four-person groups. Tell them to decide together on questions to ask about the course and about you. Encourage them to ask questions about any aspect of the class or about you, whether professional or personal.

Have each group select a spokesperson who will ask the questions for the group when the whole class reconvenes. Magnan says that many of the questions will be about the obvious — grading, expectations, assignments, and attendance. There may also be more questions than usual, as students are more likely to ask questions when they feel they're speaking for others as well as themselves.

Magnan found questions about the instructor to be similar to those I mentioned above: Students typically wonder about your credentials for teaching the course, your experiences outside of teaching, what you like or dislike about the course or about teaching in general, why you became a college teacher, what your other interests are, and whether you're married and if you have children.

Your Goal: A Relaxed Atmosphere from Day 1

Find icebreakers and activities you're comfortable with. The goal is to start the semester by developing a relaxed learning atmosphere. Students want the classroom to be safe and friendly. Since meeting other students is fun, your students will begin to develop a positive attitude about your course, and get an initial sense that your classroom is a "welcoming" one — an important attribute that we cover in depth in Chapter 3.

Personal Reference Inventory (PRI)

- Name
- Who is your hero?
- Define a "politician."
- What irritates you the most about this world? Why?
- What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment? Why?
- If you won $1 million in the lottery, how would you spend the money?
- What celebrity would you like to change places with? Why?
- What would be the title of a book about your life story? Why?
- Describe your most embarrassing circumstance.
- What would you like to change about your past? Why?
- How would you respond if you discovered that your best same-sex friend was homosexual?
- Discuss your impressions of "wealthy" people.
- Which three adjectives best describe your relational abilities (i.e., your abilities to get along with others)?
- Which part of the world would you like to visit? Why?
- Which food best describes your personality? Why?
- What is the most important discovery in life? Why?
- Who is/was your greatest influence? Why?
- What does "sexism" mean to you?
- What does a grade of "A" mean to you?
- Do you believe in reincarnation? Why?

From Berko, et al.,
Handbook of Instructional Options with Test Items.
7th edition.