

Title: The Things We Have in Common

Goals: To build rapport with classmates and identify common interests

Description: On 4-5 sheets of paper, each a different color, draw or print 5-6 different shapes on each sheet and cut them out. On the 1st day of class, randomly assign each student a shape. Ask students to assemble in groups with those who have the same color. Members of each group must ask each other questions until they identify 1-2 interesting or unusual things that everyone in the group has in common. Once all groups are done, you can have students share with the whole class. Next, have students reassemble in groups with those who have the same shape and repeat the questioning process.

Strengths: Students practice creative thinking when trying to identify some-thing interesting or unusual. Also, the instructor could consider the “data” students share when designing assignments or use it to connect to course concepts.

Challenges: Sometimes students struggle to find commonalities beyond the obvious. When this happens, I ask prompting questions such as “I hear that all of you have cars and drive to campus, but what about your driving preferences?”)

Time: Time will vary based on group sizes. I recommend 2-3 minutes for each

Participant Level: GR/WC

Prep Time: S

Class Time: S, M, L

When: B

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Code Legend:

Participant Level: **WC** (Whole Class); **GR** (Groups); **P** (Pairs); **I** (Individual Students)

Prep / Class / Results Analysis Time: **S** (Short); **M** (Medium); **L** (Long)

When to Use During Semester: **B** (Beginning); **M** (Middle); **E** (End); **A** (Any time)