

Icebreaker (Students) - The Personality Dynamics of Sitting

The purpose of this exercise is to help students “appreciate” how personality style may reveal itself even in apparently simple behaviors - such as where you tend to sit in a class.



Action: Students get out of their seats (taking their belongings with them) and move to the sides of the room.

Leader says: "Now pretend that it's the first day of a class. Sit down in a seat that would be the one you would probably choose - the one that feels most comfortable to you."

Discussion: After everyone has positioned themselves, talk about the choices they made and what it might say about their personalities.

Here are some of the ideas that often come up:

- **people who sit in front** may: want to be close to the teacher, like to be seen, be outgoing, be "brown-nosers", like to be up front where all the action is (perhaps even to help them stay awake), want to be sure they hear everything that the teacher says (perhaps are grade-conscious?)
- **people who sit in the back** may: like to sleep during class (are "slackers"?), like to see everything that's happening in the room (are "observers"), dislike attention, LIKE the attention of having everyone turn around to see them when they talk, like the security of having their back against a wall, are oppositional or rebellious.
- **people who sit by the window** are daydreamers, like the "freedom" of having wide-open space next to them (but often pay the price of being far from the door)
- **people who sit by the door** like a quick way out of a situation, are often in a rush
- **people who sit in the middle** like to be inconspicuous, like to blend in with the crowd, are possibly shy people
- **Loners** avoids sitting near other people
- **Changelings** sit in various seats (likes variety, likes to see things from different perspectives, is indecisive, and likes to experiment?)

Discussion: Point out the patterning of the entire class.

- Does the class look cohesive or fragmented?
- Are there subgroups?
- Are people seated evenly across the room, or are there gaps?
- Are the gaps in the front of the room, middle, sides, back?
- What might these patterns say about the class and its "group personality?"

Action: Students get up and sit in a seat that feels like the **exact opposite** of the one that they usually sit in. For example, if they usually sit in the front, choose a seat in the back. If they usually sit on the right side, sit on the left.... etc. Choose a seat that feels UNCOMFORTABLE.

Discussion #2: After they choose their places...

- Talk about how it feels to be in that "**alien**" seat (Often strong feelings emerge)
- Look again at the entire pattern of the class: Often looks and feels very odd to students and the teacher. Usually it is a mirror image of the "normal" seating arrangement, and therefore highlights the features of that normal arrangement.