

# Getting to know you activity

Mohammad Rejaul Karim  
Dhaka, Bangladesh



My name is Mohammad Rejaul Karim. I teach English Language courses at BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University but the story I am going to tell here is from a training session conducted at the British Council Teaching Centre, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

It was the first day of training and I facilitated a 'Getting to know you' type of activity. I got the original idea from Dr. Jane Cullen, a professor at Open University, UK while attending a session with her in Dhaka back in 2010 but adapted it to this context. There were 32 school teachers participating, all from English medium schools in Dhaka.

To run the activity, I wrote four questions on a small piece of paper – six sets of questions can fit onto an A4 piece of paper. Regarding the questions, questions 1, 3 and 4 were usual questions designed to elicit the participants' personal details, their course expectation and what they could contribute to the workshop. Question 2 was open-ended and thought-provoking and it was designed to make the participants imagine something interesting to share with others. Whereas questions 1, 3 and 4 were the same for each participant, each question 2 was different. An example of a question 2 would be 'What would you do if you were invisible for a day?'

At the start of the activity, I gave clear instructions that it would be a walk and talk activity and for that reason all the participants would need to stand up. I also told them they were going to get to know more about each other and for that reason they should try and talk to six to eight participants. I also told them to remember the answers as there would be a sharing session at the end.

All the pieces of papers were on the front desk and all the participants came forward and picked one. So 16 participants got papers and 16 didn't. I told those with questions to go and ask those without papers all four questions. When they finished they should hand the piece of paper over to those they had just questioned. Then they would walk and talk to someone else without a paper and ask them the questions. This process was repeated six times. Some of the participants were very enthusiastic and talked to more than six people.

After twelve minutes I asked them to go back to their respective seats. Then I elicited some of the interesting findings. They really liked some of the findings which came from question 2.

The activity was very lively and everyone participated fully as they had to either ask or answer the whole time. Later I received feedback from some of the participating teachers telling me that they liked the activity and would use it in their own classrooms. It was a success.

#### Reflection questions

Q1: When are 'Getting to know you activities' like the one Rejaul described useful? What are the aims of such activities?

Q2: Could you use this activity with your trainees/learners? If not, how could you adapt it (as Rejaul did) to your context?

Source: Smith, R., Padwad, A., and Bullock, D. (eds.) In process. *Teaching in the Low-resource Classroom: Voices of Experience*. London: The British Council.