



## **MODULE** **Icebreakers**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Participants will get to know each other
- Interactive warm-up activities for using the target language
- Practical application of the target language using communicative games in an authentic context
- Modelling classroom activities that can also be used for preparing subject-specific topic areas

### **METHOD:**

Group and pair-work activities, the methodology of which is subsequently “unpicked” and discussed

### **DURATION:**

One hour

### **MATERIALS:**

- Work sheets
- Overhead transparencies with visual support and written instructions in the target language

Further items: balls, posters featuring useful classroom language, funny hat, national flags and a chart with forfeits



### **PROCEDURE:**

The ground rules for the activities are established as and when necessary in the following way:

An expectation that the target language is to be used is made explicit at the beginning of the session by pointing to the flag of the target country. Whoever uses their own language



unnecessarily (a) has to wear a funny hat (b) if he/she persists, has to do a forfeit, which is determined by throwing dice. The forfeit should be non-threatening and funny, e.g. saying “*I love English*” five times, making a proposal of marriage, etc.

### 1. Revising, practising and recalling vocabulary (through ball throwing)

Depending on the number of participants, groups of 5-6 people are formed. The tutor demonstrates the activity with one group. This is done before each different stage:

- (i) Before throwing the ball you say your own name;
- (ii) Before throwing the ball you say the name of the person to whom you are throwing it;
- (iii) Before throwing the ball you ask the question “What did you do in the school holidays?”  
The person who catches the ball has to answer and then ask the same question as he/she throws to someone else.
- (iv) Before throwing the ball you ask “Herbert, you went to France, didn’t you?”  
The person catches the ball and says, “yes I did” “no I didn’t”, and then throws the ball to someone else, asking a similar question.
- (v) Before throwing the ball you say a subject-specific word or short phrase.  
The aim of this activity, which involves unpredictability and various challenges, is for the participants to get to know each other’s names and to revise language.

### 2. Using alliteration as a memoria technica (Round Robin)

New target language groups are formed. The tutor demonstrates the activity in his/her group: “*My name is Janet, I come from Jamaica and I like eating jam.*” The next person in the group says: “*Her name is Janet, she comes from Jamaica and she likes eating jam. My name is Norbert, I come from Norway and I like eating nectarines.*” The next person says: “*Her name is Janet, she comes from Jamaica and she likes eating jam. His name is Norbert, he comes from Norway and he likes eating nectarines, my name is Paul, I come from Poland and I like eating porridge...etc.*”

The activity continues until everyone in the group has had a turn. This is a way of learning people’s names quickly. Both of the above activities can, however, be used in other contexts, e.g. in a history lesson to perhaps revise events/key points or to consolidate particular subject-specific facts.

### 3. A mingling activity (Find Someone Who)

The participants receive a work sheet ([AB 1](#)) with approximately 10 sentences like: “Find someone who stopped smoking last year.” Apart from being about personal information, these questions can also be of a thematic kind, preparing a new topic or revising a topic dealt with in previous lessons.

By way of many short conversations ([AB 2a](#) and [AB 2b](#)), each participant now has the task of finding people who can answer one of these questions with “Yes”. The winner is the one to first collect the names of ten *different* people (this number being variable according to the number of participants). Alternatively, a time limit, e.g. 5 minutes, can be set, in which the participants have to find as many people as possible.

The information collected on the other participants can be presented to the group afterwards.

For this activity to be successful, the following rules have to be observed: each participant is only allowed to talk to one person at a time. He/she has to collect 10 *different* names. Also,



participants should be reminded that they have to exchange their information in the target language.

#### **4. Find Something in Common**

The participants work in pairs and are given a short time (3 minutes) to find out and note down as many things that they have in common. (E.g. both might teach a foreign language, go to school by bike, etc.) When the time is up, the number of points that people have in common with their partner are counted, and the pair with the most is the winner. The winners then present their results to the group.

#### **COMMENTARY:**

The methodological aspect of these activities can be discussed either after each task or altogether at the end of the session.

These activities should be carried out in the target language so that the participants can practise their own language skills. They can also explore methods that encourage pupils to stay in the target language when working in pairs and groups.

The message of this module is not that *all* CLIL teaching must be carried out in the target language. Rather, it serves to show a pool of ideas to keep pupils in the target language, when so desired.