

Elevator Talk

The major goal of this activity will be to gain skills in one-on-one contact (formal/informal as well as peer/non-peer introductions). By becoming familiar with these standard patterns of interaction the students will increase this comfort level in different situations.

Objectives:

Students should be able to:

- recognize the importance of networking, elevator talk
- identify the goals in making elevator talk in different situations and expectations, such as opportunity for follow-up for job or research opportunities.
- be prepared for meeting/contacting someone (prepare contact information and dress appropriately).
- utilize ice breakers, such as paying a compliment or asking a specific question.
- focus on pronouncing their name clearly and present a confident persona through a firm handshake, eye contact, body language that will be memorable.
- establish further conversation and identity through describing their institution, position, department, research area or some other tag.
- communicate clearly the reason for the introduction/meeting.
- interpret the individual's response and deal with variable outcomes and be prepared to ask questions after meeting.
- both enter as well as exit the established conversations.

Session Format: (2-3 hours with Introduction)

- program participants will be given homework, such as listing reasons for elevator talk, what information is important to transmit, think of ice breaker/attention getter, and prepare a short biographic sketch.
- “How not to” demo/skit and then analyze things wrong in “how not to” for either large group or small discussion.
- practice session where groups of students exchange roles in practicing their skills.

Participation Activities:

- as a group brainstorm reasons for wanting to do elevator talk. List 5 things you would want to say about yourself in an elevator talk and cut down to most important 3 if in a very short meeting period.
- practice speaking clearly utilizing round-table game and telephone game.
- identify who is appropriately dressed in the group and why.
- following practice sessions such as intro, handshake with peer-evaluation they will be given a worksheet/checklist for evaluation.
- utilizing homework, the students must introduce themselves and conduct elevator talk for 3-5 minutes with outside individuals/strangers. They will role play in different situations by breaking into conversation groups and role play for pre-mediated meeting or chance meetings.

Minority Issues:

- identify yourself and use minority status to advantage. This can be important for grant support, associate names on papers with faces, and job opportunities.
- be conscious that geographical/cultural and scientific pedigrees are important for finding common interests/background.
- be aware of shyness, speech level, gender, and status issues.
- the program can utilize testimonials – personal stories of successes and nightmares to make this point.

Speakers:

The program should be able to utilize program participants and outside speakers would not be necessary.

Materials Needed:

- skit scripts, scenarios/role playing
- video clips of scenarios for analysis
- writing materials
- worksheet for self- or peer-evaluation