Inside Teaching Lounge
Building Classroom Community
I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or dehumanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they out to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming. (Ginott, Haim G.)
Why Build Community?

- Students need to know the expectations in your class—behavioral and academic.
- Helps build engagement.
- Creates value in different perspectives, ideas, and styles of learning.
- Creates a safe place for students to test out ideas, be creative, and sometimes fail.
What does Community look like?
Some Ideas and Strategies

- Find Someone Who
- Character Sketches (see physical handout)
- Visual Listening Activity
- Brain Breaks
- Group Problem Solving or Design Challenges
- Team Webs
- Corners
Team Web

Great for any Concept Mapping Activity

One large piece of paper and a different colored marker for everyone in the group. Have students create a color key code.

Have students brainstorm ideas related to the concept. Aim to have even color distribution on the web.

Follow up with presentations, carousel walks, or class discussion.
Corners Activity

- Used as a way to help jumpstart class discussions.

- Label the corners of your room (1-4 or A-D). A sticky note will work.

- Pose a question to your students. Let them answer the question first at their seats. Then once you see everyone has answered then you let them go to the corresponding corner.

- Have them break up into pairs in the corner to discuss their reasons for selecting that answer.

- Then have each corner report out their answers and justifications.
What is the primary cause of the Civil War?

A: Slavery and the Union were the fundamental causes.

B: The War was caused by the basic economic conflict between an industrial North and an agricultural South.

C: Civil War was a great mistake due to the breakdown of political infrastructures and the ineptitude of a blundering generation of leaders.

D: Civil War was an all but inevitable clash between two cultures and two sets of social values.
http://www.polleverywhere.com Live polls that students can respond to with phone or computer. Pose “would you rather” style questions that relate to the theme of your course and have students register their thoughts.

http://photopeach.com Free online slideshow software that students use to respond to questions about who they are and related to course content. It allows students to respond via photo, music and typed text. Can be accessed outside of class and is secure.
http://popplet.com This is a group concept mapping tool. It is free for up to seven popplets created but students can discard old popplets to stay in the free zone.
Group Brainstorm of Ideas and Resources
Thanks for coming!

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