



Community Builders

Introducing community-building activities into your everyday classroom practice can create an environment that allows for risk-taking, creativity, and active participation. Practicing these exercises can encourage your student to start to work as an “ensemble”—being open to each other’s ideas and choices. And if you’re teaching virtually, we believe that these low-stakes, engaging activities can help draw out even the most “camera-shy” student.

Note: If you’re using Google Meet, you and your students can download [this extension](#) to make sure everyone in the “room” can see each other at once!

Kname Knowledge

Watch [▶ this video](#) to see how this activity can work in a virtual classroom.

Students think of an adjective that begins with the same sound as their name—not necessarily the same letter! To begin, the class forms a circle. One student says their adjective and name, making a bold vocal choice and accompanying it with a physical gesture connected to their adjective. The group repeats the student’s adjective, name, and gesture, call-and-response style. The next student takes their turn right away, with the group echoing the vocal and physical choice. Continue until everyone has presented.

Group Counting

Watch [▶ this video](#) to see how this activity can work in a virtual classroom.

The goal is to count as high as possible as a group, with only one person offering each number in sequence. There is no set order of who speaks when. With the class standing in a circle, one person starts by saying, “One.” Anyone can now offer “Two,” and so on. The class should listen for the “space” or “opening” between numbers and offer the next number when they are moved to do so. When two or more people talk at the same time, the group celebrates with jazz hands and “Yay!”



before starting all over from “One”—a playful, fun way to celebrate our “failures” (which are not really failures at all!). Keep trying to see how high you can count!

Group Juggling

Watch [▶ this video](#) to see how this activity can work in a virtual classroom.

Standing in a circle, the class tosses a ball from one person to another in any pattern, with everyone getting the ball only one time. The final person should toss the ball back to the first person, closing the pattern. The class then repeats the same pattern, with the facilitator picking up the speed, and eventually adding more balls to the mix as they continue.

What Are You Doing?

Watch [▶ this video](#) to see how this activity can work in a virtual classroom.

The class forms two parallel lines with enough room in between for “action” to take place. The first student in one line, Student A, steps into the empty space and begins miming any action (e.g. bouncing a basketball). The first student in the opposite line, Student B, steps out and, addressing Student A, asks, “[Name], what are you doing?” (A good name reinforcer!) Student A then states any action that is not what they are miming (e.g. “I’m baking a cake”). Student B then mimes Student A’s *stated action*. Then Student A asks, “[Name], what are you doing?”. Continue until all students have had a chance to play.

Variation: Once students feel confident with the exercise, ask them to choose actions that relate to the plot/characters of a current text they’re studying.



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