

Building Community

Why Community Within the Classroom Is Important

Emotional:

1. Fills students' needs for belonging
 - a. They can contribute to the community's success
 - b. They can benefit from its rewards.
2. Provides a way for all students to be included
3. Allows students to form and maintain positive relationships
4. Teaches students social skills
5. Teaches the importance of collaboration
6. Teaches a sense of responsibility towards others.

Academic:

1. Students retain more information when relaxed and accepted
2. Students are more motivated to participate when they feel safe and secure
3. Students are motivated to ATTEND (even when they don't feel like it)

Teacher Habits that Encourage Community

- Arrange the classroom in a semicircle instead of in rows. This is more conducive to conversation and is less formal and rigid. Sometimes group in two or three smaller circles.
- Get to class before the students and greet them warmly as they arrive. SMILE! Before class, when only a few students are there, get to know them.
- Model desired behaviors. Remember, "A good example is more valuable than good advice." (from thingsweforget.blogspot.com)
- Plan a lot of interactive group work. Use grouping strategies that allow students to practice with different students every day.
- Sometimes pair more fluent speakers with less fluent ones.
- Let students know they will be welcomed back to class if they have to be absent. Let them know that they were missed (but don't make them feel guilty for missing class).
- Make language learning fun. A sense of humor breaks the ice, lowers barriers to communication, and builds community.

- Make time after class to follow up with individuals about personal situations that may be affecting their attendance.
- Contact students who are absent, either by phone, text, e-mail, or note.

Example of text message or phone message:

“Hello. This is _____, your English teacher. We miss you in class! Hope to see you next week!”

Activities We Can Use to Foster Community in the Classroom

- Name Games.
 - Energetic Elaine, Sweet Sue, Adorable Ann, etc.
 - Catch the sock. Name the person who threw it to you. Say your own name.
 - Throw the sock. Name the person you are throwing it to, then throw it to him/her.
- Personal Information Games.
 - Truth or Lie (See Page 7)
 - Fact or Fiction (See Page 7)
- Interviews: Surveys (One-on-One Interviews), Facing Lines, Facing Circles, Large Group Interaction (See Four Types of Interviews, Pages 8-9)
- Use photographs of students for grouping
- Use name tents for grouping
- Begin a class website or set up group e-mail interaction (Be sure to Bcc so students cannot see each other’s email addresses. Also, get permission from each student (in writing) to share e-mail addresses just in case someone accidentally forgets to press Bcc.)
- WhatsApp
- Each student makes a Family Book or Family Collage to share with the class. Beginning students may only be able to name the person and their relationship (mother, father, etc.), but more advanced students may share information about each family member’s interesting traits or interests. (Ellen Booth Church)
- Make a class collage of pictures of students and their interests.

- Provide opportunities for students to share information about their countries and cultures.
- Count the students from each country. Cheer for the country with the most students, and laugh with and show sympathy for the student who has no one from his country. (Cathy Sunshine)
- Students find their country on a big world map. Print (free of charge) large maps by going to <http://www.yourchildlearns.com/megamaps.htm> (Cathy Sunshine)
- Students can use country flags, and students learn to say the colors of their flags (Cathy Sunshine)
- Take group photo of your class. Great gift for Christmas or end of the year
- Students tell the class about themselves and their aspirations (why do they want to study English?)
- Students set goals as individuals and as class (ESOL Starter Kit) (See Specific Goals, Page 10)
- Two groups of students compete in class. Example: Tic Tac Toe or Alphabet Game. (See Page 11, 12)
- Use Student names and interests in dictation, vocabulary, grammar sentences, or mixed-up sentences (See Page 13)
- Use Language Experience Approach. Start with discussion of an experience or event (banquet, holiday, photograph). Teacher writes on board exactly what students say with no corrections of grammar or sentence structure. Teacher reads story back to students. Class discusses ways to make corrections.
- Use Student Dictation. One student dictates a sentence while others write what they hear. They laugh because it shows the speaker which words she isn't saying clearly, and it shows the writers the words they need more practice spelling. After everyone has written the sentence, the teacher writes it correctly on the board. This gives opportunity to talk about grammar and punctuation. To create more opportunities for speakers, divide into small groups—one student dictates to his small group while others write. As they laugh and learn, they build relationships.
- Have a tea party! Teacher provides tea and cookies. Students sit around and chat. For beginners, this would happen after the first six weeks so students will have some English words to use! (Gloria Russell and Peggie Waller)
- Students take turns bringing in snacks from their countries.

- After practicing ordering food by phone, students order pizza and have it delivered to the classroom! (Remember to teach tipping and set an example by tipping well!) (Talk to the pizza place before class so they'll be expecting your call) (Sue Isaac)
- Encourage students to share their talents. After rehearsing in class, maybe they can share during large group time
- Practice choral reading or play in classroom, then perform for Large Group or Banquet
- Give a baby shower (Gloria Russell and Peggie Waller)
- Celebrate birthdays with a cupcake with candle (Sue Blackwell)

Activities We Can Use to Foster Community Within the ESL Ministry

- Have group refreshments time so all classes can mingle (TELL)
- Celebrate birthdays with cake and singing (TELL)
- Have banquets and invite students' families (TELL)
- Invite entertainment (such as puppet ministry) and laugh together
- Invite former students to help as ESL leaders
- Celebrate baptisms with your students
- Enjoy dessert receptions (FBC Orlando)

Activities We Can Use to Foster Community Outside the Classroom

- After studying how to order food at the Townhouse Restaurant, Madelda Thompson and her class walked to the Townhouse, ordered, and ate during class time.
- After you study the post office, write and mail a letter at the post office
- Take a "Walk and Talk" excursion around your campus (if it's safe)
- Tour your local library
- Study American football and then go to a game. (from Cayln Reber Stringer, who lives in Tallahassee and took her students to an FSU game!)
- Give a baby shower for a staff member and invite students from your ministry into an American home.

- Students may organize a shower in one of their homes and invite teachers and classmates.
- Meet in a local restaurant on a different day than your class day.
- Go to a student's home for their birthday
- Invite students to meet you at Panera for food and fellowship (Peggie and Gloria Russell)
- Invite one or two students to meet for lunch
- Invite students to your home for lunch or dinner
- Invite students to go with you to a free or inexpensive local attraction (such as boat ride in Winter Park)
- Invite students to tour local art museums on days when admission is free (SB)

Just a Little Something Extra

Activities to Address Differences in Conversational Ballgames

(from Glenda Reece) Put students in groups of 4. Have them throw a soft Nerf ball (or rolled up sock) back and forth as they discuss a topic.

Teach them filler comments such as,

"I'm not sure I know."

"Let me think about that."

"Let _____ answer this one."

Glenda says that personal questions such as,

"How was your weekend?"

"Did you eat lunch?"

might never be asked in their country!

So let them PRACTICE answering the personal questions!

Also, to encourage them to talk, find something they're interested in discussing that's not so personal.

English Fillers (or Gap Fillers)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKmkB7OVO> **M**

1. Tell me something
2. Well,

3. You see,
4. By the way,
5. To be honest,
6. Exactly, You're right!
7. You know. . . .
8. Basically,
9. Certainly. . . .

YouTube video gives good examples on when to use each one.

Here are some other American English fillers (from Glenda Reece):

1. I don't get it –
2. Really? –
3. That's interesting –
4. You're kidding –
5. I give up

American Conversation Noises (more from Glenda Reece):

Ummmm (I heard you, and I'm considering your words.)

Ahhhhh (I'm filling time so I can think for a moment)

Ah! (I understand)

Uh...??? (I don't understand)

Uh huh (It means you are listening.)

Uhn uhn (means no) –

Mm mmm (means no, and has body language) –

Uh (gives speaker time to think of something to say) –

Hmmm (I am thinking)

And conversational exclamations (and more from Glenda)!

Uh oh (Oh, no. There is trouble) –

You know! (You understand or I am thinking) –

Hey! (A casual way to draw attention to what you are saying. It often begins a sentence) –

Oops! (made a mistake or drops something)

Huh?! (I don't hear or I don't understand.)

And the art of "In other words." (Repeating what you think someone said.)

Truth or Lies

<http://eslgames.com/>

Teacher says three sentences about himself (or herself).
Students must guess which sentence is a lie.

Example: My brother (cousin) was a pro baseball player
I can ride a bicycle
My favorite food is sushi

Next, the teacher invites the students to discuss in pairs which statement they think is the lie. Then the teacher asks each pair which statement they think is untrue and has them explain why. Then the teacher reveals the answer.

Next, students come up with 3 sentences about themselves. The website writer of this activity says,

“I find students need quite a lot of time (at least five minutes) to come up with three ideas. If some students are still short of a sentence or two, start the game anyway, and they can finish their statements during play.”

Next, the teacher checks students' statements and has them take turns reading the statements aloud to the class. In each case, the other students have to guess which is the untrue statement.

Fact or Fiction

http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1502&context=ipp_collection

This is designed to help new students bond with the group and to help everyone feel comfortable together. When a new student arrives in class, two volunteers sit on each side of him. When the class asks the new student a question (to help them get to know him better), the **volunteers** answer. If the answer is correct, the new student gives a thumbs up. If incorrect, thumbs down. Since no one knows anything about the new student, the answers can be really funny, especially to the new student!

Four Types of Interviews That Build Community

Interviews:

Survey (One-on-One Interview):

1. How many years have you studied English? _____
2. What languages do you speak? _____
3. Where were you born? _____
4. How long have you lived in Florida? _____
5. What is your favorite thing about living in Florida? _____
6. What do you miss most about your home country? _____
7. What BIG event is coming up in your life? _____

Speed Dating (or Facing Lines)

Use the same questions. Two lines of students face each other. Students interview the person standing directly across from them. Line A asks questions and Line B answers. Many students are talking at once! Teacher may ask students to ask all the questions or just some. Teacher may allow students to decide which questions to ask. After three minutes, Lines A & B switch roles. Now, Line B asks the questions and Line A answers. After three minutes, ask everyone to stop talking. Line A will stand still. Line B will move to the right so that everyone is facing someone new. (The student at the far right of Line B will need to go to the opposite end of the line.) Students begin the interview process again.

Speed Dating 2 (or Facing Circles)

Use these same questions. Two circles of students (one inside the other) face each other. Students interview the person standing directly across from them. Circle A asks questions and Circle B answers. Many people will be talking at once! Teacher may ask students to ask all the questions or just some. Teacher may allow students to decide

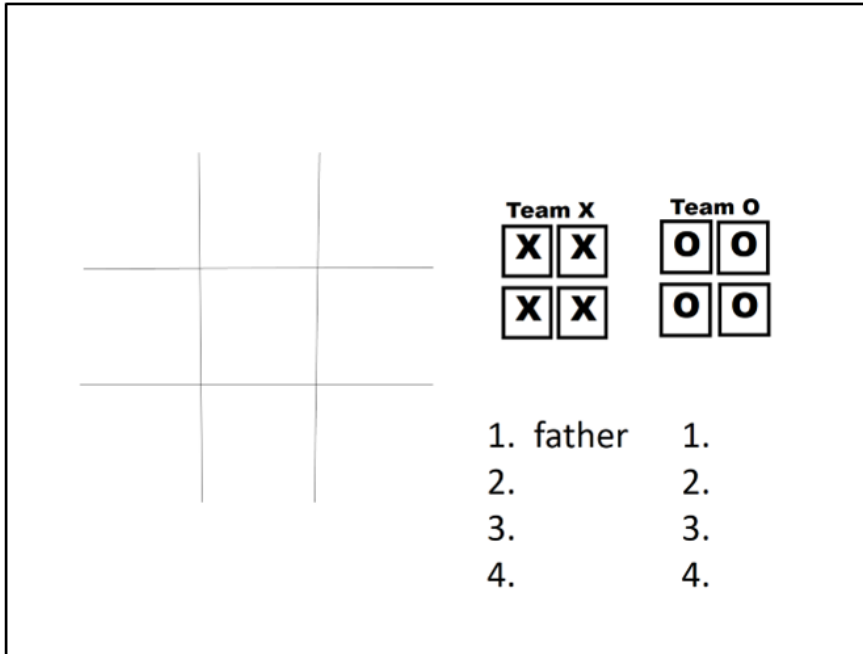
which questions to ask. After three minutes, Circles A & B switch roles. Now, Circle B asks the questions and Circle A answers. After three minutes, ask everyone to stop talking. Circle A stands still. Circle B revolves clockwise until everyone is facing someone new. Students begin the interview process again.

Large Group Interaction

As a large group, ask one student to share his/her answer to Question 8 (or you may wish to share your own answer to that question). Ask if anyone in the class has already faced that life event. Ask if students have any advice to share about how to handle the situation well (or the mistakes they made in that situation). Then ask for a student to share his/her answer to Question 8, and ask for advice from the other students.

SPECIFIC GOALS (Check the appropriate column)

	Already Know	Want to Learn	Not Important
report an emergency			
write personal information			
read signs (road, stores, job etc.)			
use bank (fill out forms)			
use post office (fill out forms)			
use American money			
read newspaper ads (sales, jobs, housing etc.)			
write letters and notes			
fill out job application			
read letter from child's school			
shop for food			



Tic Tac Toe

Make a grid on the board.
 Tape X and O markers beside it.
 Number 1 – 4 under each set of markers.

Use this to review the topic of the class.
 If Beginners are studying families,
 You could ask, "Who is in a family?"

When a team gives a correct answer,
 Write their answer under their markers to avoid repeats.
 They can place the x or O in the space of their choice.

First to get three in a row wins.

Alphabet Game			
A	H	O	V
B	I	P	W
C	J	Q	X
D	K	R	Y
E	L	S	Z
F	M	T	
G	N	U	

Another easy game uses an alphabet grid. The teacher writes the alphabet on the board (with room beside each letter for student responses). Students name an item that begins with that letter that fits the category.

An example might be:
Name a vegetable that begins with each letter.

To get a list for yourself, google, "Vegetables that begin with letters of the alphabet."

Using Student Names on Worksheets. When creating sentences for dictation or for grammar practice, use the students' names and interests in the sentences. It personalizes the activity. It helps students feel important and part of the group.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Homework Lesson 4

1. English class is in _____.
2. Martha is in my _____.
3. Juan is from _____.
4. Sukyong is from _____.
5. We learn _____ in class on Tuesday nights.
6. Sau Mei is a _____ in my class.
7. Tjon is a _____ in my class.

China	man
Mexico	woman
The United States of America	class
	English

Mixed-Up Sentences. Give students a sentence about one of them but scramble the words! Again, students learn more about the classmate as they unscramble the sentence.

United States China Surinam cruise ship in in to before on
Sau Mei came lived born was but the a she she

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by Rachel Fabian Hope Hardin Maria Hodapp Dr. Cheri Pierson
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To ask questions, write to fostereslcommunity@gmail.com

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by Cathy Sunshine (no longer online)

Gloria Russell and Peggie Waller, Teachers of Intermediates, CrossLife Church

Sue Blackwell, UCF Community English Club, Director, ESL Workshop Leader, and Co-Director at Aloma Church

Sue Isaac, ESL Workshop Leader and Co-Director at Aloma Church