**Community building**

1. Vision boards, ‘*The* *Secret’*. A vision boards are a visual of the things we want in our lives. The idea is that if you can see it in your mind then you will be able to have it in your life. I think a vision board is a great activity to do the first week. Each student can bring in their own paper, pictures, words, and items that show exactly what they want in this academic year and their long term personal goals. These boards can be shared and used a tools throughout the years. I have created a ‘dream tree’ past where students put their dreams on the leaves. Every time someone did something positive I added a new life. Our tree grew as we grew as a community.
2. Appreciations. During my pre-service teaching I have learned to love appreciations. Appreciations is a simple activity in which the classroom has a few moments at the end of the day to appreciate other members of the class for anything. It makes people feel good and is a great way to create a positive energy in the classroom.
3. Connections. Connections is where each person in the class has the opportunity to say whatever it is on their mind. There is no responding or additional remarks while people are sharing. You do have the right to pass. After everyone has had a chance to talk then you can make cross-connections. Cross-connections are responses to others peoples original connection.
4. Peek-a-who. I had the opportunity to play this fun game in class. You divide the class into teams. Then you have two people hold a blanket up in between the two teams. Each team sends a person up to the blanket. When the blanket drops the person who says the other persons’ name first wins that round. The loser goes to the winning team. The object of the game is to get the most people on your side. It is a great way to learn people’s names. I would play this game two times a semesters to refresh our community.
5. Tea Party. Tea party is a great way to combine an academic subject with community building. In my sixth grade social studies class we are learning about Latin America. I had started off the day with a KWL chart about the history of Latin America to activate prior knowledge. Throughout that day the students took notes in the learned column. The next day we revisited our KWL charts by having a tea party. The students took out the chart and were told that while the music from Brazil played they were to move quickly around the room. They are not to stop until the music stopped. When they stop they were to have a tea party and have get a new piece of information from a peer and write their name by it and give a piece of information. The process happens three or four times, stopping just for one minute each time with a new person. At the end we shared who we got something new from while trying never to repeat the same thing. It is one of my favorite community building activities because it can be built into the lesson and it helps students learn their peers’ names.