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| **A picture containing logo  Description automatically generatedConsiderations** This short guide is intended to think through the elements that create an environment for engaging students in a Cognitive Community. It is not a checklist nor is it evaluative. It is a way to start discussion around important elements of a learning environment.  |
| **Considerations for Making Ongoing Connections with Students*** How am I learning about the interests of my students, both synchronously and asynchronously?
* Where do my students have opportunities to choose and share interests?
* How am I creating a safe and respectful environment?
* Am I greeting and addressing my students by name?

Ideas:1. Collect Evidence: Use student surveys, Google Forms and journals to learn about how your students are doing academically and personally
2. Build in time to allow for connection. Get to synchronous sessions early and stay late, incorporate soft starts, have Lunch and Learns, use office offices to connect
3. Develop norms with students and post them, referring them to frequently and incorporating them into your routines
 | **Considerations for Partnering with Families*** Have I established a consistent location and predictable schedule for sharing information?
* Am I building consistency into my communication with parents?
* Have I set boundaries in my expectations for responses?
* What other forms of communication are families receiving from the school and district?

Ideas:1. Coordinate with your team and administration to coordinate your efforts so that parents aren’t inundated with contacts.
2. Set clear expectations by surveying parents on their needs and sticking to your scheduled contact schedule.
3. Get to know who to connect parents with in order to solve problems that may occur like the IT dept. and food service.
4. Be patient with parents and families, understanding that there are many challenges for families right now.
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| **Considerations for Synchronous Time*** Am I using this time to connect with students and have them connect with each other?
* Is the time being spent actively?
* How can I use this time to inspire and energize the work?
* How can I reduce my voice and raise the voice of students?
* How am I preparing students for asynchronous time?

**Ideas**1. Synchronous time is different, and it could be used to allow for interaction rather than content delivery. If students are preparing for synchronous time before you meet, they may be more apt to participate.
2. Creating an environment where students are discussing relevant problems and solutions may evoke discussion.
3. Synchronous time could be a time for sharing the process and progress of student work. There is an authentic audience that could give feedback.
4. Prep students for responses by connecting individually during asynchronous time to plant responders in the class. Sometimes it takes a few responses to loosen things up.
5. Take advantage of the chat, a Google doc or another written interactive element and highlight the responses.
6. Don’t be afraid of the soft start. Get there early and stay late if you can to have some time to connect.
 | **Considerations for Asynchronous Time*** Have I given clear instructions in multiple places with easy access to resources?
* How could I have students collaborate asynchronously around this work?
* Is the work relevant and engaging to the student?
* How am I offering feedback to students around the asynchronous work?

**Ideas**1. Focus on process over product. Ask students to detail what they are doing and how it leads them to understanding. This raises metacognitive thinking and helps transfer skills.
2. Using Google docs to co-create is a great way to get students to collaborate, but it must be set up with expectations and roles so that the work is truly collaborative.
3. Meeting with small groups, if possible, creates connection and can help move collaborative work along.
4. Allow for choice. Topics for research or writing are a great way to individualize learning.
5. Make sure that you have taught students where to find resources. Making them clear and in multiple places will alleviate confusion. Making sure that students know where and how to ask questions is helpful.
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