

Community Building Activities

Description

This resource is provided as an example of the Inclusive Research & Development Key Action of “Invest time in relationship-building and building a sense of community across the team.”

This resource includes a selection of activities drawn from the EF+Math community that support relationship-building in different ways and at different stages of collaboration. The resources fall into multiple categories:

- **Relationship Building Activities:** Activities that help team members learn about one another’s backgrounds, experiences, and interests.
- **Connection Activities:** Activities that foster interpersonal connection through shared reflection and experience. These include opportunities for participants to reflect on how they are arriving emotionally or mentally to the work; explore personal experiences and perspectives related to the content; and engage in shared experiences connected to the topic of the work.
- **Community Agreements:** A protocol that establishes shared expectations for how participants will engage with one another, helping to create a respectful environment where all voices can be heard.
- **Equity Commitments:** Structured opportunity for teams to articulate how equity will shape their R&D processes.

This collection is designed as a starting point. Teams may use these activities directly or adapt them to better align with their goals, participants, and contexts.

For teams ready to begin their co-design process with researchers, developers, educators and students, we recommend also reviewing the **Community Charter Template** in the EF+Math resource library.



Devote a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting for people to get to know each other.

In this activity, each person completes a fun, semi-structured template—sharing their favorite place, superpower, and more—followed by a brief, interactive small group activity to deepen connections.

Pre-work

Ask each participant to complete the “All About Me” slide on the next page and bring it to the meeting.

The template is titled "All About [Name]" with a subtitle "Directions: Add images and words about yourself to complete the template." It contains six boxes arranged in a 2x3 grid, each with a small icon and a label: "Favorite Place" (location pin icon), "Favorite Pastime" (game controller icon), "Favorite Book, Song, or Movie" (book icon), "Favorite Food" (fork and knife icon), "Guilt Pleasure" (ghost icon), and "Superpower" (lightning bolt icon).

Facilitation Guide (15-20 mins)

Breakout Room 1

5 Minutes

- Two people will be placed in each room.
- Share your screen and introduce yourself using your “All About Me” slide.
- The other person should take notes, because you will be introducing the person you have met in the next section.

Breakout Room 2

10 Minutes

- You and your partner will be paired with two more people.
- Each person will introduce their first partner to the two new people in the room.
- As a foursome, you will collaborate to create a list of **common threads**.
- Before returning to the main room, please decide on a presenter to share your common threads with the full group.

Full Group Discussion

- Every group presenter will share common threads.

All About Me

Directions: Add images and words about yourself to complete the template.



Favorite Place



Favorite Pastime



**Favorite Book, Song, or
Movie**



Favorite Food



Guilty Pleasure



Superpower

Build strong relationships by getting to know your colleagues on a deeper level.

Each team member will complete a personalized card, which the group will then review.

To spark conversation, each person will highlight one detail from their card and pose a probing question to a teammate.

You can then save these cards as a future resource.

[Insert Name and Role]

[Add a photo]

My Why

I do this work because....[complete the sentence]

My Style

You can add points here about:

- your personality
- what energizes you:
- what drains you
- your preferences working in a virtual environment:
- your leadership style

What I Value

You can add points here about:

- what is important to you at work
- what is important to you in your personal life
- what you value from your organization
- what you value from the team members you lead or who lead you

How to help me

You can add points here about:

- how others can best work with you
- some of your strengths or complementary skills others have to your skills that you seek collaboration on

My identities

Add the identities that are important to you e.g. daughter, runner, entrepreneur etc.

Identity

Identity

Identity

Identity

Identity

What people misunderstand about me

You can add points here about:

- what you would like people to understand about you that you don't often verbalize;
- some of your behaviours that people misinterpret

My Goals

You can add points here about:

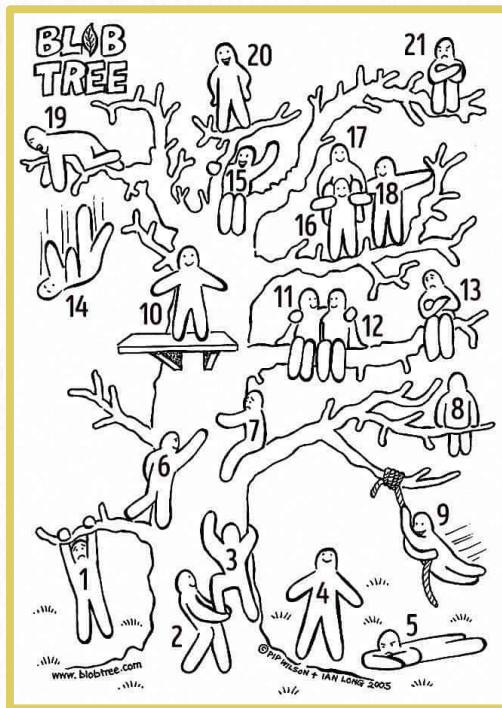
- your top 1 - 3 personal / professional goals for the coming year



Check in with the team at the start of the meeting with a reflective connection activity.

Participants select a character from the Blob Tree image that represents how they are feeling or how they're showing up today, using visual metaphor to support reflection.

Small groups look for interesting patterns in their selections to connect and spark light conversation.



Facilitation Guide (10 mins)

Silent Reflection 3 minutes

- Invite participants to look at the Blob Tree image.
- Prompt: *Which Blob feels most like you today?*
- Ask everyone to put the number of their Blob in the chat.

Small Group Discussion 7 Minutes

In breakout rooms, participants share their Blob choices and then work together to find something interesting their numbers have in common.

Examples to spark ideas:

- "All of our numbers are prime."
- "All of our numbers are divisible by 3."
- "All of our numbers round to 10."
- "Our numbers are all 2 apart."

Encourage groups to be creative!

Build connections through an activity that gets people moving around the room and meeting new people.

Participants hear a series of statements and place themselves in the room to show if they agree or disagree.

Brief partner conversations throughout give participants a chance to share with others in the room. This activity is well suited for large groups

Facilitation Guide	
<p>[1 min] Describe the activity.</p> <p>Invite participants to engage in this fun warm up activity. The facilitator will share a statement, and then everyone will physically place themselves along an imaginary line in the room based on how much they agree or disagree.</p>	
<p>[1 min] Read the choices shown on the slide. Example:</p>	<div><p>"I felt confident doing math in school."</p><div><div>Strongly Disagree</div><div></div><div>Strongly Agree</div></div></div>
<p>[20 sec] Move to the area of the room that <i>most</i> aligns with you.</p> <p>One side of the room represents "strongly disagree," and the other represents "strongly agree."</p>	
<p>[3 mins] Turn and talk! Turn to someone standing next to you and share more about your choice and respond to the discussion prompt. Example:</p>	<div><p>What have you learned about how to help students build confidence in their ability to do math?</p><p>Discussion Prompt</p></div>
<p>Repeat 2 more times!</p> <p>Example statements and discussion prompts are included on the next page. These can be adapted to be related to the content of your work, or they can be more lighthearted.</p>	

Sample Statements

Strongly Disagree ————— Strongly Agree

Prompt 1

“I felt confident doing math in school.”

Prompt 2

“My identity has shaped how others see me as a learner.”

Prompt 3

“I’ve experienced joy while learning math.”

Sample Discussion Prompts



What have you learned about how to help students build confidence in their ability to do math?



How can we better honor the brilliance of our learners?



What can we do better to ensure all students can experience joy as math learners?

Invite teammates to do math together to build connections.

In this activity, participants engage in two short rounds of math problem solving — first independently, then in pairs.

Small-group discussion focuses on the experience of doing the math and connects to how students might experience similar tasks.

Facilitation Guide (15 mins)

[3 min] Solve as many problems as you can, working individually

- ❖ Lin's family has completed 60% of a trip. They have traveled 30 miles. How long is the whole trip?
- ❖ The Radio Flyer wagon is 27 feet long, 13 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. The wagon is being used to deliver 4,000 boxes that each have the side lengths 2 feet by 2 feet. How many trips will the wagon have to make?

[5 min] Pick one math problem and start to work on it with a partner

- ❖ Create two rectangles so that the first has a bigger perimeter, and the second a bigger area.
- ❖ It costs \$1.50 each way to ride the bus home between home and work. A weekly pass is \$16. Which is the better deal, paying the daily fair, or buying the weekly pass?

[7 mins] Turn and talk! Discuss with your table

- What was it like solving the first set of problems? What about the second set?
- How did the problems make you feel?
- How do you think these tasks might make students feel?
- How did you use your EFs as you worked on each task?
- What mathematical strengths, including EFs, might a student bring to this task?



Set Community Agreements to create a shared foundation for how the team works together.

Community Agreements establish expectations that support participants in feeling heard, respected, and valued, and they help foster a space where honest dialogue and learning can happen.

Facilitation Guide

- **Plan ahead:** Include Community Agreements in the meeting agenda and set aside dedicated time to introduce and discuss them.
- **Provide context:** Share why the agreements matter and what the team hopes to get out of them.
- **Review together:** Present the agreements and briefly walk through each one. Invite clarifying questions or reflections.
- **Make space for input:** Ask participants if there are additional agreements they'd like to add to support the group's work.
- **Close the loop:** At the end of meetings, briefly reflect on how the agreements supported the conversation and collaboration.
- **Revisit regularly:** Return to the agreements at the start of future meetings.

Community Agreements

- **Speak from the "I."** *We speak from our experiences instead of using generalizations.*
- **Assume good intentions but name and own our impact.** *Regardless of our intentions, impact still occurred. Seek to repair and learn.*
- **Use respectful communication.** *We offer mutual respect and acknowledge that we are all learners. We aim to receive and give feedback with love.*
- **Make space.** *Everyone has something valuable to contribute, so be cognizant of how much air time you're taking.*
- **No one knows everything, together we know a lot.** *We don't expect perfection, instead let's learn together.*
- **Stories stay, learnings leave.** *We don't share names or specific stories we heard in breakout rooms, but we do take away learnings.*

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Develop commitments to outline how equity will actively shape decisions, processes, and outcomes throughout the R&D process.

Setting aside dedicated time for teams to name and agree on their commitments helps move equity from intention to action, and creates shared accountability for revisiting them over time.

Facilitation Guide (30 mins)	
Framing (5 Minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share the purpose of Equity Commitments: making explicit how the team will center equity in both process and outcomes.• Review a few sample commitments on the next page.• Introduce discussion prompts to guide small-group work. Thinking about your co-design process and your product, specifically:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ How is your co-design team going to provide access?◦ How will your team honor the identities of students, families, and educators?◦ How is your co-design team going to define achievement with culturally relevant measures?◦ How will your team affirm the power of students living in poverty, Black and Latinx students and educators?
Small Group Discussion (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm and iterate on a set of commitments to ensure equity is centered in the co-design process and outcomes.• Record your group's commitments.
Group Discussion (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share 1-2 of your commitments with the group.• Discuss: <i>What should we do when we notice we are not living up to these commitments?</i>• Introduce the idea of Equity Pauses:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Pause in the moment.◦ Analyze the process and identify the root cause factors.◦ Name actions to take.
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The core team will integrate and finalize commitments and share them back with the whole team.• Revisit them regularly



Explore Examples

Examples of Equity Commitments

- ▣ Our co-design team will **provide access** by **meeting community members where they are** -- in their homes and neighborhoods -- rather than requiring them to come to us.
- ▣ Our team will **honor identities** by ensuring that **all major meetings and decisions include representative voices and perspectives**.
- ▣ Our co-design team will **define achievement** with culturally relevant measures by focusing on growth rather than static performance.
- ▣ Our team will **affirm the power** of students experiencing poverty and Black and Latinx students and educators by ensuring that students see themselves and their interests reflected in the work (e.g., examples and assignments).