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1) YARN WEB:

Early in the semester of a brand new year, I like to work on team building right away. One of the first activities I do is a Yarn Web. I do this on a day that the tutors are available so that they can also get to know the students better.

Necessary Items: Rolled up Ball of Yarn.

Instructions: I start the yarn web by holding on to a piece of unraveled yarn and then I throw the ball to someone in the class. The recipient says his/her name and then I ask a "getting to know you" type of question. The student then repeats this pattern with another recipient until everyone is holding on to a piece of the yarn creating a weblike structure.

While holding the yarn, students are then asked to make observations. Most will create a simile/metaphor for the AVID class. If not, then I guide them with the idea that we are holding on to each other as we pursue our goals and if someone should let of his/her yarn, we will all be impacted.

2) STEP EXERCISE

Objective: To show students the motions of their actions. They are either moving forward toward their goals or backward away from their goals.

Necessary Items: A list of potential forward and back questions. See attached.

Instructions: I position the students facing the sun (if possible). Generally, the kids complain about the light in their eyes, but I tell them that we will constantly be facing obstacles that we will need to endure as we move forward toward our goals. Students are instructed to move forward or backward depending on the question at hand. I generally try to create distance between me and the kids with the goal of having them move forward toward me.

By the time they reach me, I call for observations. Most students understand the symbolism of moving toward goals. I then have each student say his/her name and announce one goal that he/she will be moving towards for the semester/year. However, there is one catch--the students are not allowed to repeat each other's goals which forces them to think and allows them to create goals that others would not have considered.

***Possible AVID Step Exercise Directions

Take a step forward if you like pizza.
Take a step forward if you have all your books for your classes.
Take a step forward if you passed English with a C or better last year.
Take a step forward if you like all types of music.
Take two steps backward if you failed a class last year.
Take a step backward if you tend to have a tardy problem.
Take two steps backward if you had to attend summer school last year.
Take three steps forward if you actively participated in sports, music, drama, or a club last year.
Take two steps backward if you are not planning to get involved in any of these activities this year.
Take two steps backward if you hate English.
Take a step forward if you like writing essays or at least want to improve your writing.
Take two steps backward if you know someone who did not graduate from high school.
Take two steps backward if you often feel like you are dumb or just don't get it in school.
Take three steps backward if you are not the type to ask for help when you fall behind or don't understand something in class.
Take two steps backward if you did not attend homework center or study hall last year.
Take two steps forward if you know that graduating from high school is only the first step in your education process.
Take a step forward if you want your future children to attend college.
Take three steps forward if you will be the first in your family to attend a university.
Take three steps forward if you will continue a trend of going to college in your family.
Take three steps forward if you are going to fulfill more CSU and UC requirements this year because you are willing to do the work and ask for help when it is necessary.

3) Go Ahead and Ask me A Question!

Objective: To acquaint students with each other while building a positive AVID classroom environment.

Necessary Items: Index cards with questions on them. See attached sample questions.

Instructions: The class is set up in a casual atmosphere. In other words, desks are pushed out of way and a circle of students and tutors is created on the floor. The cards with questions are placed in the center of the circle. A tutor starts the activity by calling on someone to pick up a card and ask him/her a question. After the question is asked by the student and answered by the tutor, the student calls on someone else to pick up a card and ask him/her a question.

Observations: By the end of the activity students have come to know each other somewhat better. Another great aspect about this activity is that several of the questions focus on school which allows the students to ask layers of questions.

***Possible Notecard Questions

1. What grade are you most proud of for the first quarter and why?
2. What has been your most challenging assignment so far in any class?
3. What has been your most challenging class so far?
4. What inspires you to keep striving to do your best?
5. If you could change your grade in a class, what would it be and why isn't it already that grade?
6. What is the best thing about being in AVID?
7. What advice would you give to someone who is struggling in one of his/her Honors classes?
8. Who inspires you in our AVID class and why?
9. Who is your favorite tutor and why?
10. What is something you regret about first quarter?
11. What extracurricular activity were you involved in first quarter?
12. What is a good quality that Ms. Hernandez has as an AVID teacher?
13. What is a something that Ms. Hernandez can improve about herself or the class to make you a happier or more successful AVID student?
14. What is something you plan to do differently for second quarter?
15. What is something you plan to continue doing for second quarter?
16. Who has been the most helpful AVID student during your tutorials?
17. What is something unique about you as an AVID student?
18. Which university would you like Ms. Hernandez to take you to?
19. What complaint do you have about the tutors?
20. What is something you admire about the tutors?
21. If you were chosen to give a presentation about AVID to teachers who know nothing about the program, what would you tell them? How would you describe the program and its value?
22. Tell why someone should or should not be removed from AVID if they have only F's and D's.

23. Of all your teachers, who do you think would be a good AVID teacher and why?
24. What scares you the most about being in AVID?
25. What have your friends said about you being an AVID student?
26. What have you done to help one of your friends academically who is not in AVID?
27. What would you want Ms. Hernandez to tell your parents if she was ever invited to dinner at your house? (By the way, what is for dinner?)
28. What is something you would want Ms. Hernandez to do for you that your parents cannot or will not do?
29. What is something you have recently learned in one of your classes that you never understood or did not know before?
30. With all the resources, attention, and support, why do you think there are some AVID students who are failing?
31. Other than a university, what kind of field trip would be inspiring? In other words, where do you think the class should go for an educational/inspirational field trip?
32. What book are you reading for silent reading? Is it a book you would recommend? Why or why not?
33. Even though the AVID dating rules are meant to be funny, why do you think they may be good to consider when choosing someone to like or hang out with?
34. Which AVID poster do you like the best and why? Can you relate?
35. Which AVID student do you think will be famous some day, and why?
36. Which AVID student do you worry about? What advice would you give him/her?
37. If our AVID class could have a theme song, what would it be?
38. If you were going to buy Ms. Hernandez a car, what would you buy her and why?
39. Create a simile and explanation for AVID. AVID is like _____, because _____.
40. Create a simile and explanation for being an AVID student. Being an AVID student is like _____, because _____.

Which AVID student inspires you to be a better tutor and why?

Which AVID student makes tutoring more fun than you thought it would be?

As a college student, what advice would you give to a high school student?

So far, what has been your most challenging course at the university?

What is the one piece of advice that you would give Ms. Hernandez to help her improve her teaching and/or the AVID class?

If you didn't have a tutoring job, what would you be doing to earn money while you are in college?

What is something you admire about AVID students that is different than who you were as a high school student?