



Engagement Strategies for Reflection

Conversation Strategies:

Question Mingle – develop questions on slips of paper and have students conduct a “mini interview” with partners

Conversation Dial – Have group members find a partner and form an inner and outer circle (concentric circles) with partners facing each other. Ask a question. Partners share with one another. Have one of the circles (inner/outer) shift to a new person (ex. 3 people to the left). Ask another question. Partners share. Continue through reflection questions, changing partners along the way.

Crowdsourcing – Divide into smaller groups (3-5 people) and give each group a piece of flipchart paper or another place to capture their work. Ask the groups to brainstorm about a topic given a particular time frame. (ex. Write everything you know about the Civil War in the next 3 minutes). Small groups share out. This gets a lot of information out quickly, gives an opportunity for assessment to the teacher and quick starts the brain.

Sentence Starters – Write the beginning of sentences for students to complete. (Ex. I will remember... I hope.... I promise... I learned.... Then use those starters as openings to group conversations

Take a stand – The group sits in a circle. One of one, each person “takes a stand” in front of the group and answers 3 questions. This could be a way to get to know each other (What is the history of your name? What is an important memory you have that you want to hold onto?) Or it could go a little deeper. (What is something you take a stand for?)

Get in groups of...3, 4, 5 (discuss a topic or solve a problem) – simple strategy to remember to mix up the small groups for discussion. Find creative ways to divide and choose the number of groups based on the different perspectives you would like to be present during the discussion as well as how much time you have for the exercise

Forced choice (on ideas or opinions on a topic- pick a side and discuss) – for a particular discussion topic, have students choose a side based on a particular topic of study. You can warm up with pick a side: vanilla or chocolate. The student goes to the side they choose and discuss why they chose that side. This same strategy can be used to discuss more dynamic topics

Questions in a hat – have students construct question they have about a particular topic. Place them in a hat and mix them up. Draw a question and have the group engage about the question. (Or pass the hat with each student drawing a question as the hat passes to them.)

Questions on a ball – Write reflection questions on the surface of a ball with “sides.” (Ex: What key learning did you explore during that exercise? What did you experience? How was that experience like others you have had in the past?) Pass the ball and students answer questions where their right thumb lands.

Index card Questions – Have students write questions on index cards about a reading, topic, etc. Mix up the cards and then randomly select cards for the group to offer advice or discuss a topic.



Choose a picture/quote/card that represents... - When students need a visual representation to prompt their thinking

Everyone stand up – Have all students stand up where they are. Ask them to share one thing that resonated or that “stuck” with them from the last lesson. They can sit down when they have shared.

Summarizing Strategies:

Headlines – Summarize a main point or a key learning as if it were a news headline.

6 word stories – Summarize your learning in a 6 word story

Sentence Starters - You start the sentence, they complete

Small group summaries - Small groups take a portion of a reading, article, concept and present main ideas to the larger group

Construct a Tweet –Summarize your learning in 140 characters

Meaning Making or Reflection Strategies:

Think-Pair-Share - ask students to do these 3 things about any given topic (especially good with reactions to things, also a good teaching strategy when 2 students have learned different things)

Journal - students write their reactions/thoughts/feelings about content, experiences

Free Write - students write whatever occurs to them about a topic you suggest. Brain dump without editing

Mind mapping - students start with a main concept and then let their brain build additional concepts showing the relationships between them

Caricature of a concept - Students create an exaggerated version of a concept or human characteristics (ex: ideal mentor, active listening, leader, etc.)

Skits - in small groups, students brainstorm quickly then present short skit to illustrate concepts

Role-plays - Similar to skits, but students act “as if” they are expressing someone else’s Point Of View

Artistic representations - Students capture what they learned or its significance by drawing, creating a sculpture with various materials, etc.

Talk and Walk - Students take a walk and talk with someone about a specific topic for a certain time. (Limits are important here - as are what you’ll ask when they return)

Take/Select a Picture that Represents ... - Students either select pre-chosen picture/images or they take a photo to represent a certain concept/strategy/idea/feeling/reaction



Life Journey Map (or a portion of a journey map) students identify and chronologically plot MAJOR events in a person's life (those that helped shape who they are)

Gratitude Journal - Students keep a journal of things for which they are grateful. This leads to greater resilience for managing stress.

Mindfulness Break or Meditation Moment - brief guided calming and centering process which eventually leads to either sharing insights or approaching the material with fresh eyes or calmer focus

Organizing strategies:

Vote With Your Feet - students move to identified locations to answer questions based on interest, knowledge, etc.

Vote With Dots - each student (anonymously) places a dot on an axis or continuum to reveal their answer to a question....to create a scattergram or degrees of agreement (think visual Likert scale)

Post-it Up - students jot down ideas onto sticky notes and post them up and then organize ideas by grouping like notes

Closings:

Exit ticket (index card, scrap paper, computer) answer 1 question; share 1 thing you learned; say 1 thing you'll carry with you; identify any idea you'd like more info on; write one question you have

Sounding - You ask a closing question. Everyone gets a chance to answer by going in order around a room or circle. (can give the option to pass)

Popcorn Conversation - Ask a question, the group answers "popcorn style" - contribute when you are ready (like popping corn)

Take Away Statements - identify what Major Idea or thought you're carrying out with you

"I Will" Statements - identify what you'll DO next about what you've learned

Appreciation Circle - say one thing you appreciate about someone else's contribution to your learning

Notecard Individual Appreciations - same as above, but in writing

Letter to Self - students write an introspective letter geared toward their future. Something they would like to read down the road (1 month, 1 year, 4 years, etc.)

"What If" Statements - students/class identifies a hope they have for the future phrased as a "what if" statement (ex: What if we all treated each other with respect? What if I could believe in my abilities to pursue my passions?)