# Activities for Engagement and Reflection

## Engagement

Stand and Talk: An engagement method by Sara Vanderwerf. Reference her blog below.

<https://saravanderwerf.com/2017/08/09/stand-talks-the-best-thing-i-ever-did-to-get-students-talking-to-one-another/>

**Purpose**

* Create classroom community
* Get the blood flowing
* Engage students in the upcoming lesson, or at least pique their interest

**Methodology**

1. Ask learners to stand up. “You should have nothing in your hands. In a moment I am going to give you something that I want you to look at with a partner. I want you and your partner to talk about things you notice and things you wonder about.”
2. Give prompt to half of the students. They must find a student without a prompt to partner with. (Ideally someone on the other side of the room.)
3. Put the prompt on the screen.
4. Move around the room, listening in. (1-3 minutes to talk)
5. When time is up, ask for volunteers to share one thing they noticed/wondered. Simply respond with a “thank you.”
6. Ask why they think we did this activity. Affirm that we are investigating, warming up, and meeting people.

**Thoughts**:

What is the next topic you are teaching? What kind of image could you use as a Stand and Talk?



## Reflections

I find that students are more aware of their learning when they are given time to reflect on their learning. My inspiration comes from Rich Bankhead did a great presentation a few years back on how he uses reflection in engineering and Mary Boldt who does daily reflections with her GED classes.

**Purpose**

* Students reflect on their learning needs; this shows students are aware of their needs and informs the teacher of needs that may not be evident.
* Students reflect on their learning successes; this builds confidence and proves to themselves that they are, indeed, learning something.
* Teachers learn about specific problems students are having. They get feedback before the end of the quarter.
* Teachers can implement student suggestions, giving them more agency in their learning.

**Methodologies**

There are many ways to approach reflections. Here are some examples:

* Students complete a daily journal about things that went well and need improving in their learning.
* Students can answer them as part of a quiz or test. (Everyone who answers it gets a point!)
* Students complete a weekly assignment answering reflection questions. I like to do this on Canvas where I can easily grade them with a rubric.
* They can be very specific.
  + What is one way that you see ratios in your life?
  + How did you feel about Wednesday’s discussion on colonization?
  + Did the M&M activity help you understand the concept of expressions?
* They can be general:
  + What is something that went well for you in class this week?
  + What is something that was difficult in class this week?
  + Do you have any suggestions for changes I could make?
  + Is there anything I didn’t do that you wish I had done?

**Thoughts**:

Where does it make sense to work reflections in to your class? What do you hope to learn from them? What do you hope the students will get out of them?