



Pedagogy On-The-Go

SECSA CHRIE Federation

Mirror, Mirror in the Classroom: Building an Engaged Classroom through Reflective Teaching



Energized by:

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🌟 True engagement isn't just about making learning fun—it's about shaping a space where students feel respected, challenged, and genuinely excited to participate. By combining authentic instructor enthusiasm, low-stakes playful activities, and high expectations infused with warmth, educators can create classrooms where students actively mirror the energy, mindset, and dedication of their teachers.

What It Looks Like in Action

1) Channel Your Enthusiasm Beyond Teaching

It's no secret that students mirror an instructor's energy, but enthusiasm isn't just about being lively in class. It extends to the design of learning experiences, the format of

assignments, and even how routine activities like grading or attendance are handled. When enthusiasm is expressed through thoughtful, creative instructional choices, it can shape a more emotionally engaging and dynamic classroom environment.

For example, [integrating music into early morning classes](#) can set a positive tone for the day. Rather than beginning with roll call, playing culturally relevant or mood-evoking music invites students to engage in simple tasks like guessing the mood, identifying instruments, or responding through short visual or written expressions. Similarly, offering alternative assessment formats—such as reflections submitted as drawings, memes, or songs—helps foster deeper emotional and creative investment. These strategies demonstrate that when learning is approached with



intention and energy, students respond not only with attention but also with enthusiasm and ownership.

2) Gamification: Fun, Simple, and Impactful 🎮

Gamification doesn't have to be complex or costly. Even in subjects often seen as dry simple, playful activities can transform the learning experience. For example, using colorful jelly beans to represent performance levels can make understanding pay structure engaging and memorable. Such straightforward, creative methods dispel the myth that gamification is difficult to implement, proving that any subject can be engaging with a bit of imagination.

🔗 [Explore more examples of gamification activities in my classes on LinkedIn.](#)

3) Becoming a Warm Demander 📈

According to Hammond (2015), the "**Warm Demander**" approach blends high expectations with genuine warmth. This means you can be approachable and supportive without lowering your standards. Students will respond to your belief in their potential by striving to meet those high expectations, creating a classroom dynamic of mutual respect and accountability.

References

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin Press.