# Moving Forward: **Use these interventions to respond to students’ emotions in the classroom**

**In general, project** optimism, confidence, enthusiasm

**Practice mindfulness:** paying attention on purpose in the present moment and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment

continual calling back of attention to the present moment

intentional eye contact

take a deep breath, become present and attentive to student feelings, engage your emotions with students thoughtfully

engage in metainstructing

**Offer emotional support**

Change classroom organization: behavior management, classroom productivity, instructional format

**Provide instructional support**: assist with problem solving, quality feedback

**Use humor**: to motivate, engage attention, hijack working memory, yield memory consolidation

violate expectations in a harmless way

use humor for a “commercial break”

joke about the material that requires students to apply information they just learned

start class off with humor to encourage positive moods to help with motivation

put a finishing touch on a topic to help with memory

unpack content jokes together

**Statements of intent**: make yourself and your intentions as clear as possible

**Instructor self-disclosure**: sharing yourself as a person with your students (selectively and relevantly)

**Tell stories**

including examples in which scholars had to overcome adversity or writer’s block, etc

Confidence and optimism

Put on a game face

Present material with the same enthusiasm as when you discovered it

**Distribute quick surveys of perceived understanding**

**Compliment students for good contributions**

**Use inclusive pronouns** “**we** are going to discuss together” instead of “I’m going to have you”

Non-verbal ques of engagement: Eye contact, leaning forward, smiling, relaxed posture, use of gestures, a variety of vocal tones, movement around the room

Novelty & Complexity and Comprehensibility: make info new and potentially complicated, but inherently graspable

Knowledge-deprivation hypothesis: reveal a gap in student knowledge

**Play on an attentional bias toward self-relevant information**

Use their name often in conversation

**Have students recall in detail past experience**

Setup a burn to know what comes next to solve a problem (why trivia works)

Introduce puzzles and mysteries

highlight knowledge gaps

use puzzles for brief activities; open a knowledge gap that has a definite solution & satisfying ending

mysteries have solutions that are much more nuanced and complex and elude solving

**setup a debate between 2 options or viewpoints to introduce disequilibrium and engender curiosity**

Get students in the flow: level of challenge at the very limit of their skills

**Incorporate clear goals and progress markers**

instill in students belief that they are competent & up to the challenge

**provide positive, encouraging feedback about their competence & abilities**

**give feedback on what they’ve done right, particularly on skills they previously lacked**

**Respond to right answers with harder questions**

give particular, positive feedback **to struggling students**

**Create a zone of optimal confusion: contradictions, incongruities, anomalies, system breakdowns, difficult decisions**

appropriately and intentionally evoked in the context of a learning environment

students possess the ability to successfully resolve the confusion

and/or when students cannot resolve the confusion on their own, there are appropriate scaffolds in place to aid students in the resolution

frequently and thoroughly assess what your students know with periodic check-ins

ask questions that reveal where your students actually are in their understanding

Give students a high sense of control and value:

**Prompt appraisals: to what degree students feel in control of activities (most important early on)**

**Allow for choice/student control**

Make material meaningful or worth it to students: utilitarian use to their lives, **explicitly call out the value, role-playing to artificially call out the value**

**Use cognitive reappraisals**: reconstrual of the original appraisal of an event or thought in order to alter its emotional impact (**look at a jarring situation from different perspectives or goals**)

**Setup transcendent purposes**: how a skill could someday improve the world or subsequent performance

Practice attributional retraining: intervention that changes how students appraise their own learning

we have an hedonic bias (bad things are from outside forces, good things are from our work)

retrain to see all negs and pos as result of within student control

**Create a growth mindset** (instead of “I’m bad at writing”)

**worksheets priming the idea of growth**

**praise efforts, not ability**

Adapted from: Cavanagh, S. R. (2016). *The spark of learning: Energizing the college Classroom with the science of emotion*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press.