

HOW TO USE

Reflect

To support well-being in the classroom



A Teacher's Guide



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Welcome to Reflect from Pam Allyn and Dr. Ernest Morrell

Dear Educators,

Before the school year begins, we look at the names on our attendance list and we wonder about each of our students. Who will they be? What will they be feeling and experiencing? What are their interests and passions? Students' emotional, inner lives are central to the work of teaching and learning. We know the importance of caring for students' social emotional lives inside and outside of school, yet the days are busy, and we are actively balancing all the demands of being an educator and being ourselves! All these human feelings, expressions of love, fear, happiness, anxiety, joy, loneliness, and more deeply impact the ways our students learn and grow. Reflect is here to help you create a community of social and emotional understanding and growth. Reflect asks the central question, simple yet full of all the power of the inter-relational nature of teaching and learning: "How are you feeling?"

With this foundational question, Reflect gives you a jumping off point for Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), and a practical and profound way to take the emotional temperature of your class and get to know your individual students. Social emotional learning threads its way through every aspect of your work. It is key to how our students take risks, make decisions, approach problems, and build friendships – all the work of being human across all school, community and home contexts. Students' SEL skills are directly tied to how well they perform and how effectively they express empathy and connect to others.

Reflect in Microsoft TEAMS helps build a student-centered classroom with space for students to grow their emotional vocabulary and learn to express their feelings. With a list of 51 different emotions brought to life by the Feelings Monster, an illustrated character that helps students expand their emotional vocabulary, Reflect is a landing place for powerful check-ins with students that will help them gauge their motivations and effort in learning, grow socially and emotionally, and develop the social and emotional intelligence that is the foundation of their future. Reflect gives you the tools to accompany your students in their social-emotional development, letting you tap into the richness of your students' emotions as they build empathy, learn fearlessly, and connect joyfully.

In this Teacher's Guide, commissioned by Microsoft Education, you will learn to use Reflect to build a foundation of care for your students, so that they can show the best of themselves and show up for each other. By supporting students in navigating the complex terrain of self-awareness, connectedness, and learning, you will help them develop habits that will support them in growing and in coping throughout their lives.

With Reflect, you will help students name emotions, becoming “reflectors” of their own emotional lives and building their capacity to learn and grow with intention. Reflect builds social and emotional granularity to foster deeper connection and self-reflection.

Every classroom has an ever-changing “thermostat”. With Reflect, you have information to help you turn the community’s energy up or down. You have access to the emotional temperature of individual students so you can naturally differentiate instruction to meet the unique social and emotional lives of your students.

Emotions don’t have to be a distraction; in this Teachers’ Guide, you will learn how to use Reflect as a transformational tool to build emotional resilience and growth-mindset while creating a safe space for every student to learn and grow. You will learn about three important times of the day you can use Reflect to amplify student growth socially, emotionally, and academically. You will hear about practical applications for how the knowledge we gain from Reflect can be then paired with teaching strategies and activities that foster social and emotional growth and development. And you will hear about how you can customize Reflect to answer the deepest questions you have about your students’ learning and emotional growth. Join us in becoming “reflectors” for and with your students.

Pam Allyn and Dr. Ernest Morrell



Allyn and Morrell are a leading team of educators and co-authors, most recently of “Every Child a Super Reader”; now in its second edition as well as the forthcoming “Tell Me a Story: Teaching Students to Become World-Changing Thinkers and Writers” Dr. Morrell is the Coyle Professor of Literacy and Associate Dean of Humanities and Equity at the University of Notre Dame. Pam Allyn is the founder and award-winning creator of many widely used programs for children’s learning, including World Read Aloud Day and LitCamp.

Time matters

When to use Reflect

Students are engaging with the curriculum we present, but it's important to remember that they are also constantly developing their understanding of the world around and inside them. Students are always in a state of growth. They jump from feeling playful to serious, observant to impulsive. The learning they are doing is as much about navigating emotions and building relationships as it is about academic content. Social emotional learning is inextricably linked to outcomes in academic learning.

As students progress through their individual social, emotional, and academic development, Reflect can help educators to embed opportunities to build SEL skills throughout the daily routine. Every day, there are many moments that can be transformational for your students as self-reflectors, as friends building empathy skills, and as young people learning to engage with the world meaningfully. Let's make the most of these moments with Reflect.

Reflect can help you check in the moment students enter the classroom, carrying all the simultaneous joys and complexities of their home lives. It can provide tools for the mid-day energy slump when students need a boost, and help you identify whether students are struggling or bored during independent work. You can use Reflect when the mood of the classroom is low or high, helping to identify outlying students who may need additional support, or use Reflect with Class Notebook to help monitor students' confidence and motivation. Equipped with data directly from your students, you can leverage Reflect to make the end of the day feel as engaging as the start, with an awareness of how your students are feeling, how you might close out the day in a supportive manner, and what might set students up for success tomorrow.



[Get started with Reflect in Teams](#)



[Reflect check-ins in Class Notebook](#)

How are you feeling today?

By Hayden Lopez | Closes 3:12 PM



With check-in results in hand, always consider if there is a feeling or trend of feelings that will require referral to the guidance counselor or a conversation with the student's guardians. When in doubt, work with your school's crisis team immediately, it is better to be too cautious than to let a student fall through the cracks. A tool like Reflect is not intended to be an SEL curriculum or counselor alternative but instead highlights trends and changes which empower educators to direct their class with purpose. Certain trends may indicate further investigation is required and should be taken seriously.



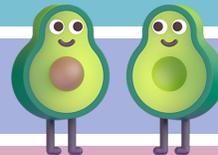
In our classrooms, we have the power to encourage students to process, regulate, and share the spectrum of emotions they experience. There are three key questions we can ask ourselves to guide this work:

1. Do we need a **Whole Group Temperature Change**?
2. Can we identify relationship trends and make adjustments through a targeted **Small Reflect Group MeetUp**?
3. Are there any students who have indicated they need one on one support that we can provide through a **Reflector Reboot** conference?

Whole Group Temperature Change



Reflect Group MeetUp



Reflector Reboot



You can change the temperature

What to do now that you have your Reflect data

You took the temperature with a Reflect check-in, and explored the data visualizations on how the class is doing as a group and individually. Now, how do you adjust the thermostat to aim for emotional well-being for every student. What is the right temperature for a sense of community and belonging? How do you optimize the temperature to promote learning?

Whole Group Temperature Change

By completing a Reflect check-in first thing in the morning, you can understand how your group is feeling and set the tone of the day with some practical, fun, meaningful activities.

Every emotion matters and serves a purpose. Frequently we feel multiple emotions at once! Reflect helps promote a pattern of investigating our emotions and their impacts rather than judging them. A whole class temperature change is appropriate for helping students become socially aware or for addressing emotional trends in your classroom. With whole class activities you can highlight similarities and differences in the way that peers are feeling to support students in empathy and community building.

Authentic dialogue in response to Reflect questions can empower students to evaluate their actions and recognize their potential to calibrate with new strategies. Pointing out similarities can help students recognize that they aren't alone. Regardless of how each individual in the class shows up, we can honor one another's needs and hold space for processing emotions together.



Opening and closing activities

Use Reflect check-ins to inform your choice of activities, or to assess the emotional impact of activities you've tried. By adding Reflect to activities you use to generate energy and solidify learning, you can gain insights into what your class likes and how to best motivate them.

Name story activity

Reflect helps remind us that our students are in a constant state of navigating their social emotional needs in a large group. Check-ins with Reflect can remind our students that we care about their personal growth and also that we are truly getting to know each other here. Students can begin each day or use Reflect to get students feeling known and seen—first through a Reflect check in and then after that, to gather together for this activity. Students are invited to share a “name story”, either how they got their name, or a home nickname they've been given. Then, in a circle, students can try to challenge themselves to remember each other's name stories so that when it gets to the last person around the circle, they have to do the whole class! You can switch up the order of how it begins each day so that everyone gets a turn to practice adding more and more stories. Without the sense of being known, students may feel lonely and have difficulty expressing any discomfort or confusion, creating a barrier to accessing help and more generally in feeling comfortable socially and emotionally. Use of the Name Story activity is a great precursor to a Reflect check in and also a follow up, reminding our students they are singular in their life story and interests, and that this matters to others.

The read aloud

Use the results of a Reflect check-in to inform your selection of a read aloud. With practice, you can become adept at selecting read alouds that will bring energy up or down, create a community connection, or directly address an issue that's on the minds of your students. Reading aloud is a singularly powerful way to change the emotional temperature of a room. It can be a responsive tool in urgent situations that require an energy infusion or a path to relationship repair and connectedness. Picture books are only about 26 pages, perfect for a brief break and reflection for your students. They are a great way to address something in the news that may be weighing on your students but is difficult to talk about without support. Valuable resources for finding suitable and inspirational stories for classroom discussion include, The Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal, NCTE, the Caldecott, the Walter Dean Myers Award, the Coretta Scott King Award, the Sidney King Award, the South Asia Award and more. Poetry too can provide a brief moment that changes the temperature in whole group settings. Like children's book authors, poets can be funny, poignant, and inspirational, sometimes all at the same time. Poets who can change energy in a room include Carl Sandburg, Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes, Naomi Nye, and more. Including a daily poem or read aloud in your opening or closing routine, or when your class needs a moment of calm, can transform anxiety to confidence, and loneliness to connection.



Music

Before or after a Reflect check-in, music can be a powerful ally for our work in lifting spirits, changing the energy in the room, and getting students motivated for learning. At all ages, music brings us together. A song brings up energy or eases the intensity of emotion in a room. If your students' Reflect results indicate sadness, anxiety, or sleepiness, try a song that has them clapping, stomping, or swaying together. Songs with gentle, soothing lyrics and melodies can calm jangled nerves prior to an upcoming test or get everyone smiling together after a tense time. *What a Wonderful World* sung by Louis Armstrong, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* sung by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, and *You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song* by Ella Jenkins are three examples of songs that naturally create community, appeal to all ages, and feel deep, rich, and connecting when listened to together.

Animal stretch

Breathing and stretching have been used to manage emotions by many cultures throughout history. For a fun activity that encourages mindful movement, try asking: "What animal do you most want to be today in your schoolwork? Is it a bird for perspective? Is it a lion for courage? Is it a small and graceful fawn for speed? Choose one this morning and let's breathe and stretch as if we were that animal. Now, let's bring that feeling to our work." You can set this activity to quiet music in the background as the stretching begins.



"Welcome to My World" activity

To create a trusting and collaborative classroom community, educators need an understanding of their students' life beyond school. There are so many things that make up a student's habits, passions, and personality, and sharing this depth with others helps build a community where students feel safe taking chances and being themselves. The "Welcome to My World" activity, a favorite created by Allyn & Morrell, can be used to get students to introduce themselves to you and one another. Give each student a piece of paper and some drawing tools, or a tablet. Invite them to respond to the prompt: "Imagine you are welcoming others to a "world" that is all about you. Illustrate your world with images and words that remind you of moments you felt strong." Encourage your students to write and draw details of their interests, passions, and wonderings. Help them see that everyone's uniqueness adds to the classroom community. Knowing about one another helps us highlight each other's strengths.

An awareness of oneself and one's community impacts how comfortable we are throughout the day, which seeps into all we do. Give students an opportunity to share the world they've drawn with others in quick partnerships, then have students rotate to several new partners, helping them to relate to one another and forge social and emotional connections they can rely on throughout the year. Create a Reflect check-in with the customizable question to assess students' response to the activity. By asking "How are you feeling about sharing your personal world?" you can learn even more about students' personalities. Who enjoyed the social time? Who was anxious about sharing? Who felt included or neglected? This activity can be done several times during the year to observe growth and change in your students and help them to continue to get to know themselves and one another.



Mindful breathing

Practicing coping strategies when we are calm helps make those strategies available to us when we are facing a challenge. As a class, create rituals and routines that value the intake of breath, practice taking a deep breath in, holding it for two seconds, and then exhaling slowly. Relaxation techniques with breath will help your students prepare emotionally for the day ahead. Deep intentional breathing also helps our students change cognitive gears as they move from one experience to the next. Test out the impact of mindful breathing by taking a Reflect check-in after a nice long exhale.

Gratitude gifts

Studies show that practicing gratitude can have a major impact on mood. You can test this with your students by providing a Reflect check-in after the following activity. Have your students write three people, things, or moments they are grateful for regularly, and see if the overall mood is different on days when you set aside time for gratitude. Model for your students how gratitude can come from seeing a tree changing colors outside the classroom window or spending time with a beloved grandmother. Fostering and expressing gratitude in our lives helps us to center our thinking and be emotionally prepared for the day.

Feelings Monster videos

The Feelings Monster has starred in a series of videos demonstrating their range of feelings and how people in their community support one another. Use the Monster's videos as a launching point for pairing students to discuss their experiences with these emotions and what coping skills they might try in the future. Have them take two minutes to write about their personal emotional experiences or how they think the Feelings Monster should handle these situations. Seeing coping skills modeled, then processing what they've seen, builds their social emotional vocabulary and reinforces open discussion about one's own emotional experiences.



[Watch All the Feels—the Feelings Monster videos series](#)



Transition activities

Reflect can help us understand how our students are feeling as they transition from one activity or class to another, something that is challenging for many children. As busy teachers on tight schedules, building intention into transitions isn't always a priority, but when we engage with these transitions we begin to see how they influence our learners. Leaving for and returning from lunch or recess, or switching to a new subject or classroom can be jarring and often involves lots of interactions. Reflect questions can give us a good sense of what might be making students anxious in these transitions. With this information, we can implement group level activities to ease discomfort and reduce disruptive behaviors related to students' emotional states.

Rhythmic affirmations

Work with your students to create a set of affirmations to use as part of a transition ritual that builds momentum and helps students feel supported. Affirmations with a beat could include "We will be strong today, strong today" or "Let your heart guide you, let your spirit shine!" You can invite your students to invent their own and keep a running list to use and share. Have students clap to the rhythm of the words as they say their affirmations aloud. A Reflect check-in before the transition can help inform your choice of affirmations or other transition activities to help set the right energy for the students' upcoming environment. Affirmations that can be clapped out, sung in a call and response, or chanted as a mantra as you move students to the next phase of their day can build familiarity and fun around these changes and provide deep support in moments that sometimes feel too brief to be powerful.



Visualization exercises

Reflect can help you to determine what is causing anxiety and worry for your students. Is it going to math class? Are there friendship challenges at lunch? With the knowledge you gain from Reflect, you can prepare students for the next activity by helping them set intentions for what it will look and feel like. Model the way you set intentions to work through a challenge or pre-activity jitters, then ask students to set a goal for themselves with the upcoming activity or academic subject in mind. Have them imagine, draw, or write what the activity could feel like if they do it well. Have them envision "success" in those moments and what that would mean to them. Visualizing can be extraordinarily empowering: it can help us break out of negative powers and write a new narrative about our capabilities.

Create a routine with music

Predictable routines can help students feel comfortable and meet behavior expectations. Setting transitions to interesting or familiar music is a great way to let students know it's almost time to switch gears. A Mozart piano quintet can be a signifier to switch to independent work; Vivaldi violin concerto could be a great backdrop to a pre-lunch discussion on friendship inclusion practices, Dizzy Gillespie's School Days can get everyone cleaning up time after a messy activity, or a favorite instrumental version of familiar movie tunes such as We Don't Talk About Bruno can bring some levity after a difficult lesson. Build community while you're at it by having students help you choose the songs, perhaps on a rotating basis or as a reward. You can use Reflect check-ins to help Identify the direction you want to adjust your emotional thermostat. If you're seeking calm, a thunderstorm soundtrack could be the right fit.

Reflect and recess

Managing friendships and learning how to navigate changing relationships is challenging and can cause significant anxiety for students. Throughout life, relationships with friends can be complicated and inconsistent. Use Reflect check-ins before or after recess to monitor how interactions beyond your supervision are impacting students. Customized Reflect questions could include "How are you feeling about the way your classmates are included during recess?" or "How are you feeling about the upcoming outdoor time?" save a few minutes around this reflection to host a conversation with your students, perhaps creating strategies for including a new friend or envisioning how they want to feel after their break is over. Giving your students more scaffolding here helps empower them to create a great experience for others (empathy) and for themselves (self-awareness). Following unstructured time with another Reflect check-in asking "How are you feeling about how recess went?" can help guide a conversation about how students can support one another and draw your attention to any concerns. Reflect brings a humane and caring dimension to transitions, and especially recess, a time that is fun for many, and highly intense for others.



Reflect Small Group MeetUps

You can use the Reflect app to observe where students have shared challenges, things they are struggling with personally, difficulty in their relationships with others or their relationship with academics. Reflect Small Group MeetUps gather students on similar emotional or academic wave-lengths for extra support.

Reflect

All the feels—the Feelings Monster videos series

Use the Monsters' videos as a jumping off point for a deep dive conversation about topics this small group may be struggling in. This might include expressing gratitude, fostering energy for focused work, becoming more connected to others, and feeling more comfortable in school.

Collaging

Create collages together (and hang them up) using photographs either on or offline that use the emotion words of Reflect. This extra practice with emotional vocabulary will aid with student's ability to emotionally connect and communicate.

Friendship circles

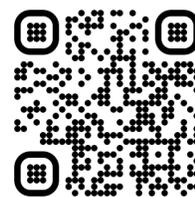
When a Reflect check-in indicates that a subset of students could use support in their relationship building, bring them into a small group. Go around the circle sharing one thing you'd like a friend to know about you, then have each student select a new theme, like favorite color, biggest dream, or coolest experience. Talk about how friendship is made through active listening and interest in others, but also in having confidence in one's own interesting self. Sharing in a friendship circle like this is a great way to practice!

Improv

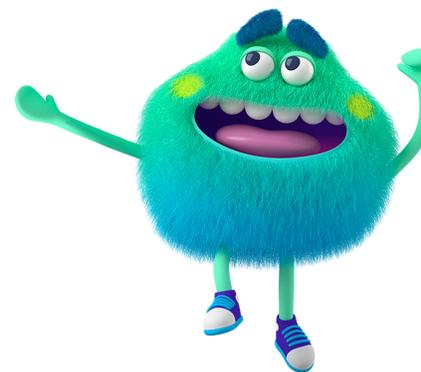
Use the custom Reflect question "How are you feeling about your opportunities to share your ideas in class?" along with your lived experience as an educator, to help determine which students need support practicing active listening and turn taking or conversely, which students aren't feeling confident or heard when they want to share their thoughts. Set up small groups for explicit practice of these skills. Have one student start a story and work around the circle with each student adding their own ideas. Help students understand the importance of saying "yes, and" to their peers, and provide guidance on disagreeing respectfully and with purpose. Help students understand how collaboration can help build the best story! Small groups can help extroverted students be more self-aware and shy students feel more confident. Close by discussing the value of active listening and building off others' ideas with confidence.

Welcome newcomers

Create a ritual for when new students join your class. Invite everyone to bring an artifact or photograph that is meaningful to them and have the MeetUp members model presenting and practice their active listening skills while each student talks about the item they've selected. When applicable, try using Microsoft Translator to help everyone get to know a bit about each other despite language barriers. Building some awareness of and connection to their peers in their own language can create a sense of comfort for students who are experiencing so many new things.



Watch [All the Feels—the Feelings Monster videos series](#)



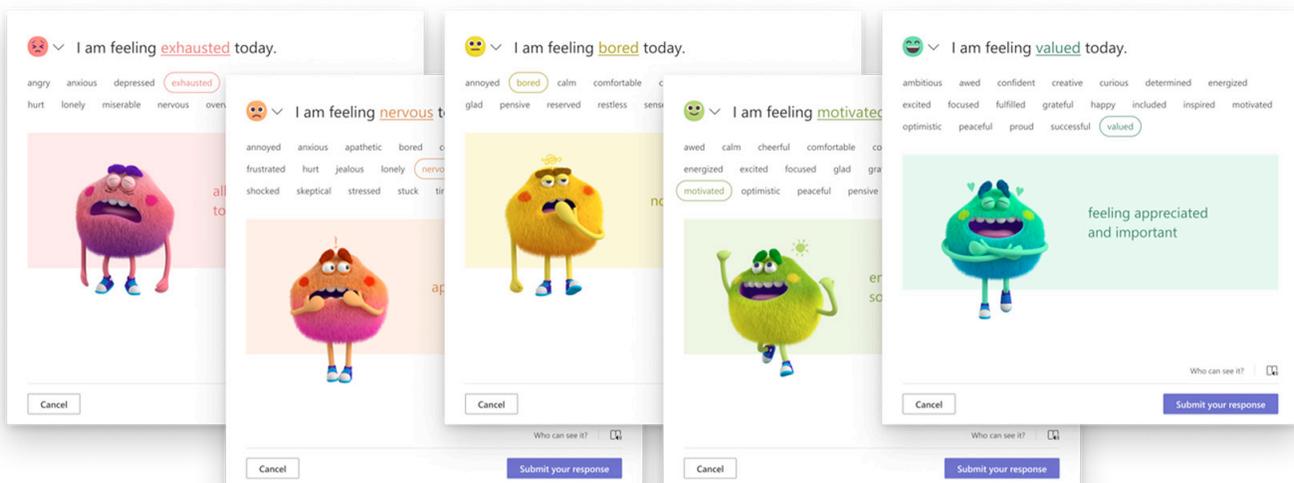
Other people's shoes

When Reflect results indicate students feeling lonely, sensitive, or hurt, practicing empathy skills with small groups can help move your class in a more positive direction. Assign a character from a recent shared reading to each group, and provide the reading so students can refresh themselves. Choose a passage where the character is struggling and talk with students about what that might feel like, helping them put themselves in the shoes of that character. Invite students to share what they would do in this situation, and what kind of support they would want from their friends. A sentence frame could be helpful. For example; If I was _____ I would want my friends to support me by _____. Encourage students to consider how the character they are considering might want different things than you or I do. How is what you would want in that situation different than what the character may want? Why do you think so?

Reflector Reboot

The Reflector Reboot is a structure that can work as a brief weekly meeting with each of your students, with extra Reboots available when Reflect results indicate students in need of additional attention. A Reflector Reboot is designated one-on-one time between you and each student for you to demonstrate deep presence and listening for them. Just five minutes that are fully devoted to providing attention and social emotional coaching can go a long way in building your personal relationship with each student, understanding their needs, and making them feel comfortable and important in your classroom. We recommend using a visible schedule of your class's regular Reboots, so they know they have some of your time each week. You can also provide a way for students to request extra Reboots if they're needed.

There is always the potential that a Reboot will uncover something that requires follow-up with school specialists or the student's guardian, but frequently one-on-one time will fortify the SEL skills each student is working on and leave them feeling heard and valued. When you've established a classroom community that you trust to care for one another's emotions, and have modeled Reflector Reboots for everyone, students can also initiate Reboots with peers. It can be extremely gratifying to see that your modeling and reflection has built a community of collaboration, openness and warmth.



Intentional conversation starters include...

“I hear you saying...”

“What can I do to help?”

“Let me be your deep listener...”

“How are your feelings changing?”

“Share with me what you’re thinking”

“How can I help you remove the obstacles?”

“What would it take for your feelings to change?”

Customizing check-ins for your class

Reflect asks the following questions:

- How are you feeling today?
- Overall, how did this week feel for you?
- How do your friendships feel today?
- How are you feeling about *fill in your topic here*?

The final question is an opportunity for you to customize your prompts for the needs of your classroom. Let's explore what custom questions we can ask our students to inspire even richer, deeper use of Reflect. Consider planning your custom prompts around these four major areas:

Creating targeted instruction that addresses your students needs can be facilitated with custom prompts in four major areas of learning; **self-awareness**, **relationships**, **schoolwork**, and **participation and engagement**.



Self-awareness

- the challenge level of this class
- current events
- your ability to succeed today
- your independent work
- your strengths
- any recent challenges you're facing
- your capacity to complete work
- your comfort level in this subject
- your strength in this subject area
- your comfort level sharing with others
- how your passions and interests are supported



Relationships

- collaborating in a small group for a project
- going out for recess
- feeling connected to others
- making new friends
- friendships after school
- coming to school
- your school relationships
- lunchtime and friends
- standing up for what's right
- sharing your ideas with others
- your listening skills



Schoolwork

- your success during projects
- tonight's homework
- today's math problems
- your ability to read
- your ability to write
- today's classwork
- the upcoming test
- your understanding of science
- your understanding of social studies
- expressing yourself through art
- your organizational skills



Participation and engagement

- group activities in this class
- participating in class
- being heard by others
- what we are learning about in class today
- sharing your own ideas and thoughts
- your ability to have a conversation with someone whose ideas you don't agree with
- sharing your ideas online
- sharing your ideas in a big group
- working independently
- your potential as a leader
- being part of the group



Companion tools

Reflect has been integrated into a variety of companion tools to make its use in your classroom as seamless as possible.



PowerPoint

Get students thinking with structured SEL projects.



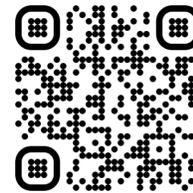
Kahoot!

Introduce and discuss social emotional skills with Kahoot! activities.



Flip

Get creative with social and emotional learning.



For all students

Learners can be defined in many ways, but all children come to us with resilience and diverse attributes and strengths. Their breadth of languages, cultures, and experiences are core to who they are and how they learn. Classrooms frequently fail to center students' diversity of cultures and experiences as strengths, making students feel out of place and out of step with the work that is happening around them.

Reflect gives all students the chance to communicate their learning and emotional processes and to contribute to a rich environment that celebrates their diversity. Ways to ensure success for our diverse learners include:

- Use Reflect to **build vocabulary for all students**. The language is rich and purposeful and supports students in acquiring nuanced vocabulary to communicate their exact emotional needs. Provide access to Reflect words in your teaching language as well as students' home languages.
- Use the Monsters to **engage in meaningful conversation** with your students who are newcomers. The Monsters are a safe and warm way to talk about the newness of coming to a country with unfamiliar traditions, rituals, and routines.
- Help **multilingual students** bring Reflect vocabulary home in both their school and home languages. Try using translation tools to create a weekly card highlighting a Reflect word in both languages, so the students can share with their families and practice expressing themselves in the varied contexts of their lives. Feature the Reflect words on walls so they are visible in the physical environment for language learning and for more visual learners.
- Take the time to **talk explicitly through the results of Reflect check-ins**. For example, "It looks like we have mostly students who are energized and excited for our field trip, but a few folks who are nervous. What steps should we take to make sure everyone is comfortable and ready to learn?" This is a perfect time to reinforce expectations for the whole class and can be especially helpful for neurodiverse students. You might also encourage neurodiverse students to create their own drawings or imagery inspired by the Monsters and talk about how their drawing compares to the illustrations in the app. The visuals in Reflect can be a good starting point for helping neurodiverse students interpret social cues.
- For **Deaf students**, celebrate the complexities of self-expression in sign language and work with your students to determine how to express and share the Reflect vocabulary. Students may be able to bring nuanced sign vocabulary to class, and find novel signs to share at home. Helping students practice their social and emotional skills across cultural and linguistic contexts is vital to their relationship building and self-awareness.
- To keep **gifted students** feeling challenged, make space for them to add words beyond those in Reflect to a personal emotion word vocabulary bank. They may like to create stories of the Monsters in new scenarios.
- For all students, use Reflect to **create a sense of belonging**. Reflect provides an opening for more honest conversations about joyful living and the resilient work our diverse students do every day. Let storytelling be a big part of checking in. Listen to the voices of your classroom and reiterate to students that everyone belongs.





To feel seen

A closing note from Pam Allyn and Dr. Ernest Morrell

After 20 years in the education space, we know that straightforward but caring questions and access to a rich emotional vocabulary have the potential to transform a teacher’s relationship with their students. With a routine of pausing, reflecting, and listening, educators can spark a depth of mutual understanding that supports learning and emotional well-being. Our lifework as co-authors and co-creators of programs and initiatives that focus on SEL has brought us to Reflect as ambassadors for this important app. We believe in the work Reflect can do to transform classrooms.

Reflect facilitates connection-building and understanding of each individual student, with the Feelings Monster to help transport us into possibility. And with a bank of rich vocabulary for emotions students have the scaffolding they need to respond purposefully and profoundly. Reflect gives students a method and a language to put eyes on their own emotional experience and to then communicate it with trusted adults. Reflect supports students’ emotional life skills to serve them well as lifelong learners and future colleagues, thinkers, innovators, friends, and family members.

Learning can be inexplicably lonely, even in groups of people. Children find this out as they travel through their elementary school years, and teachers know it too: seeing a student as if from a distance, understanding there are percolating worries and concerns that a student might have, but the curriculum is rushing along, the work is busy, and there are lots of students’ lives, including their families, to manage and track.

Inviting students to be part of a rich SEL environment and giving them a tool to contribute to that environment through regular check-ins, communicates to them that we, the adults they look up to, are listening. We want them to feel safe, confident, and secure at a time in their development where this might feel difficult. We believe in their abilities as learners and that reflection and practice as whole humans is a big part of learning.

Feelings can be managed, emotions controlled. But Reflect is here for something more: to accompany you and your students in the richness of those feelings so they can connect with empathy, learn without fear, and grow joyfully.

Pam Allyn and Dr. Ernest Morrell



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