

UDL and Social Emotional Learning: The How

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So let's go ahead and talk about some of the things that we can do as educators when we're universally designing their learning environment.

How can we mitigate some of this fight, flight, or freeze triggers?

Dr. Canter talks about the science of adversity. One of the things that we really need to be thinking about is cultivating a sense of belonging in our schools.

Qualtrics came up with a study recently in August that basically stated that a third to almost a half of our students, if you add up the percentages, they don't feel welcome. And that other than moving is one of the reasons why they choose not to graduate. And that's sad to me. But there's hope, educators. There's a few things that we can do.

First, let's talk about fostering that sense of belonging, where students all feel welcome. CASEL has come up with three signature practices that can create a welcoming and inclusive environment. So think about how you can welcome your students by first having some sort of inclusionary activity right when they come into the classroom that they can talk about, they can read about, they can do something with. It could be a morning prompt, it could be a picture. What do you see and what do you notice, or share something that went well with you this morning. It just something that's inclusionary that gets our students feeling like, I'm seen, I'm heard, I belong here.

Second practice in that is to incorporate throughout your learning day engaging activities. Do we allow students to collaborate, to work independently, to make those choices to where they feel like they are personalizing their learning. So how do we engage our kids throughout the day so they're not just sitting and getting but they're actively involved in their learning environment?

And then third, closing your day with what they call an optimistic closure. That basically is just celebrating something that went well today, something that they learned, something that they want to hold in their thinking in order to maybe move forward with their learning tomorrow. Some of my teachers that I work with create a circle and everybody shares, sitting at the desk, putting it on a tablet, however that looks. Remember we want to offer choices and options. Those three signature practices are key to creating a welcoming environment.