

THE BRAIN CAN CHANGE; SO CAN BEHAVIOR - A BRIEF CLASSROOM ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

Designed and contributed by Jenny Morrill

Bell Ringer:

1. Assess strategies kids use to deal with stress- Think, Pair, Share
2. Rate how strategies can be used in classrooms- (probably not likely)
Task: Assess stress triggers at school- Think, pair, share
3. Find a gallery board and write some down that you know
4. Have students walk around and read other people's stressors in school (??)
5. Rate how these strategies mentioned before work in school (probably don't)
6. What if I told you there is something you can do that is so simple, that it helps with the stress we face in school and in life?
7. Ok, wait, before I tell you I want to show you something- This is your brain!
8. Why am I showing you your brain.... Let's think!
9. Your brain has many parts, and we can break these parts into 3 sections with different jobs.
10. Investigate this diagram.
11. Why is the amygdala red?
12. When we get stressed, our amygdala goes hay-wire and we can become overwhelmed with emotions. When our amygdala is activated, its voice can grow stronger and we lose control over our thinking brain. It can increase our heart rate and cause us to react with anger, or running away or freezing up.
13. When can this be a good thing?
14. When can this be a bad thing?

15. When we are stressed in school, our amygdala can take over, it has control over our ability to use our thinking brain.
16. Stress is something that is in our daily lives. Some of us can feel it more than others, some of us do not know we are stressed and some of us already know how to handle stress. And sometimes, it is a part of our classroom.
17. Remember the stressors? So, let's think, I am a student who is stressed because of _____, and now my amygdala is acting crazy, I have no control over this, and I can't use my thinking brain.... What can I do?
18. Share slide..... Breathe
19. When I take deep breaths, I actually release a message to my brain to settle the amygdala down. I actually override the amygdala's voice and shut it down.
20. Our bodies are controlled by information received to our brain. We can change how our brain and body responds to stress by connecting to our breath. We can actually work our brain out like a muscle. Our brain can actually grow.
21. Let's watch this video. [Neuroplasticity-sentis](#)
22. Ok- What do we know...
23. We know that when stressed, our amygdala goes hay-wire and this blocks our thinking and reasoning.
 - a. We know when we breath, we re-wire our brain and shut our amygdala down.
 - b. We know we can change the way we think and react to stress and that is actually like lifting weights in our brain carving new habits of minds and learning.
 - c. We know that thoughts can change and when we are uncomfortable, we are on the brink, on the edge of growing and learning something new.
24. Closure: Why does this matter?