

The Traffic Light Nervous System

Imagine every student's nervous system has a traffic light that controls learning.

Green Light - Regulated

Brain and nervous system feel safe
Student can access learning (thinking brain is online)
Able to listen, remember, plan, and learn

Yellow Light - Stressed/Cautious/Alert

Nervous system senses pressure or overwhelm and views potential threat
Heart rate & breathing increase
Attention becomes inconsistent - distracted
Access to learning becomes more difficult - **focus is on the concern for safety and the next steps for self-preservation or survival**

Red Light - Survival Mode

Fight, flight, or shutdown response
Brain and nervous system is primarily safety rather than learning (frontal cortex is less accessible)
Directions, reasoning, and projected outcomes don't process well
Taking in new information becomes extremely difficult
Less accuracy interpreting facial cues/hearing differences (tones)

Most schools operate as if every student's nervous system is always on green



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