



## **Universal Design in Teaching: Using Social Emotional Engagement-Knowledge and Skills (SEE-KS)**

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As the coordinator of the Central Region ASD Team at ESU 10 in Nebraska, I am intrigued by research data that demonstrates that strategies that support individuals with autism are equally helpful for others in the classroom. The Social Emotional Engagement - Knowledge and Skills (SEE-KS), a framework developed by Emily Rubin and Jennifer Townsend, meets the criteria of piquing my interest for just that reason. I was introduced to the SEE-KS model while attending a recent conference at the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Disorders. The SEE-KS framework provides educators and service providers with professional development opportunities guided by the belief that all students can - and will - learn when instruction is designed for the benefit of all learners. Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework within multi-tiered supports, SEE-KS provides a systemic professional development model that equips educators to understand the neuropsychological differences between students and then to design instruction to meet their needs. The model encourages students' social growth and results in documented improvement in class culture and academic outcomes. This is achieved through coaching teachers using "appreciative inquiry" or posing positive questions that build on an individual's strengths.

The use of appreciative inquiry coaching in SEE-KS focuses on three key support areas: 1) fostering engagement, 2) presenting information in multiple ways and 3) allowing multiple options for action and expression. Rubin and Townsend have created a rubric of supports and questions across the key areas using language level as components of how to provide support. For example, individuals in the Before Words Stage are described as communicating through body language, gestures and facial expressions and not yet through speech, pictures, signs or assistive technology. Those individuals characterized as in the Emerging Language Stage communicate through single words and brief or scripted phrases using speech, pictures, sign language or assistive technology. Those in the Conversational Stage communicate using sentences and conversational level discourse using speech, sign language or assistive technology. Determining an individual's communication stage helps to define what needs to be embedded to support the key areas. For example, fostering engagement for individuals means we are providing them with an opportunity to predict the sequence of activities and steps within activities. The supports to foster engagement are different for a student at the Before Words Stage who may need direct access to concrete objects and embedded multimodal cues than for an Emerging Language Stage learner, whose support may include access to written information paired with photos or graphics to use agendas and within task schedules. An individual at the Conversational Stage may independently use agendas or have the ability to create tools like agendas to predict the sequence of activities and steps toward completion. The SEE-KS model provides similar structures to rate active engagement in using individual interests to motivate students to learn under the area of Fostering Engagement. Similarly, the SEE-KS model helps teachers assess their ability to Present Information in Multiple Ways and Allow for Multiple Options for Actions and Expression.

SEE-KS encourages use of the Student Engagement Ladder, a helpful tool for rating students' engagement in classrooms on a descriptive scale ranging from No Focus to Fully Engaged with descriptions of each level of engagement. Information on SEE-KS, including what was introduced in this report, can be accessed by registering for a free account at <https://www.see-ks.com>.