**Summary of ideas from meta-research studies on high engagement studies in the book by Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering called *The Highly Engaged Classroom!***

1. Allow for an activity that can **raise the level of physical** **movement in the classroom**, even in the face of distraction. Keep steady pacing.

Examples: Stretch break, round robin group answers at review posters in four corners of the room, silent cheer, high fives when they’ve done something well, linking a certain movement to key terms, acting out vocabulary

1. **Show a positive demeanor on the part of the teacher** (enthusiastic regularly and intense selectively; sincere statements of the value that you place on a topic or activity will be enough)
2. **Use humor: teacher’s use of humor** was associated with a 50 percentilepoint gain in instructional effectiveness in Laughing and Learning by Peter Jonas (2010); it reduces stress in students and promotes creative thinking.

Examples: For the school day around April Fool’s Day, spend some time using brain teasers, Plexors, or visual humor to kick things off. Then let them try to show you their brain teasers. Or have students try making a torn paper map or image of a person studied and project results for a good laugh.

1. Develop student perceptions that **the teacher believes in them** and **encourages peer relationships that are accepting**. Both are equally important.

Example: Teacher spends time with greetings to students as they enter and welcomes back those who were absent. Teacher doesn’t allow negative talk about people who are absent.

1. Triggering and maintaining **situational interest** by**:**

* Using game-like activities (and guess sheets with missing information); “inconsequential competition” (game not used for grades, but great for review)
* Initiating friendly controversy (let student vote on an issue that is not

highly divisive, as in a court drama)

* Using unusual information (Collect “strange and amazing facts”)
* Using effective questioning strategies (Get good at creating “Essential

Questions” for which there are multiple right answers)

Example: Games for review include time for teams to create names, and to set up ground rules so that the competition is not lopsided for one team.

1. Help students **link academic content to their own personal lives**

* Give them **choices**
* **Link things to current decisions** they may be making
* Focus on **fewer topics** rather than coverage of many
* **Challenge** students to defend or justify their ideas

Example: Start with a **current article, song, film or happening**  and ask how they feel about it and why it concerns them.

1. Encourage student **access to information about how the brain can always learn, grow, and become “smarter.”**

Example: Provide information about the brain, stories/films of overcomers, people who started behind and rose to a respected level of achievement in the world of ideas and influence.

(This is referred to as a belief in the “Growth Theory of Competence” versus the “Fixed Theory of Competence.” If students believe in the fixed theory in your class, they don’t believe they can ever improve, so the don’t try.