

# Tools for Engagement



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## Agenda



- ✓ Learn 7 Tools to *Better* Engagement
- ✓ Make a Plan For Implementation

Why the Difference?  
Why Do Some Kids Engage?

1. Why do you think some kids participate and others just sit there?
2. What responsibility do you have in this process?



**ENGAGEMENT**  
Tools You Can Use  
to Foster Literacy

**What's the Best Way to Open Your Class (first 3 min.) Each Day?**

- a) Challenge posted up to solve... better to keep students busy
- b) Give students a choice of tasks
- c) Influence student mindsets & states; emotional, cognitive and physical?
- d) Pre-reading or problem-solving; give them seatwork

Debrief with Neighbor: What Tools Can You Recall that Were Used to 1<sup>st</sup> Engage You?

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**Strategies for Engagement**

*What have you noticed?*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**E TOOL #1**

**#1**

Use Buy-in & Relevance Constantly



## Buy-in *Must Be Layered*

- ❑ **HOOK:** gets initial attention, interest and curiosity
- ❑ **AROUSAL:** Physical buy-in (the body is taking action) plus emotional buy-in (I care and I feel like doing it)
- ❑ **RELEVANCE:** values are activated (meaning I understand WHY and I choose to use this)

Morel, et al. (2014). Brain activity and functional coupling changes associated with self-reference effect during both encoding and retrieval. PLoS One. 9(3):e90486.

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## Step #1: Initial Hook

Goal: get attention or curiosity

- ✓ Make a strong claim
- ✓ Cite a compelling statistic
- ✓ Offer a quick benefit

## Starter “Hooks” 1

Use compelling questions...

- ✓ “How many of you would like a simple tool that helps *you remember more* of what you learn and still have fun doing it?”
- ✓ “Who would like a simple easy to use strategy that can *bump up your reading scores* by 11% or more?”
- ✓ “Got a question for you...How many would like...?”

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## Step #2: Arousal

Goal: wake up mind/body

- ✓ Get physical
- ✓ Use music
- ✓ Engage emotionally

## Energizers Themes

- ✓ Follow the leader (me!)
- ✓ Simon Says, Head-shoulders, etc.
- ✓ Play a sport; others mimic moves
- ✓ Dance moves (you know the classics)
- ✓ Clapping/marching routines
- ✓ Circle 3 tables, give 2 affirmations and have one seat

## Step #3: Relevance

Goal: tie learning to values

- ✓ Tie the learning to values
- ✓ Make it important AND urgent
- ✓ Connect it to something learners care about

### Elementary Social Hooks

Use the next grade level as a “step up” challenge, get a privilege, have fun, quick success, raw teacher enthusiasm, deep curiosity, positive affirmation, it is really gross, friendship-maker, physical activity and a cool mystery!

### Secondary Social Hooks

Be edgy/risky, use peer pressure, give choice, a strong challenge, stair-step the activity, work with peers, predictions, more control, gain peer status, be experimental, help students find their voice, solve local problems, work for something huge, get into college, peer competition, a quick success and make content relevant!

Dweck, C. S. (1989) *Self Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*

## Link Behavior to a Goal...

- Link the behavior to **something you did in the past** so you have a reason to do it again.
- Link the behavior to **a probable future outcome**, so you have a strong reason to do today's behavior.



**HINT:** When you do this, the effect size is huge.

If the Brain is NOT Buying, the Brain is NOT Changing

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*If I did use this idea, what's the next step I need to do to make it happen?*

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**E TOOL #2**

**#2**

Use Quick Writes Daily

1. Rewrite a quote in your own words
2. Team writing: discuss & peer edit
3. Reflection: "How do I feel about this upcoming test?"
4. Summarize the content: 1 para.
5. Make content connections
6. Response to a story heard
7. Heroes in the world – who and why?
8. Personal story about your past
9. Predictions about content
10. Opinion wanted – then justify it

## 17 Content Ideas for Quick Writes



## How to Get Students to Write

11. Start small, daily, and build ("Summarize your last 24 hrs. of life in 7 words.")
12. Ask them to write out a Tweet in 140-280 characters about something they did to help a friend or that was a lot of fun
13. Students write a 1-page persuasion flyer to post up to sell something they own
14. Ask them write a Tweet of gratitude

## How to Get Students to Write

15. Ask them what problems in the world should be solved. Then they pick one they are most passionate about. This is their "voice." Allow them to express it in class.
16. Ask them to write about, "5 things to do before I die", then expand on why they chose each.
17. Ask them to write a letter to an elected official about: 1) a problem and 2) a solution to the problem.

## In Teaching, Always Connect Their Work, Values and Goals ...



The "ends" that "connect the dots" are their rare chance to express their feelings, dreams and create a voice.

The writing is not the end product; it's only a means to an end. Connect what kids really care about and the effort flows naturally. How?

## Reflective Writing 4X/yr., *Connecting Effort with Values* Raises Grades



African-American students completed four writing exercises about how their values mattered to them and had helped in their lives. This thought process helped increase the GPA of these 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009). Recursive processes in self-affirmation: Intervening to close the minority achievement gap. *Science*, 324, 400–403.

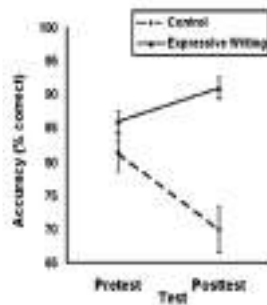
## Quick Writes Can Influence Test Scores

- ✓ They may serve as an outlet of stress
- ✓ Or, a place to sort out issues
- ✓ Maybe, a way to feel more in control



## 10 Minute Pre-Test Quick Write Activity Boosts Scores 5-17%

Romirez, G. and Bealock, S. (2011). Writing about testing worries boosts exam performance in the classroom. *Science*, Jan. 14; 333(6014):211-3



*What are some things I have learned about engagement that I can write now?  
How might I use this idea with my students?*

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## ACTION STEP

I Can Take ASAP



Make a promise to yourself; every day, in every class, do at least one 3-10 min. “quick write” activity. The power of doing this *is amazing*.

**FREE**

Research-  
Based and  
Highly  
Practical  
Monthly  
Newsletter  
You Can  
Use ASAP!



Text my name...

**JENSEN**

to

**44222**

**E TOOL #3**

**#3**

Foster Cognitive Skills

Which School Based Factor  
(when tested at age 5) is a Greater  
Predictor of Academic Success than IQ?



- a) Reading scores
- b) Working memory
- c) Motivation level
- d) Math scores
- e) Positive attitude
- f) Homework

McIntyre, T. & Kover, S. (2010). Investigating the predictive value of reading, working memory, and IQ in academic attainment. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 106, 25-36.



## Building Reading Skills



- ✓ Teach Academic Vocabulary Daily
- ✓ Boost Phonological Processing Skills
- ✓ Build Wkng. Memory
- ✓ Provide Relevant Books to Read
- ✓ Use Daily Deliberate Practice for Intense Skill Building

## Short-term vs. Working Memory

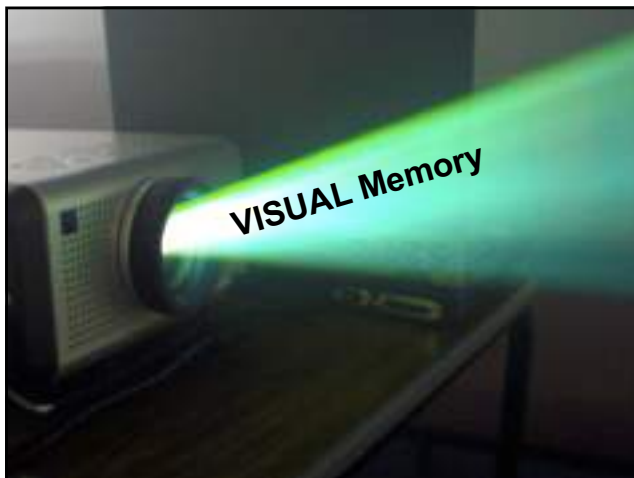
### SHORT-TERM MEMORY

Can you *hold and recall* the content in your head (as is) for seconds or minutes?



### WORKING MEMORY

Can you *hold, recall* and then **MANIPULATE** the content in your head for seconds or minutes?



## What is in Our Working Memory?



The content is... **sounds**, called a "phonological loop" **OR** **pictures**, or visual-spatial "sketchpad"

**AND** it is **held** for seconds or moments

**AND** it is **manipulated** or processed by our brain

## Working Memory

Luehli, M., Meier, B., Sanati, C. (2008) Stress effects on working memory.

- ✓ The driver of cognition
- ✓ It is required for every higher order thinking process
- ✓ Students in poverty have weaker working memory
- ✓ It is teachable and you can do it.

## Know Your Effect on Students

Effect size is a standardized measure of the *relative size of the gain (or loss)* of an intervention.

**0.00 – 0.20 = Negligible, unclear effects**  
**0.20 – 0.40 = Small-moderate effects**  
**0.40 – 0.50 = Typical one year effects**  
**0.50 – 0.75 = Moderately strong effects**  
**0.75 – 2.00 = Extreme positive effects**

Your work is the aggregate of all your effect sizes.  
 These are just one way of understanding the value of specific classroom factors.

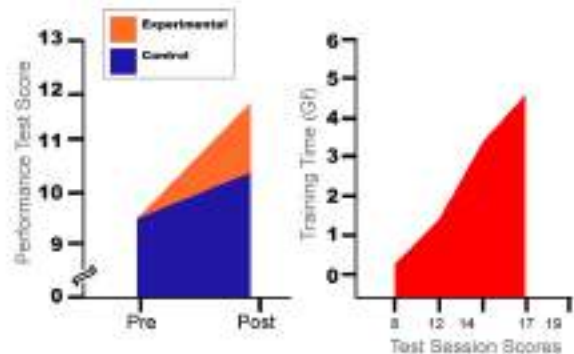
## Meta-Analysis on Working Memory Effect Sizes

- Elementary effect size = 1.41
- Secondary effect size = 0.72 – 1.18



Au, J., Buechelheitl, M., Duncan, G.J., Jaeggi, SM (2015). Psychon Bull Rev. 2015.

## Working Memory Training Shows Gains in Fluid Intelligence



## Temporary “Workarounds” for NOT Teaching Working Memory

1. Notes/Pause
2. **Gesturing**
3. **Chunk**
4. **Prime**
5. Do a quick, fun physical **activity**

Cook SW, Yip TK, Goldin-Meadow S. (2012).  
Bower 1997, DiVesta et al. 1979, and Stern 1994.

## Core Brain-Changing Factors



- Buy-in/Relevance
- Meaningful Goals/Evidence of Learning
- Interdependency
- Quick Initial Learning Curve
- Increasing Challenge & Complexity
- Quality Feedback
- 10 - 14 min. per day/ 3-5X per wk. for 8 - 12 weeks

## Buy-In Strategies

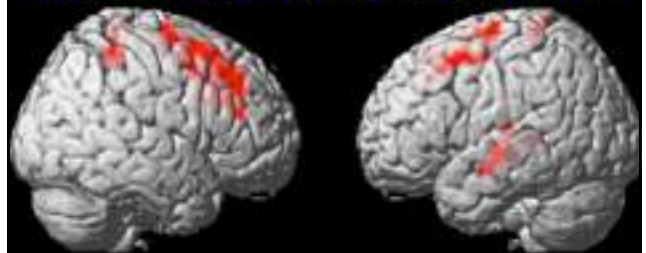
### K-5 STUDENTS:

The “bigger kid” challenge, fun, teacher enthusiasm, curiosity, be gross, friendship-maker and mystery.

### GRADE 6-12 STUDENTS:

Be edgy/risky, use peer pressure, create a big challenge, embed student interests, stair-step the activity or work with friends.

## Impact of Working Memory Training on Gray Matter in 5 Days



Talbot D, Talsi Y, Xenou Y, Makris N, Benjume L, Fiaschi A, Kowalska S. (2011) Working memory training using mental calculation impacts regional gray matter of the frontal and parietal regions. *PLoS One* 6:e22113

## Predictors of Student Success

"I have spent over a decade leading several major projects to understand the link between brain function and education.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the #1 predictor of learning success."

Dr. Tracy Alloway,  
*Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 2012

- a) Attitude
- b) IQ
- c) Effort
- d) Vocabulary
- e) Working Memory
- f) Prior Year's Grades
- g) Class Behaviors
- h) SES of Parents
- i) Motivation



*My Interest in Learning More About Working Memory is...?*

\_\_\_\_\_ **LOW** (I already know about it and I teach it)

\_\_\_\_\_ **MEDIUM** (I have some interest, *but I am very busy*)

\_\_\_\_\_ **HIGH** (I am interested; I will check it out and consider using it)

Where Can You Get More Tools to Build Your Student's Working Memory?



[Jensenlearning.com/workingmemory](http://Jensenlearning.com/workingmemory)

**E Tool #4**

**#4**

Use Gesturing Daily

## "Engage Like Crazy"

Shira Fishman, a math teacher at McKinley High School in DC Public Schools.



Shira was the district's 2011 Teacher of the Year, and the only teacher in the district to earn a perfect score from observations under the district's rigorous IMPACT evaluation system.

### CORE BELIEFS:

Keep the challenge sky high (even vs. the teacher), engage, provide the resources (esp. teamwork, high accountability).

### CORE STRATEGIES:

First 5 min. is critical! Her kids call their own parents in class when homework's not done, and engage every minute!

## Kinesthetic Math Works 3X Better: Use Gestures!



Kids asked to physically gesture their math problems are nearly **three times** more likely than non-gesturers to remember what they've learned. In the study, **90% of students** who had learned algebraic concepts using gestures remembered them 3 weeks later vs. 33% of speech-only students. And 90% of students who had learned by gesture alone **with NO speech** at all recalled what they'd been taught.

Cook, BW, et al., 2017

## ACTION STEP

I Can Take ASAP



Today, make a promise to engage with at least one new gesturing activity. The power of doing this **is amazing**.

*If I did use this idea, what's the next step I need to do to make it happen?*

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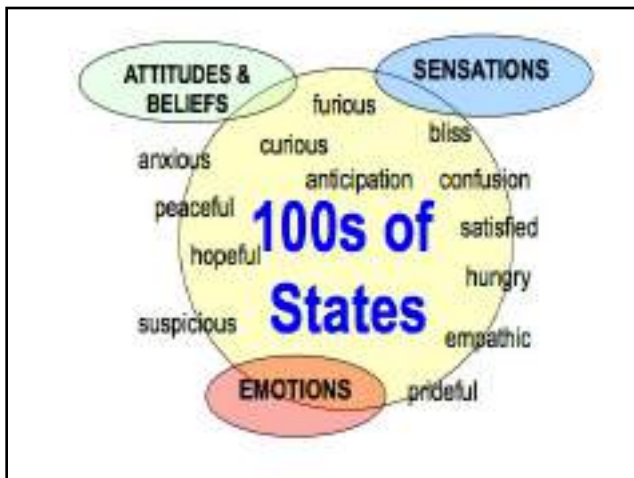
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**E Tool #5**

**#5**

Read & Manage Student States



- Understanding States***
1. States usually last for s\_\_\_\_\_ or minutes, moods last for hours or days.
  2. We experience 1\_\_\_\_\_ of states every day.
  3. More states i\_\_\_\_\_ learning than help it.

## Why are States So Critical?



Complex Learning Requires Background Knowledge, Working Memory, Processing Skills, Long-term Retrieval and Risk-Taking.

These all Require Positive Learning States.

## Qualities of States

1. States usually “run a course” and one state will often flow to another state.
2. States are self-reinforcing; the longer you’re in a state, the more comfortable it becomes and feels normal.
3. Your students range from being very flexible to very inflexible with changing states; that’s typical.

## Focus on Where You Have the Greatest Influence Right Now

Personality    IQ    Character    States!



## Why Go For Walks?

- Many students will talk more while walking than seated
- It gives students a chance to socialize and bond
- Many students get restless from too much sitting
- Memory improves when walking
- Walking releases useful brain chemicals for learning

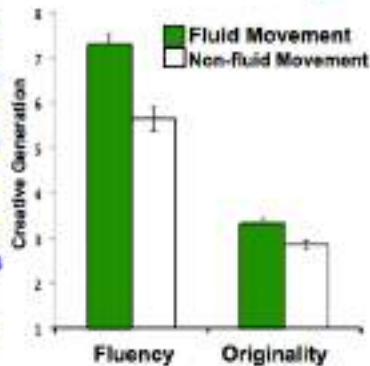


Schaefer, S., Lovden, M., Wieckhorst, B., & Lindenberger, U. (2010). Cognitive performance is improved while walking: Differences in cognitive-sensorimotor couplings between children and young adults.

## Fluid Arm Movements Boosted Creativity and Mental Flexibility

Shoenberger, M., et al. (2014). Fluid arm movements and creativity. *1 Day Psychology*.

In 3 experiments at Stanford, fluid arm movement in young adults led to documented results in three cognitive domains: creative generation, making remote associations and greater cognitive flexibility.



## Energy Management Strategies: ES = 1.51

- ✓ **Destressing** = slower movements, stretch, purposeful breathing, tense & release
- ✓ **Energizing** = faster movement, walk, mimic, dance and move quickly



Erwin, H., Fedewa, A., Beighle, A. & Ahn, S. (2012). A Quantitative Review of Physical Activity, Health, and Learning Outcomes Associated With Classroom-Based Physical Activity Interventions. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 25, 14-36

## 5 Easy Energizers

- ✓ Follow the leader on a quick walk
- ✓ **Simon Says**
- ✓ Play a sport, others mimic, rotate
- ✓ **Dance moves (you know the classics)**
- ✓ Circle 3 tables quickly or do jumping jacks, and then torso twists

**#1 RULE: EVERYBODY MOVES**

## 12 Min. Free Energizer Improves Attention & Reading Scores

The M. (2014). Acute aerobic exercise: an intervention for the selective visual attention and reading comprehension of low-income adolescents. *Front Psychol*, 11, 575.

- ✓ Low-income adolescents who received an aerobic exercise intervention (12') did much better than the control group.
- ✓ **Exercise raised visual attention and reading comprehension for a higher combined average.**
- ✓ The experimental group raised reading comprehension scores to 90%, fully comparable to their high-income peers.



States Bad for Learning?  
Change the States!



There's no such thing as an unmotivated student... only students in *unmotivated states* for classroom learning...

Elite teachers will engage students constantly in ways that put them in those rare states that foster rapid, quality learning.



Meanwhile, the average teachers complain that the kids have an "attitude" or are not motivated.



That's why...  
There's No  
Such Thing as  
an Un\_\_\_\_\_  
Student... Only  
Students in  
*Un\_\_\_\_\_*  
*States!*



A teacher who tried and the students would not participate ☹️

- Did you do a 2-step to get a micro state change 1st?
- Did you sell them on the benefits (buy-in) of the energizers (a better brain for learning and have more fun)?
- Did you put students in charge of this task, so they had more control and choice of the energizer?
- Did students get to select the music used?
- Did you first role model how to do the energizers?
- Are the students doing the energizers within teams vs. the whole class?

*If I did use this idea, what do I need to remember to do to make it happen?*

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## ACTION STEP

I Can Take ASAP



Don't be like other teachers and complain about students. Be like the best version of you every day, using at least one energizer activity every 10- 25 minutes. The power of doing this *is amazing.*

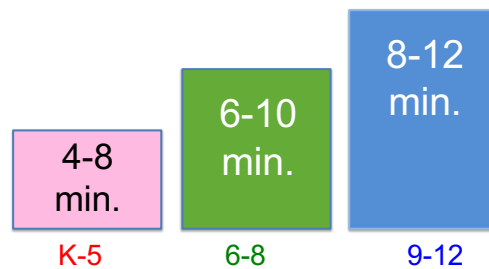
**E TOOL #6**

**#6**

Use More Active Teaching

## When You Teach, Do This

**Limit content input!** Go **4-8 min.** at grades **K-5**, then **6-10 min.** at grades **6-8** and **8-12 min.** at **9-12**.



### How to Boost Student Responses Strategies 1-3

1. Answer a m\_\_\_\_\_ choice
2. Break it into smaller ch\_\_\_\_\_ for students to learn and present to peers
3. Ask them to work together to fill in the bl\_\_\_\_\_

### How to Boost Student Responses Strategies 4-6

4. Ask students to n\_\_\_\_\_r off in a group and take turns answering Qs or commenting on them
5. Rephrase or sum\_\_\_\_\_ the content on the screen
6. V\_\_\_\_\_ on a choice and defend it

### How to Boost Student Responses Strategies 7-9

7. Work with a neighbor or team to critique or analyze a qu\_\_\_\_\_
8. Problem s\_\_\_\_\_ a situation that is posted with a partner
9. Dr\_\_\_\_\_ the learning out and share it with a neighbor

### How to Boost Student Responses Strategy 10-12

10. Never h\_\_\_\_\_ out papers; let students come get them and do the task
11. Stop telling a joke of the day; vet the jokes 1<sup>st</sup>, then allow st\_\_\_\_\_ to share them
12. Stop doing ene\_\_\_\_\_ yourself; allow students to come up with and lead them

## ACTION STEP

I Can Take ASAP



Every week, in every class, implement at least one new active “teaching” tool. The power of doing this *is amazing*.

*Which number from these ideas can I use and how do to make it happen?*

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**E TOOL #7**

**#7**

Make a Plan to Succeed

Let's Simplify...

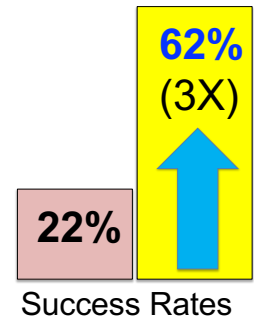
**A – B – C**

1. Acquire a clear, smart strategy
2. Buy-in for the value/need of it
3. Clear path for the implementation of 2 strategies and a plan




**To Implement a Change, Always Prevent the “Default” Behavior w/ “Plan B” Triggers**

Gelwiler, P. M., and Sheeran, P. (2008)  
 Researchers found that “action triggers” skyrocketed (nearly tripled) success rates for change from 22% to 62%. This is NOT theory; it is from real world experiments. Research shows strong when just one “Plan B” is set.



**ACTION STEP**  
 I Can Take ASAP



Today, make a promise to be more honest with yourself. Don't be like others; be *the best version of you*. The power of doing this *is amazing*.

**7 Tools for Engagement**  
*(start with relationships)*

1. Buy-in/Relevance
2. Daily quick-writes
3. Foster working memory
4. Use gesturing often
5. Read & manage student states
6. More active teaching
7. Make a plan to succeed

## Implementation Action Triggers Are, "What Will I Do When "X" Occurs?"

Favorite 1-2 ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When Things (or me) fall apart, I will do this:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Opening Activity Steps

1. Teacher enthusiasm with a "why"
2. Gave the Directions (one at a time)
3. Create curiosity and avoid naming the activity
4. Move students as quickly as you can – music helps
5. Remove common decisions that might lead others astray
6. Help students make selection E-Z: ("Point to the person nearest you and say, 'You're it!'" Now *stand confidently!*)
7. Give visual and auditory instructions (use gestures)
8. Check the body language of your students before you say the trigger word ("When I say, 'Go!'")
9. Take action if the body language is not right
10. Use the same cue (trigger word) to start the activity
11. Always give *the time length* for an activity
12. Finish with: 1) the "why" again, and 2) a partner affirmation so that the students remember + feelings from doing it

## The Following Tools Were Used

- Use of "We" NOT "I want" or "I need"
- Use of specifics to reduce problems (5)
- Constantly sharing the WHY we do this
- Reinforce the identity I want to see
- Be polite in how you ask
- Clarity in HOW I ask for action (time, steps)
- Affirm the engagement is easy
- Make any blame on a 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- To arouse curiosity, make it an experiment
- Use of affirmations and upbeat, fun music