# Critical Thinking through "Choice Led" Health Menu's

www.cmshpe.com

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WHAT WE LEARN WITH **PLEASURE**, WE NEVER FORGET.

*Dance Lessons*

www.educationillustrated.com

## *Classroom Menus*…
offer a variety of ***purposeful***, ***personalized engaging*** student ***choice*** assignments.

## Classroom Menu's may positively impact learning by:

1. decreasing high levels of stress
2. decreasing the production of cortisol *(cortisol can impair learning—yikes!)*
3. decreasing discipline problems
4. influencing positive states for learning
5. increasing student curiosity for learning
6. giving students control over their education
7. encouraging student creativity
8. allowing students to have fun

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## Turn up the HEAT...

**H**igher Order Thinking

**E**ngaged Learners

**A**uthenticity

**T**echnology use

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## DID YOU KNOW…

- ✓ **Emotions rule the teen brain**
- ✓ **The teen brain likes NOVELTY**
- ✓ **Teens are more susceptible to stress than adults**
- ✓ **Teen brains DO change with social experiences**
- ✓ **Student choice helps build intrinsic motivation**

# You must control their stress or they will achieve less…

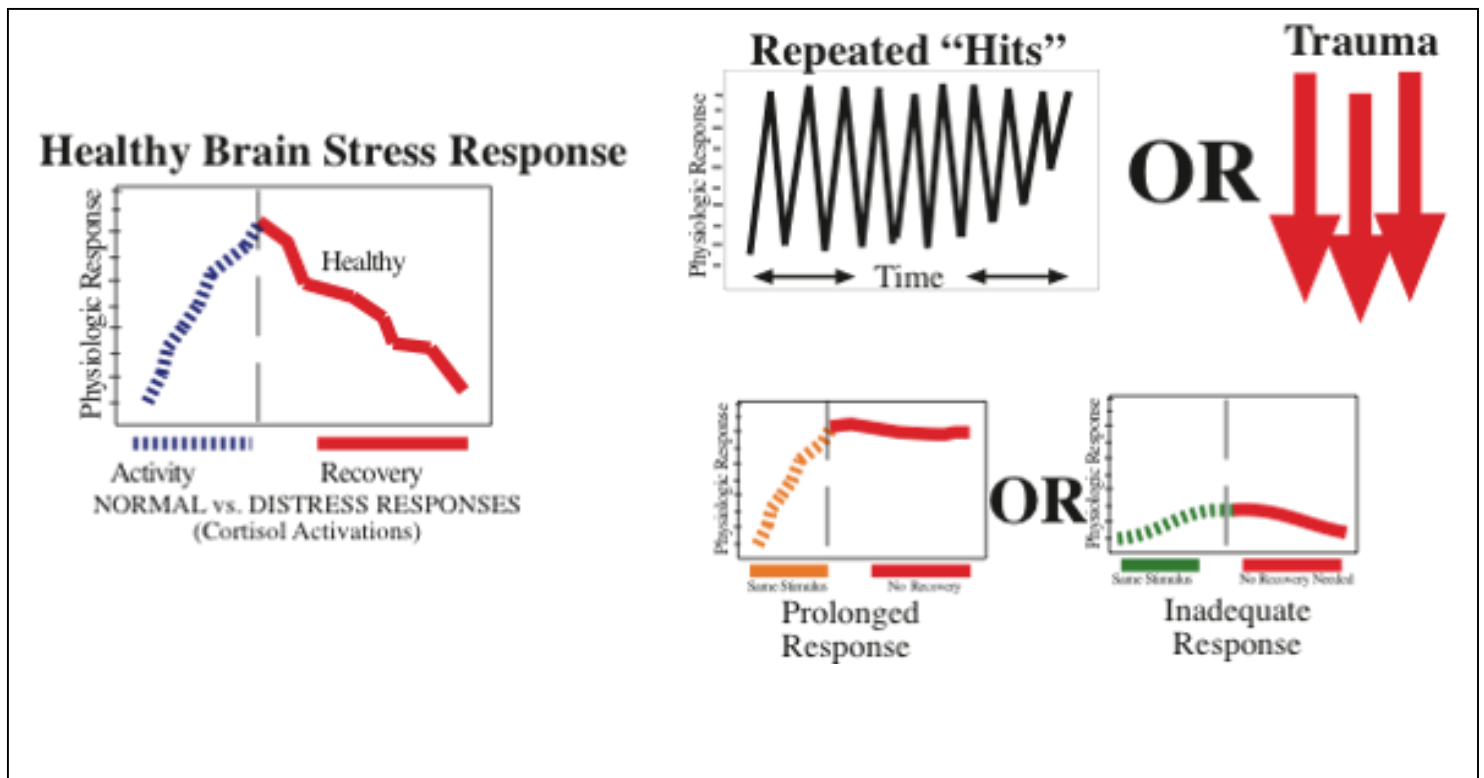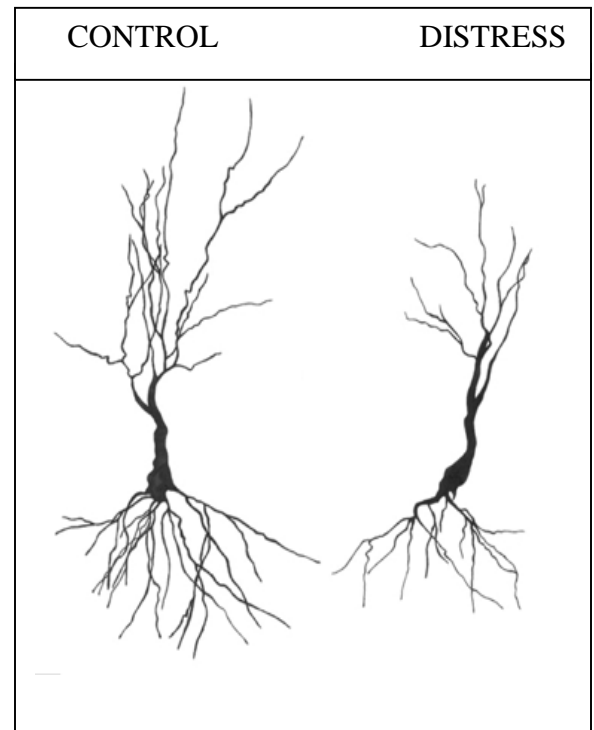**1. 20% of all students 9-17 have chronic stress.**
*These conditions are exacerbated by uncertainty, perception of lack of control, lack of arts, and lack physical education.*

**2. 1 in 5 schoolchildren suffer from an anxiety or stress disorder=<u>10 million total</u>. This condition affects test scores, behavior and social decisions. (Perry, B. (1997) and Surgeon General Report (1999)**

**3. Distress affects attention, focus and concentration. (Erickson et al. 2003)**

**4. Increased allostatic load impairs cognition, memory and creativity. (Lupien et al. 2001)**

**5. Distress reduces neurogenesis, memory and accelerates aging. (Dibellis et al. 2001)**



CONTROL                    DISTRESS



Healthy Brain Stress Response

Physiologic Response

Activity          Recovery

NORMAL vs. DISTRESS RESPONSES
(Cortisol Activations)

Repeated "Hits"

Time

Trauma

OR

Prolonged Response

OR

Inadequate Response

## Effects on Enriched Environments…

Thirty-six rats were sorted into three experimental groups**: 1. Enriched 2. Standard or 3. Impoverished environment.**

In the enriched environment, 12 rats lived together in a large cage and were given 5-6 objects to explore and climb upon (ladders, mazes, wheels, etc..)  The objects were changed 2-3 times a week to provide novelty.

In the standard, 3 rats were housed in a small cage with no exploratory objects.

For the impoverished environment, 1 rat remained alone with no exploratory objects.

After 30 days….

*In the 1960's Neuroscientists: Diamond, Krech, and Bennett conducted experiments on the effect of enrichment. Even though their studies were conducted on a rat, later studies have concluded that the human brain also changes with enriching environments!*

1. The cerebral cortex from the enriched environments had increased in thickness compared with those living in standard conditions.

2. The brains from the impoverished group decreased compared to the standard.

3. Cortical thickness was due to increased nerve cell size, and number and length of dendrites, dendritic spines, and length of postsynaptic thickening. (Diamond et al, 1964 and 1988)

4. The combination of social conditions and frequent exposure to new objects is necessary to gain full effect of enrichment.

# Engagement in High Schools…
## Let's ask 81,000 students!

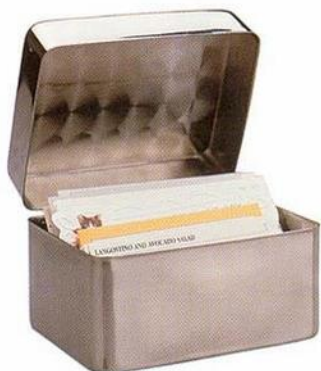**Indiana University's High School Survey of Student Engagement showed that almost half the students are *bored in class every day.* More than 81,000 students in 110 high schools, ranging in size from 37 students to nearly 4,000, across 26 states were surveyed.**

*Yazzie-Mintz, E. (2007). National high school student engagement survey by IU reveals unengaged students. Press Release, Indiana State University. Retrieved online at*

http://www.indiana.edu/~soenews/news/news1172622996.html

## Classroom Menu's…A Recipe for Success:

1. Decide what units to incorporate on the menu.

2. Decide how long you want students to complete classroom menu and set due dates. I suggest if students need to complete 200 points total on their classroom menu, set up due dates in which students should have 50 points, 150 points and 200 points accomplished.

3. Decide on a location where students turn in their assignments. I gave each student a hanging file folder and they place their completed work in the file folder that is in alphabetical order by last name and by class period.

4. Explore web-tools and resources your school has to offer. Incorporate those resources and use of technology in your health menu.

5. Ask the students what they like to do! After implementing my first classroom menu I asked the students, "What else should I offer as a student choice assignment?".

6. Take time in class covering procedures and instructing the students on the concept of the classroom menu.

7. Be there to help the students and advise them on where to go for information. Can you provide student samples?

8. Showcase student "WOW" work on a bulletin board or outside your classroom. Students of all ages love their work on display!

9. Acknowledge student effort and allow them to make corrections on assignments and turn back in for full credit.

*Play is the highest form of research!*
*-Albert Einstein*

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## Not Working?  Try This…

1. Too often, educators adopt a new strategy and do not give it enough time to work out all the "kinks".

2. Be reflective, if something is not working—ask yourself.. "Is there anything **I** can do to improve the process?"

3. Are you providing feedback on student work? (3-1 ratio)

4. Are you building relationships and building a classroom community?

5. Are you providing examples of student work?

6. Do you have a variety of **CHOICE** assignments?

7. Are you providing opportunities for students to use technology?

8. Are you building complexity?

9. Are you providing enough resources (articles, books, etc) for students to find information?

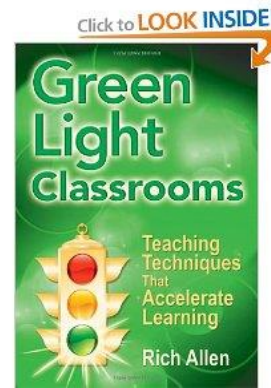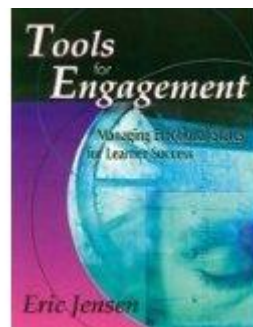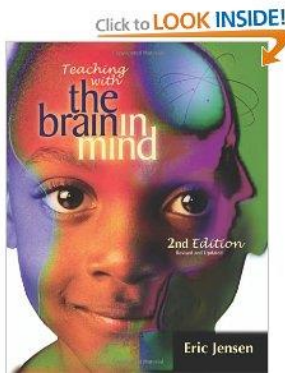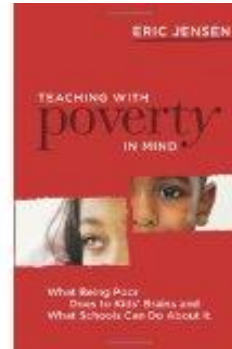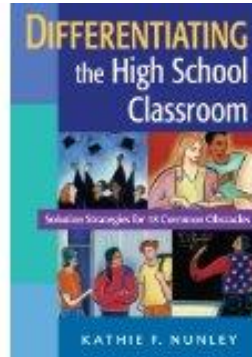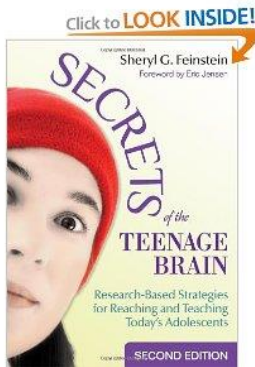10. **DO UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE FOR IMPLEMENTING THEM IN THE CLASSROOM?**

*Anything new will go through trial and error and you are more likely to "Stick" to something if you understand the "WHY?"*

## Just some GREAT STUFF!

**Music:**    Vitamin String Quartet (itunes)
**Books:**



**Websites:** www.actionbasedlearning
www.jensenlearning.com
www.battling-boredom.com
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