
Strategies for Stronger Engagement

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Module Overview

Recent statistics indicate that over half of students are disengaged in school, and teachers spend a lot of their time and energy addressing student disengagement. Is disengagement a problem in your classroom? How can you create more engaging classrooms where deep learning occurs? How can you develop stronger relationships with all of your students? This professional development series was designed to answer these questions. The purpose of this series is to help educators reflect on their beliefs about student engagement and increase the use of student-centered strategies that we know from research can increase the level of engagement in classrooms. This series was developed by Jennifer Fredricks, an international expert on student engagement, and builds on professional development activities outlined in her book, “Eight Myths of Student Engagement: Creating Classrooms of Deep Learning.”

Three separate modules are included in this series: 1) What is engagement and how can I tell if my students are engaged; 2) What influences the level of student engagement in my classroom, and 3) Improving relationships with all students in my classroom. Each module includes learning objectives, individual and group activities, facilitator notes, and accompanying handouts. The activities can be personalized to a particular school and audience, and may be adapted to fit time and location constraints. Modules can be done as individual sessions or as a three-part series, and can be completed in any order. The hope is that teachers will apply these research-based practices to create student-centered classrooms where deep learning and engagement become common shared experiences for students and their teachers.

Module 1:

What is Engagement and How I can Tell if My Students Are Engaged

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Teachers will be able to articulate at least three ways that engagement involves more than just on-task behavior and at least three benefits of considering engagement as a multidimensional construct
- Teachers will be able to describe to non-educator audiences (i.e., students, parents, and community members) the additional learning benefits that come from engaging experiences
- Teachers will be able to integrate into their lessons at least two different methods to assess student engagement

MATERIALS:

- Handout Engagement Interview Responses
- Handout Researchers Conception of Engagement/Disengagement
- Handout Video Analysis
- Handout Sample Survey Items Measuring Engagement
- Handout Sample Observational Items Measuring Engagement

TOTAL TIME: 60-75 minutes

Step 1: Interview about engagement/disengagement (10 minutes)

Have teachers get into pairs and interview their partners.

1. Describe a time when you were really engaged in learning. What were you doing, feeling, and thinking? What was the setting? Who were you with? Why do you think you were engaged?
2. Describe a time when you were very disengaged in learning. What were you doing, feeling, and thinking? What was the setting? Who were you with? Why do you think you were disengaged?

Have them fill out their responses to the question on Handout Engagement Interview Responses

Step 2: Small and large group reflection (10-15 minutes)

Have teachers get into small groups (4-6 teachers) to talk about their responses to the interview questions above. Together each group should come up with 2-3 examples of things they were doing, thinking, and/or feeling when they were engaged and 2-3 more to describe when they were disengaged.

Each group reports out 2-3 of their indicators to a facilitator who records the responses on a whiteboard.

Step 3: Individually review conceptions of engagement outlined in research (2 minutes)

- Distribute handout Research conceptions of Engagement/Disengagement. Teachers read over handout quietly.

Step 4: Large group discussion of conceptions of engagement/disengagement (10 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is to compare the list of indicators that were generated in small groups with the Handout Engagement/Disengagement, which is a summary of indicators that have been identified by researchers.

Facilitator:

- Look at list of indicators recorded on whiteboard.
- Put a star by indicators that were mentioned by teachers and are also on handout Engagement/Disengagement

- Put an asterisk by indicators that were mentioned only by teachers
- Put a check by any indicators that were mentioned only by researchers.

Key Insights for Facilitators

- Engagement is related to more positive academic (grades, test scores, motivation, staying in school) and psychological outcomes (resilience, self-esteem), and lower risk behavior (delinquency, substance use, teenage pregnancy)

- Students have different patterns of engagement (example, some students are just behaviorally engaged, but not cognitively and emotionally engaged)
- Most favorable outcomes are when students are high on all three dimensions
- Behavioral engagement is important for staying in school whereas cognitive engagement is necessary for deeper learning

Step 5: Videos and discussion (10 minutes)

Watch video of engaged students.

Facilitator:

Model how to watch: Show beginning to 45 seconds of clip where child is explaining point to another student and ends with A-ha moment.

- Ask: What do you see that demonstrates students are engaged? Try to focus on observable behaviors rather than make inferences about what those behaviors signal.

- Examples: On-task, explaining to peers, sharing ideas, persisting when difficult
- As large group, watch remaining part of video, and ask teachers to record on a handout [[insert title of handout here]]: time code and example of engagement

Step 6: Assessing Engagement (15-20 minutes)

Facilitator: We need to do better than simply observing dis/engagement in our students. We can't guess their emotional state or their cognitive investment in the activity. We can only assess what we can observe. To get a better idea of the extent of their actual engagement, we need to actually sample our students' perceptions and experiences. That means we need to get them to tell us about their engagement, not just observe behaviors and make guesses. Being systematic about this will help educators to better understand their students and then to cater their instruction to inspire increased engagement in the future.

Facilitator: The purpose of this activity is to discuss the different reasons a teacher may want to assess engagement.

1. First ask participants to share reasons why they might want to ask students about how they understand and experience engagement. What might we gain if we engage our students about engagement?
2. Potential organizers of their responses include:
 - a. Monitoring: How are students responding to different academic and social experiences to see what is working and what might need to be changed
 - b. Evaluating: Determining the effectiveness of different instructional interventions
 - c. Identifying: Identify students who may be disengaged in order to develop better supports school whereas cognitive engagement is necessary for deeper learning

Have teachers get into small groups and spend 10 minutes talking about the following three questions:

1. Can you tell when a student is engaged? If so, how?
2. Can you tell when a student is disengaged? If so, how?
3. What can happen if your interpretation of students' (dis)engaging behavior is wrong?
4. How can you check your interpretations to make sure you are making sound instructional decisions that best serve the needs of the student?
5. How might your answers to these questions this afternoon be different than they might have been this morning? What may have changed in your thinking and practice?

Have group report out their responses

Facilitator notes:

- Listen for emphasis on behavioral indicators. Discuss that engagement is multidimensional but that it is easier to assess behavior than emotion and cognitive engagement because behavior is visible.
- Discuss the role that context may play in students' level of engagement and importance of assessing engagement in multiple situations and paying attention to factors that may relate to changes in engagement

Facilitator shares sample survey items and observational protocol (see handouts Module 1)

Exit Ticket (2 minutes)

- Describe three ways engagement is more than on-task behavior
- What is one question you still have about engagement?

Module 2:

What Influences the Level of Student Engagement in My Classroom?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Teachers will be able to articulate to a non-educator audience (i.e., students, parents, and community members) how engagement is influenced by both student-level and contextual factors
- Teachers will be able to describe at least five classroom factors that have been shown to increase engagement and assess the extent to which those factors are regularly evident in their classroom
- Teachers will outline at least three specific instructional strategies they will use promote engagement in their classrooms

MATERIALS:

- Handout Portraits of Engagement
- Forced Choice Signs (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree)
- Handout Self-Determination Model
- Questionnaire

TOTAL TIME: 75-90 minutes

Step 1: Forced Choice: Agree/Disagree Statements activity (15 minutes)

Put signs on each corner (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Directions: Everyone must stand in corner, and there is no in between. Everyone must have specific reasons for standing where they are and be ready to articulate the reasons. Participants may move if arguments cause them to change their mind.

Statements

1. I would have a more engaging classroom if my students were more motivated.
2. There is only so much I can do to engage my most difficult students.
3. Some students are lazy and simply can't be motivated.
4. Some students are disengaged because they don't care about learning.
5. Some students are disengaged because they have a difficult home life.

Facilitator notes:

- Spend about three minutes on each statement.
- Ask the strongly sides to weigh in first —why are you standing there? — then ask the opposing side to counter.
- Then look for nuances in the agree/disagree sides — why aren't you standing in the strongly corner?
- Take a few additional comments, then move on to the next prompt.
- Highlight these beliefs shape how we frame learning the classroom.

Step 2: Individual Reflection on Student Learning (10-15 minutes)

First have individuals free write their responses, and then share these responses in small groups.

Think about a student who has made an intellectual leap or jumped significantly in their sophistication with a particular skill. In describing this student's growth and learning, think about the following questions.

- What were some of the factors responsible for their learning?
- What was happening in the classroom?
- What was the learning environment like?
- Who were they with? Who were they not with?
- What role did you play?
- What was happening at home?

Facilitator:

Listen for:

- Student felt they had ability
- Student felt like teacher provided academic and social supports
- Student got to discuss ideas with peers
- Peers provided academic and personal supports
- Student took to take ownership for learning
- Student felt topic was related to real world
- Student had multiple ways to demonstrate ability
- Teacher made changes to task based on students' interests, needs, abilities
- Student felt adequately challenged
- Student was interested in topic
- Teacher pushed them to explain their understanding
- Teacher modeled how to solve problems
- Student knew what they needed to do be successful
- Student had support at home
- Student received positive feedback on ability
- Student felt listened to and respected
- Student belonged and her/his/their status differences were made immaterial

Come back as a larger group. Ask: How might your student's experience apply to other students in your classroom?

Step 3: Introduce the portraits of engagement from book Eight Myths of Student Disengagement (see Module 2 handouts) (10 minutes)

Facilitator notes:

You will encounter students who vary in their levels of engagement. These portraits of students will likely remind you of students you have taught in your classrooms. Have participants read the three portraits silently.

In large groups:

Ask them if they have students who are similar to at least one of three portraits?

Ask them to describe each of three portrait's engagement and what factors they think are responsible for the different level of engagement. Facilitator records these responses on screen or poster.

Facilitator notes:

- Discuss difference between behavioral engagement (doing what is required, participating, following roles) and cognitive engagement (using effort and strategies to learn and understand the material as opposed to just completing task)
 - Students who are high on all three dimensions have most favorable engagement
 - Behaviorally engaged is a very common portrait. These are students who just want to complete the task and get the grade
1. Fully Engaged: Fiona and Franco
 2. Behaviorally Engaged Only: _____ & _____
 3. Disengaged: Rachel and Ryan

Step 4: Questionnaire (15 minutes)

Think about students in your classroom who are similar to the three portraits (fully engaged, behaviorally engaged only, disengaged). Read each statement and record the response (strongly disagree to strongly agree) for how you think a student in your class who you would characterize as fully engaged, behaviorally engaged, or disengaged would respond to each statement. Be prepared to discuss your ratings and the reasons for them with your colleagues.

- **Relatedness** – My teacher knows and understands me
- **Cultural Responsiveness** – I can bring my unique cultural identity to this class and know that it will be sustained, welcomed, and that I belong
- **Rigor** – I feel challenged more often than I feel bored in this class
- **Expectations** – My teacher communicates high expectations for my performance
- **Relevance** – I feel like the content is relevant to my life outside of the classroom
- **Peers** – I have good relationships with my peers in this class
- **Classroom community** – I feel like I belong and am supported by my peers in this class
- **Student voice** – I am able to express my opinions
- **Student voice** – I am pushed to explain my thinking
- **Student autonomy** – I get to make decisions about what and how I learn in this classroom
- **Structure** – I know what I need to do to be successful in this classroom
- **Competence** – I have opportunities to show that I am good at something in this classroom
- **Fairness** – I feel like the rules are fair in this class

Discussion: To what extent do you imagine using this questionnaire with your students? What might you learn? How might it be adapted/used?

Step 5: Share responses to questionnaire and discussion of context and engagement (25-30 minutes)

Have participants get into pairs. For 10 minutes discuss the following questions to be displayed on poster or screen for all to see:

- What do your responses to questionnaire reveal about what are the most and least engaging aspects of your classroom?
- Which areas would you like to change? Why?
- Did your responses change across the three portraits of students (fully engaged, behaviorally engaged only, & disengaged)? If so, how?

Come back as large group to share what the questionnaire revealed about their classrooms and which aspects tend to be most and least engaging.

Listen for:

- Are students more engaged when they can express their opinions?
- Are students more engaged when they feel like they are respected by and listened to by teacher?
- Are students more engaged when they feel like their teacher knows about their interests and live outside the classroom?
- Are students more engaged when they have friends in their class and these peers provide support?
- Are students more engaged when they feel respected and accepted?
- Are students more engaged when they are working on interesting and meaningful tasks?
- Are students more engaged when they feel they can be successful in the classroom?
- Are students more engaged when they feel like the rules are fair?
- Are students more engaged when the tasks are adequately challenging?
- Are students more engaged when they get to work on real world problems?

Step 5: Share responses to questionnaire and discussion of context and (25-30 minutes)

Give handout of self-determination model as an example of factors that influence engagement. Describe how individuals have three fundamental needs: relatedness (need to feel connected to an accepted by others), autonomy (need to feel that decisions are made based on internal factors as opposed to being driven by external incentives), and competence (need to feel you know how and can be successful). Individuals will be more engaged in classroom environments that provide opportunities to meet these needs, and will be disengaged in environments that don't support these needs.

As a large group, talk about teachers' personal experiences related to SDT? As a recent learner of something new, when did you feel most engaged, energized, excited?

Listen for example below and connect them to one of the three aspects of SDT theory:

- Opportunities to collaborate and plan with other (Supports relatedness)
- Develop positive relationships with other teachers (Supports relatedness)
- Be supported by administrators (Supports relatedness)
- Teachers and administrators provide social and emotional support (Supports relatedness)
- Have a voice in decision-making (Supports autonomy)
- Have some choice about how to spend time (Supports autonomy)
- Be clear what need to do to be successful (Supports competence)
- Be recognized for effort (Supports competence)
- Get positive feedback on progress (Supports competence)

Come back as a group and make a list of aspects of classroom that can support each need:

- Relatedness
- Demonstrating teacher caring
- Being a sensitive and responsive teacher
- Making adjustments based on students' needs, interests, culture, and abilities
- Getting to know students as individuals
- Giving students opportunities to work with peers
- Modeling positive social interactions
- Building a supportive and welcoming classroom community

Autonomy

- Minimizing use of external incentives: grades, prizes, controlling language
- Give students a chance to make decisions about how and what to study
- Encourage students to give their feedback and opinions on content, rules, procedures
- Give students opportunities to take leadership roles
- Give students more responsibility for their learning
- Provide students opportunities to talk
- Be responsive to students' questions and comments
- Arrange learning opportunities so students can be active and have conversations, rather than watch and listen

Competence

- Communicate unwavering high expectations
- Give tasks that are moderately difficult – “zone of proximal development”
- Provide clear guidelines for completing tasks and for behavior
- Give positive feedback
- Adjust task difficulty (make either more or less difficult)
- Emphasize effort and individual mastery
- Deemphasize competition and relative ability
- Give students opportunities to redo work

Exit Ticket (*3 minutes*)

Each educator will record the aspect of the environment they would like to change and one practical change the plan to make the classroom more engaging. Identify the following:

- What do you plan to change in classroom to make it more engaging?
- Why did you choose to make this change?
- What resources and support do you need to address this factor?
- How will you know if you have been successful?

Module 3:

What Influences the Level of Student Engagement in My Classroom?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Teachers will be able to articulate at least three ways that their beliefs about students' level of engagement are shaped by both student and teacher characteristics.
- Teachers will be able to describe the concept of learned helplessness to a non-educator audience and also be able to describe how they prepare students to avoid it.
- Teachers will develop at least three practices they will employ to improve relationships with all of their students, especially those who are having academic difficulties and/or exhibit behavioral problems in the classroom.

MATERIALS:

- Handout: What is Relatedness and Why is it Important
- Handout: Practical Strategies for Increasing Relatedness
- Handout: Jigsaw Activity

FACILITATOR: HOMEWORK:

- Read Jigsaw Activity and make notes on four cases

TOTAL TIME: 90 minutes

Step 1: Reflection on developing relationships with resistant learners (20-25 minutes)

Display the following three questions on a poster or screen visible to all gathered. First have individuals spend a few minutes reflecting individually on these questions, and then have them pair-share.

- Which student behaviors are most difficult for you to understand or respond to? Why?
- What is most challenging for you in negotiating relationships with students who exhibit these behaviors?
- What have you tried to improve your relationships with these students, and what was the result?

Then ask pairs to join larger groups to discuss individual responses and record responses to the following question:

- List 3-5 successful strategies your group members have employed that have helped to diminish the behaviors you identified and elevate students' engagement in your classes?

Poll the large group by first asking for a quick listing of the behaviors folks found to be most challenging in the classroom. Then poll the groups to construct a list of strategies for strengthening relationships with students who exhibit these behaviors.

Facilitator notes:

- Redirect participants if they focus on punishments, reprimands, and other techniques that are not explicitly focused on strengthening relationships.

Step 2: Review concept of relatedness and teacher-student relationships and engagement (5 minutes)

- Facilitator introduces handout, “What is Relatedness and Why is it Important.” Facilitator describes that this handout includes information on definition of relatedness, and it also is related to a self-determination theory, which is a motivational theory that assumes individuals have three fundamental needs: relatedness, autonomy, and competence
- Participants read handout “What is Relatedness and Why is it Important.”
- Facilitator asks participants if they have questions
- Below are points to highlight about importance of relatedness in this discussion

Facilitator notes:

- Relatedness involves feeling connected to others rather than alienated or ostracized.
- Feeling a sense of relatedness gives people the freedom to explore and to engage constructively in activities and interactions with others; relatedness can also function as a resource in times of stress or difficulty.
- Relatedness is especially important in adolescence, who are focused on developing identity and meaningful relationships and who need practice on relationships with others.
- Relatedness is closely related to belonging, acceptance, inclusion, and feeling known, supported, and respected.
- Developing positive relationships with teachers and peers support the need for relatedness.
- Students with positive relationships with teachers tend to get more engaged over time and students with poor relationships with teachers tend to get more disengaged over time (i.e., the rich-get-richer phenomenon, or the vicious/virtuous cycle).

Step 3: Gallery walk (10-15 minutes)

Place around the room three different posters:

1. strategies for increasing relatedness through instructional activities
2. strategies for increasing relatedness through teacher-student relationships
3. strategies for increasing relatedness through the building of classroom community

Participants should be divided into three groups. Each group starts at a different poster.

For five minutes, participants walk around room and write responses on each of the three posters.

At the last poster, a representative is identified to report out on the responses to that poster.

Have representative report out on some of strategies on each list:

Instructional Activities

Listen for:

- Personal relevance
- Interesting
- Meaningful to real world
- Choice about what to study
- Multiple solutions to problem

Teacher-student relationships

Listen for:

- Getting to know students interests and background outside classroom
- Listening to, respecting, and integrating student voice
- Demonstrate authentic (as opposed to aesthetic) caring
- Provide academic supports – ZPD
- High expectations – unyielding, for everyone
- Teacher sensitivity – personalizing instruction based on students' needs, interests, abilities
- Recognizing diverse perspectives and contributions

Classroom community

Listen for:

- Hold class meetings
- Co-develop with students the norms for appropriate behavior
- Incorporate cooperative and collaborative (not competitive) games
- Provide opportunities for students to get to know classmates
- Emphasize mastery and self-improvement rather than competition
- Model positive interactions
- Provide messages about inclusion, welcoming all
- Praise effort not intelligence
- Attend to status differences and protect the vulnerable

Step 4: Working with low expectancy students: Activity to illustrate concept of learned helplessness (5-10 minutes)

Teachers are given a very complicated and poorly worded passage. Facilitator states: “You need to do your best to make sense of it and will be expected to explain it to others. The passage may be challenging for some, but given your education and experience, I expect that you’ll bring insight to the reading and add to the discussion that follows.”

“ *The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to view a hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which they insights into the contingency possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power. (Butler, 1997)*

Facilitator: as they read silently, note their reactions to this reading.

- Do they get off task, make jokes, distract their peers, and/or reject the activity?

After a few minutes, ask them how they felt when they read it and why. What was going on for them? Why didn’t they stay focused? What behaviors did they employ to manage their experience? Is it fair to say that folks “didn’t want to learn” or were acting “disrespectfully”? How does this relate to your interactions with students who are believed to be low in expectancy? What does this activity make you think about how you read and respond to students who may seem disengaged?

Key takeaway: Sometimes students who don’t understand the material and who don’t want to look dumb in public begin to feel like they can’t control the outcomes so they don’t exert effort and begin to disengage. Their logic: it’s better to be willfully disengage than to be publicly disparaged.

Step 5: Jigsaw activity (25-30 minutes)

- Arrange self in groups of 6
- Count off by 3s in each group. Ask group members to join groups with other participants who have information on a particular student (keep this group size to 5-6 participants, depending on the size of group may have multiple per group). Group members with #1: Assigned low expectancy, Group members with #2: students who have been disciplined in school; Group members with #3: disengaged students.
- Take 3 minutes to skim notes from readings on assigned cases: Low expectancy students, students who have been disciplined in school, and disengaged students.

Facilitator:

Tell each group to use information from book and their own experiences in classroom to answer the following questions:

1. what are some challenges that educators may face in building relationships with each of the four cases
 2. what are some research-based strategies for improving relationships with students who share these characteristics (*7-8 minutes*)
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- Facilitator will go to each of the three groups and do a check in before individuals return to their original group of 5-6 students
 - 3. Participants will then return to their old group and each pair will share information on that particular type of student. As a group talk about the commonalities and differences in challenges and strategies for building relationships with each case of students (*15 minutes*)

Come back as a large group

Facilitator will ask each group:

- What are 2-3 challenges they think educators they might face in building relationships with the student described in the case study.
- What are 2-3 practical strategies for addressing each of these challenges. Facilitator will record this on sheet under type of student.

Facilitator will note on board or a screen the strategies that are common across all students, and the strategies that are specific to the three cases.

Step 6: Reflection Activity: Reflection (questions A-C conducted immediately) and question D Conducted One Month After PD concluded

Think about a student in your classroom with whom you have found it difficult to engage.

- a. With regard to your student's behaviors and your reactions to them, what are you curious about? What do you want to know more about, and how might you gain that knowledge?
- b. Using this first question as a springboard, outline three strategies you plan to use in the next two weeks to improve your relationship with this student.
- c. Note the date by which you plan to try these strategies and also note a colleague with whom you plan to discuss the results. Put that discussion in each of your calendars and also put a reminder about it a week prior to that discussion.
- d. After one month, respond to a series of questions:
 - a. How you would describe your relationships with this student? Has it changed over past month? If so, how?
 - b. Which strategies have improved relationships?
 - c. Which strategies have not improved relationships?
 - d. What challenges do you still face?

Module 1: Handouts

Engagement Interview Responses

ENGAGEMENT	DISENGAGEMENT
Describe a time when you were very engaged in learning.	Describe a time when you were very disengaged in learning.
What were you doing?	What were you doing?
What were you feeling?	What were you feeling?
What were you thinking?	What were you thinking?
Who were you with?	Who were you with?
Why do you think you were engaged?	Why do you think you were disengaged?

Researchers Conceptions of Engagement/Disengagement

Behavioral Engagement	Behavioral Disengagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Follows classroom and school rules2. Completes homework and comes to school prepared3. Exerts effort to complete task4. Participates5. Pays attention6. Asks and answers questions7. Extracurricular involvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Skips school2. Gets in trouble3. Off-task4. Does not try5. Does not participate6. Zones out
Emotional Engagement	Emotional Disengagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Positive emotions (i.e., happiness, pride)2. Interest and enjoyment3. Feelings of belonging (i.e., liked by others, feel included)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Negative emotions (i.e., sadness, frustration)2. Boredom3. Feeling alienated (i.e., not included, not respected)
Cognitive Engagement	Cognitive Disengagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Goes beyond requirements to learn2. Exerts effort to understand/master content3. Persistence4. Self-regulation (i.e., planning, monitoring, evaluating thinking)5. Deep strategy use (i.e., elaboration, connects to prior knowledge)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does only what is required2. Exerts effort only for grade3. Gives up4. Shallow strategy use (i.e., memorization, rote learning)

Videos Analysis

ENGAGEMENT VIDEO

Time Code	Example of Engagement

Videos Analysis

SAMPLE SURVEY ITEMS MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

Behavioral Engagement

1. Negative emotions (i.e., sadness, frustration)
 2. I work hard to do my best in class.
 3. When I am in class, I listen very carefully.
 4. When I am in class, I just act like I am working (reverse coded).
 5. I complete my homework on time.
 6. I get in trouble at school (reverse coded).
 7. If I can't understand my schoolwork, I just keep doing it until I do.
-

Emotional Engagement

1. I feel happy to be part of school.
 2. I enjoy learning new things.
 3. When we work on something in class, I feel discouraged (reverse coded).
 4. I am bored at school (reverse coded).
 5. Most of things we learn in school are useless (reverse coded).
 6. School is one of my favorite places to be.
 7. Sometimes I get so interested in school, I don't want to stop.
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Cognitive Engagement

1. When I read a book, I ask myself questions to make sure I understand.
 2. I classify problems into categories before I begin to work on them.
 3. I check my schoolwork for mistakes.
 4. Before I begin studying, I think about what I need to learn.
 5. I work several examples of the same problem so I can understand problems better.
 6. When I finish working a problem, I check my answers to see if they are reasonable.
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Sample Observation Indicators

ENGAGEMENT

- On-task
- Listens attentively
- Asks and answers questions
- Focused on learning with minimum distractions
- Persists with a task, even when difficult or long
- Expresses interest and enthusiasm

DISENGAGEMENT

- Inattention
- Off-task
- Aggressive behavior
- Inappropriate movement
- Inappropriate vocalization

Module 2: Handouts

Portraits of Engagement

Fully-Engaged: Fiona and Franco

Fiona looks forward to going to school. She finds most academic subjects interesting and excels in math. She pays attention, enjoys challenging tasks, and tries hard to do her best work. She contributes her thoughts in discussions and asks good questions. She studies at home to make sure she understands the material even when she does not have a test. Her family is very involved in her education. They talk with her about how she is doing in school, monitor her homework, and attend school events. At home, she reads math and science books that her family has bought to supplement what she is doing in school. If she has trouble solving a problem, she goes over it again until she understands it.

Franco likes school, being with his friends, and has a good relationship with his teacher. Most of the time, he is happy at school. He enjoys opportunities to be intellectually challenged and especially loves history. He works hard, listens attentively, and actively participates in class discussions. When he is studying for a test, he makes chapter outlines and tries to associate the material he is studying with what he already knows about the topic. His parents have high expectations and expose him to intellectually stimulating activities and experiences at home. He enjoys reading history outside of school, going to museums, and discussing the subject with his family and peers.

Behaviorally Engaged Only: Beatrice and Benjamin

Fiona looks forward to going to school. She finds most academic subjects interesting and excels in math. She pays attention, enjoys challenging tasks, and tries hard to do her best work. She contributes her thoughts in discussions and asks good questions. She studies at home to make sure she understands the material even when she does not have a test. Her family is very involved in her education. They talk with her about how she is doing in school, monitor her homework, and attend school events. At home, she reads math and science books that her family has bought to supplement what she is doing in school. If she has trouble solving a problem, she goes over it again until she understands it.

Franco likes school, being with his friends, and has a good relationship with his teacher. Most of the time, he is happy at school. He enjoys opportunities to be intellectually challenged and especially loves history. He works hard, listens attentively, and actively participates in class discussions. When he is studying for a test, he makes chapter outlines and tries to associate the material he is studying with what he already knows about the topic. His parents have high expectations and expose him to intellectually stimulating activities and experiences at home. He enjoys reading history outside of school, going to museums, and discussing the subject with his family and peers.

Disengaged: Rachel and Ryan

Rachel finds many of her subjects difficult and boring. Her mind often wanders in class and she rarely participates in class discussions. She has a poor relationship with her teacher. Her attendance and participation in class have been inconsistent. As a result, she is one of the lowest performing students in her class. Although she acknowledges that she does need to do better in school, she lacks a successful strategy for overcoming her confusion. She has begun to assume that poor performance is inevitable. She wishes she did not have to go to school and does not see how it will help her in the future. She lives with her mother, who did not complete high school. Her mother believes strongly in the value of education, but lacks the skills or confidence to help her daughter with school. She has fun in class when she has extra recess or gets to talk with her friends. She also loves to sing and dance.

Ryan can sometimes be aggressive and often gets in trouble at school. He gives the impression that he does not care about school or getting in trouble. Sometimes he gets in trouble for not paying attention, and other times for fighting. He finds school an alienating and unsupportive context. He has a poor and often conflictual relationship with his teacher and many of his peers don't like him. He often feels that the other students and his teacher wrongly accuse him of misbehaving. He often gets labeled as a "disruptive and aggressive student", and he feels like he is given few opportunities to explain his behavior. He finds few subjects interesting, and tries to get by doing as little as possible. He is having the most difficulty with math, which he finds boring and confusing. His parents have become increasingly frustrated with his poor behavior and academic performance, and have tried a variety of forms of punishment. His favorite parts of the day are gym and recess. He likes playing sports, building, and playing on the computer outside of school.

Questionnaire

Think about students in your classroom who are similar to the three portraits (fully engaged, behaviorally engaged only, disengaged). Then read each statement and write the response that reflects the extent to which you agree with the statement for each student. Be prepared to discuss your ratings and the reasons for them with your colleagues.

1. My teacher knows me and understands me.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

2. I can be myself in this class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

3. I feel challenged more often than I feel bored in this class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

4. My teacher communicates high expectations for my performance.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

5. I feel like the content we study is relevant to my life outside of the classroom.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

6. I have good relationships with my peers in this class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

7. I feel like I belong and am supported by peers in class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

8. I am able to express my opinions in class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

9. I am pushed to explain my thinking.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

10. I get to make decision about what and how I learn in this classroom.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

11. I know what I need to do to be successful in this class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

12. I have opportunities to show that I am good at something in this class.

STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

13. The rules are fair in this class.

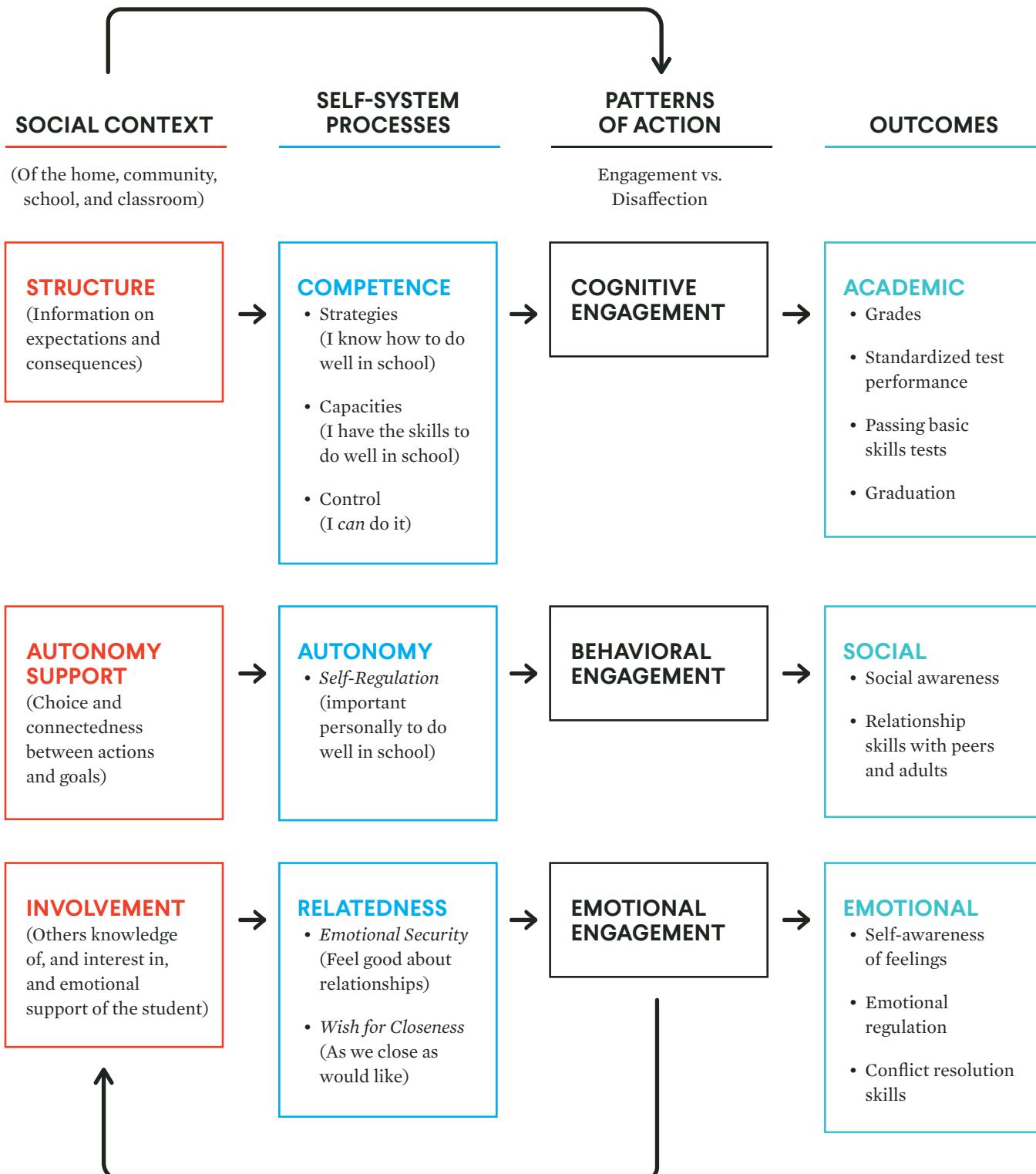
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
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Fully Engaged _____

Behaviorally Engaged Only _____

Disengaged _____

Self-Determination Model



Module 3: Handouts

What is Relatedness and Why is it Important

WHAT IS RELATEDNESS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Relatedness is based on idea that humans have a fundamental need to be part of their social environment, and to form and maintain positive and significant relationships.

Feeling a sense of relatedness gives students the freedom to explore, engage constructively in activities, and interact with others. Relatedness also serves as a resource in times of stress and difficulty.

Research shows that adolescents' sense of relatedness:

Triggers energized behaviors such as:

- Effort
- Persistence
- Participation

Promotes positive emotions and cognitions such as:

- Interest
- Self-efficacy
- Values

Depresses negative emotions such as:

- Anxiety
- Boredom

Adolescents who feel disconnected from adults and peers tend to:

- Find it harder to become constructively involved in academic activities
- Become bored, worried, and frustrated more easily
- Can become increasingly disengaged over time

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS' NEED FOR RELATEDNESS

1) Get to know students in your classroom.

Teachers should try to learn as much as possible about students' interests and background outside of school. Teachers can use information on students' interests to create opportunities in the classroom that match these interests. Furthermore, having a greater understanding of students' unique lived experiences can help teachers to build stronger emotional connections to students.

Jigsaw Activity

LOW-EXPECTANCY STUDENTS

One of the key predictors of disengagement is having academic difficulties. Students who struggle academically often lack the background knowledge and skills to be successful, and as a result have had few opportunities to feel the sense of accomplishment that comes from achieving success in school. One common response for students who have experiencing a history of failure is to have low expectancy, or believe that they lack the ability to succeed. These students often show a pattern of **learned helplessness**, where they have low expectations for success and give up quickly in the face of difficulty. Since they feel they can't control the outcome and fear failure, they abandon any serious attempts to master tasks and instead concentrate on preserving their self-esteem and reputation. Low-expectancy students often also have difficulty following directions and completing their work. As a consequence, these students often fall behind their classmates. This makes it more difficult to use instructional materials developed for their grade level, and can result in students feeling frustrated because they don't know how to do the task and how to get the help they need to be successful. Below are practical research-based strategies for helping students who have disengaged because of low expectancy-beliefs. These strategies are adapted from suggestions for working with low-achieving students.

Practical Strategies for Teaching Low-Expectancy Students

Providing opportunities to achieve success: It is important to set up tasks so that low-achieving students can experience success. Dividing assignments into smaller parts, and making sure the first part of the assignment is approachable or familiar can help students to experience some initial success. Early little wins provide intrinsic motivation to persist and move on to the next, and possibly more challenging task. This can also help students to feel less overwhelmed and see where they have done well and where they need to improve.

Helping students to deal with frustration and failures: Low-expectancy students are more likely to become frustrated and give up easily. One way to minimize these frustrations and encourage students to persist is to make sure that students have the background knowledge and skills to be successful. When teachers find out what students know and can do beforehand it is easier to personalize approaches and materials to build on those assets. It is also important to not single out students who are having difficulties or embarrass them in front of their classmates. Teachers should encourage effort and give students recognition for the strategies they employ, the progress they demonstrate, and even the mistakes they learn from. These students may also need individualized supports so that they are willing to keep trying, especially when faced with difficulties.

Adjusting task difficulty and reading levels: It is important to give tasks that are within students' range of capabilities. In some cases, it may be necessary to raise the level of supports so students can experience success.

Providing clear directions: Low-expectancy students may have difficulty with instructions, particularly in learning environments where the consequences of failing publicly are high. It is therefore important to provide students with clear and simple directions on what they need to do to complete task and how they can achieve a desired outcome and to check for understanding before initiating the activity. Having students repeat the directions in their own words or demonstrate a particular step is one way to make sure they understand the task. It is also important to provide clear time expectations for completing the task, but to adjust them when things take more or less time for some or all students.

Offering tutoring and additional supports: Low-expectancy students often have difficulty keeping up with their classmates. These students can benefit from tutoring or additional instruction from an aide, resource teacher, adult volunteer, or a high-achieving classmate. Offering and scheduling such additional help needs to be done in a way that addresses status differences between students and ameliorates any perceived social stigmas associated with receiving additional help. The more all students are perceived to need additional help sometimes, the more such help becomes normative and therefore "no big deal."

Setting realistic goals for task completion: Low-expectancy students often have difficulty completing assignments. Therefore, it is important to help students set realistic incremental goals and evaluate their own accomplishments. The emphasis should be on effort and improvement, rather than how these students are doing relative to their classmates. Grading should reflect this focus on mastery rather than performance. Individualized learning plans, contracts, and competency-based forms of instruction and assessment can be effective approaches to help students plan and evaluate their progress.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN DISCIPLINED AT SCHOOL

One of teachers' biggest concerns is how to manage the classroom to ensure that classes run smoothly and students' behavioral problems are minimized. This is important because the time spent dealing with student misbehavior takes away time that can be spent on learning. Prevention is the key to reducing behavioral problems. There will be fewer behavioral problems in a classroom with engaging tasks, a positive social climate, and clear expectations, rules, and rituals. Students need to know what is expected of them and the consequences for failing to comply with these expectations. Other keys to preventing student misbehavior include anticipating problems before they occur, intervening and redirect off-task students before their behaviors become more severe, and dealing with a disruption with as little interruption as possible.

Even with these preventive measures, some teachers will still have students who are disruptive, distracting, and/or defiant. Many of these students have had a history of behavioral problems. It is important to emphasize to these students that you will never give up on them and want to work with them to discover and address the antecedents of their behaviors. In addition, for these students, it is important to identify the conditions that prompt and reinforce negative behaviors. Teachers should work with students to determine when, where, and how often these behaviors occur. For example, teachers and students can co-observe

whether these negative behaviors are more likely to occur at certain times of the day, during certain types of tasks, or during certain instructional arrangements (small group, individual seatwork, or large group discussions). In addition, they might track whether these behaviors occur in the presence of certain peers. This information can be used to determine the underlying causes of student misbehavior and to develop a plan for addressing the factors that trigger the student misbehavior. This may mean changing the seating plan, instructional small groups, variety of instructional activities, or pace of instruction.

When working with students to change their behaviors, it is important to be calm and try to understand the situation from the student's perspective. Getting upset at the student has the potential to make the situation even worse. Teachers should reflect on their beliefs regarding student misbehavior to prevent negative cycles of teacher-student interactions from escalating. It is important to remember that sometimes students' resistant behavior may stem from not having a supportive or caring adult role model, or having a lack of consistency in their home life. Disruption may be the only way that these students have learned how to get attention. It is important to give students an opportunity to voice their feelings, and show them that even though you dislike their behavior you still care about them as individuals.

Students typically benefit from the opportunity to explain their interpretation of an event. This may help them to analyze their behavior and to begin to accept some responsibility for it. If the behavior persists, it may be necessary to call a conference to discuss the (mis)behavior, outline a plan to stop it, and detail consequences that will result in behavioral changes if not met. Finally, if you are still having difficulty with a student's behavior, it is important to enlist the support of fellow teachers, parents, administrators, psychologists, and social workers. The more perspectives you integrate, the more likely it will be that the solutions generated will be responsive to the nuances that shape all of our behaviors. If problems persist, many students will benefit from additional counseling or instruction into more effective ways to handle their frustrations, control their tempers, and resolve conflicts.

DISENGAGED STUDENTS

Why do teachers often respond to disengaged students with less support and warmth? It can be more challenging for some educators to foster high quality relationships with disengaged students. Developing relationships involves emotional work, which can be difficult amid swirling demands of teaching, especially for a beginning teacher who is just learning to cope with the workload and pressures. Prior research suggests that many teachers approach their relationships with students from a cost-benefit perspective, and struggle with whether the time, energy, and emotional investment required for developing relationships with more challenging students is worth the effort. Unfortunately, there is also evidence that those students who would benefit most from positive relationships with their teachers are also those that are least likely to get this support from teachers.

The link between teacher and student relations and engagement is reciprocal over time. High quality relationships with a teacher serve to bolster a student's perceptions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which in turn, elicit further teacher supports. In contrast, unsupportive interactions between a teacher and student, makes it more likely that the student will perceive him or herself as unwelcome, incompetent, and pressured. In turn, these negative self-perceptions lead to further withdrawal of support

from the teacher. Findings from several research studies suggest that these individual differences in engagement are magnified over time, with highly engaged youth getting more engaged over time, and less engaged youth becoming more disengaged over time.

How can teachers break this cycle? A natural response to a difficult student is to assume that he or she is purposely trying to defy or manipulate you. However, it is important to remember that student's misbehavior and disengagement often reflects other factors, as opposed to a purposeful intent to misbehave. It is possible that the student is attempting to protect his or her self-beliefs. It is also possible that the student is trying to get some attention because they lack a supportive or caring adult relationship in their home life. It is also important for teachers to change the way that they view their relationships with disengaged students. Teachers should not view disengagement as a character flaw of the student or a short coming of the teacher, but instead as a signal that this student needs more support. Teachers often view relationships with difficult students in terms of a deficit perspective, rather than seeing disengagement as an opportunity to intervene and cultivate a stronger relationship.

Although it is challenging, teachers should not give up too quickly on efforts to develop positive relations with resistant or disruptive students. Research shows that students who present behavioral challenges benefit even more from developing positive relations than their more compliant peers. The reality is that positive teacher student relationships can help to support students who are at-risk for disengagement and school failure. Unfortunately, there is also evidence that greater conflict or disconnection between students and teachers can actually heighten the risk. There are substantial benefits for student engagement, achievement, and healthy development when teachers decide to invest energy in their relationships with students, while the costs of not trying to improve these relationships can lead to even greater disengagement over time.