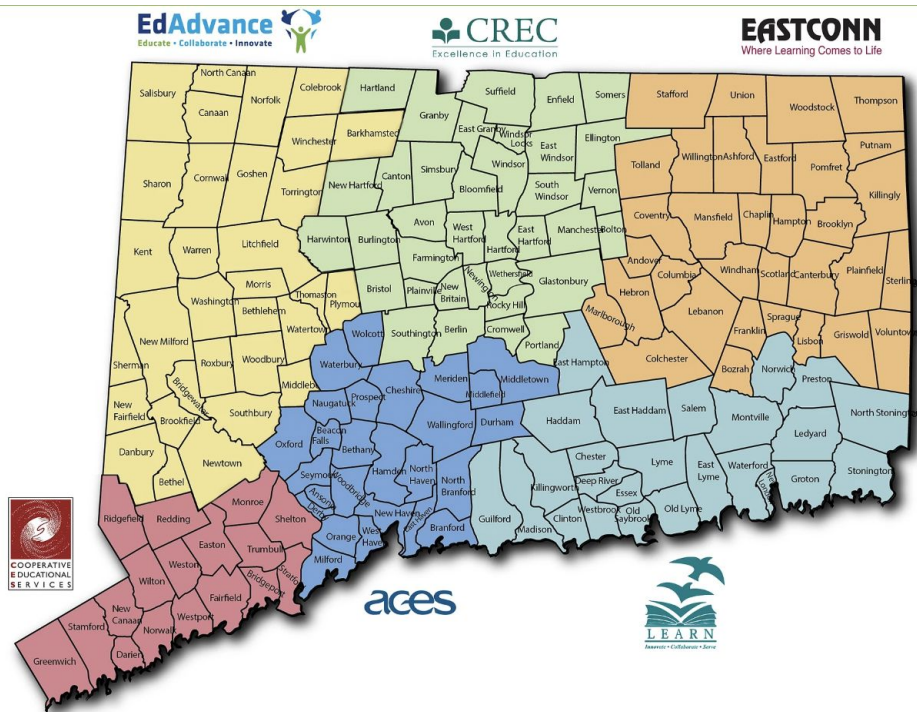




Engagement Reimagined: Building Agency, Belonging, and Purpose

About EASTCONN



EASTCONN ACCESS TEAM

(Advancing Coaching & Consultation to Empower Student Success)

We are a team of consultants and interventionists with backgrounds in general and special education, school psychology, behavior analysis, and assistive technology/AAC.



Erin K Dunn, PhD (she/her)

Senior Educational & Behavioral Consultant



Ravit R Stein, PhD, BCBA-D (she/her)

Director of Consultation & Professional Learning

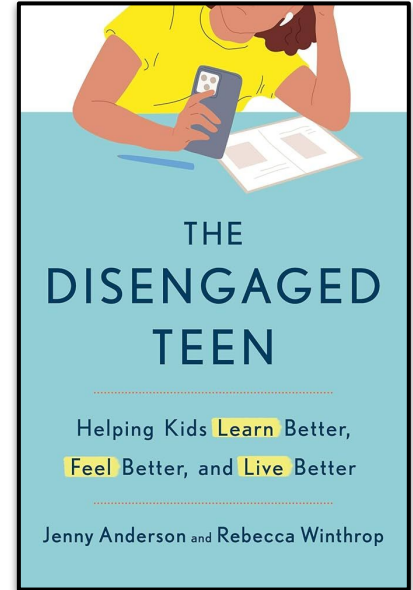
Agenda

Welcome

Overview of Engagement

Four Modes of Engagement

Supporting Teens in Each Mode



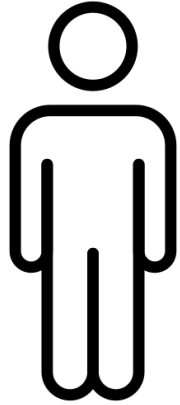
Describe what “highly engaged” means to you





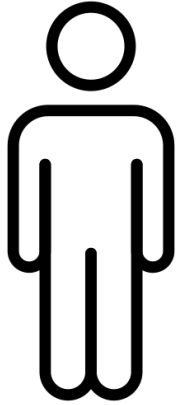
OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT

Types of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do

Types of Engagement

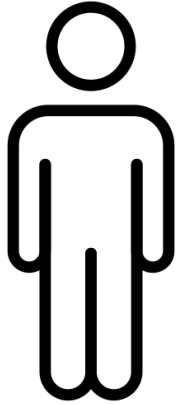


Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel

Types of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel

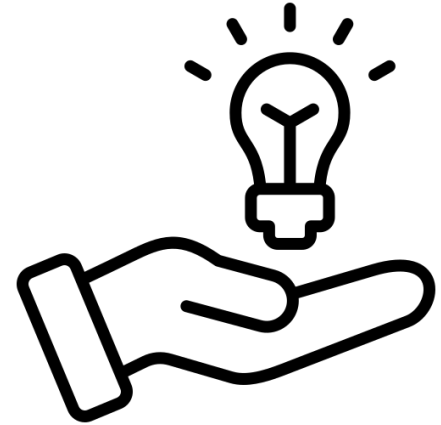


Cognitive
what we think

The importance of *agency*

“..the ability to set meaningful goals and marshal resources to meet them.”

- Having and executing a plan
- Overcoming barriers
- Tapping into resources (internal + external)
- Knowing yourself

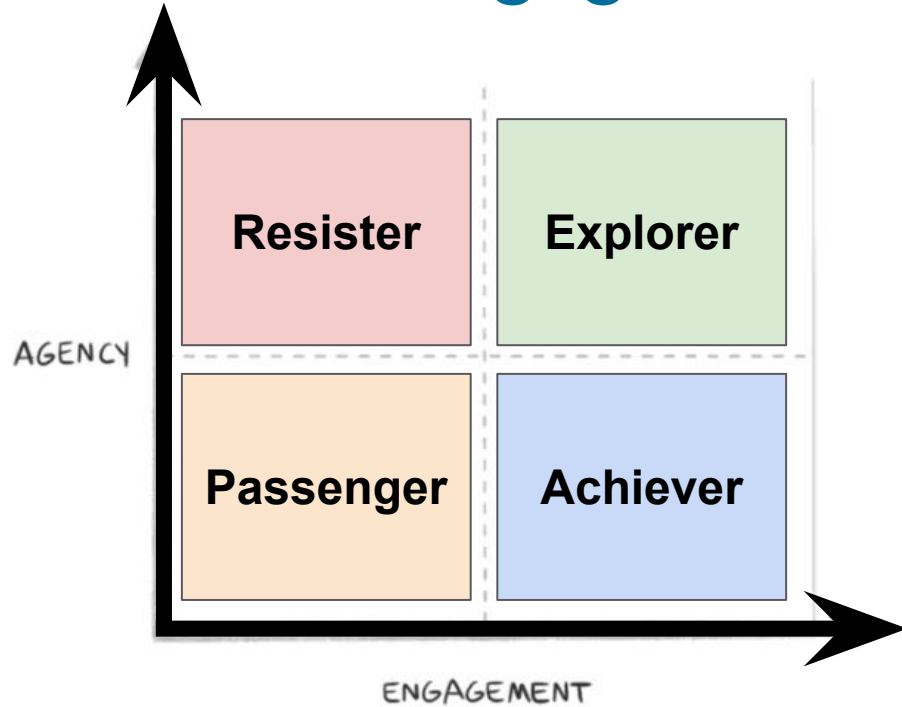


(Anderson & Winthrop, 2025, p. 16)

A photograph of two young women sitting in a food pantry. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a purple t-shirt. The woman on the right has curly dark hair and is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. They are both smiling at the camera. The background shows metal shelving units filled with various food items, including boxes of Dairy Pure 1% Lowfat Milk, cans of Sea Brand soups, and cans of Smucker's jam. A brown paper bag and a blue bag are visible in the foreground on the left.

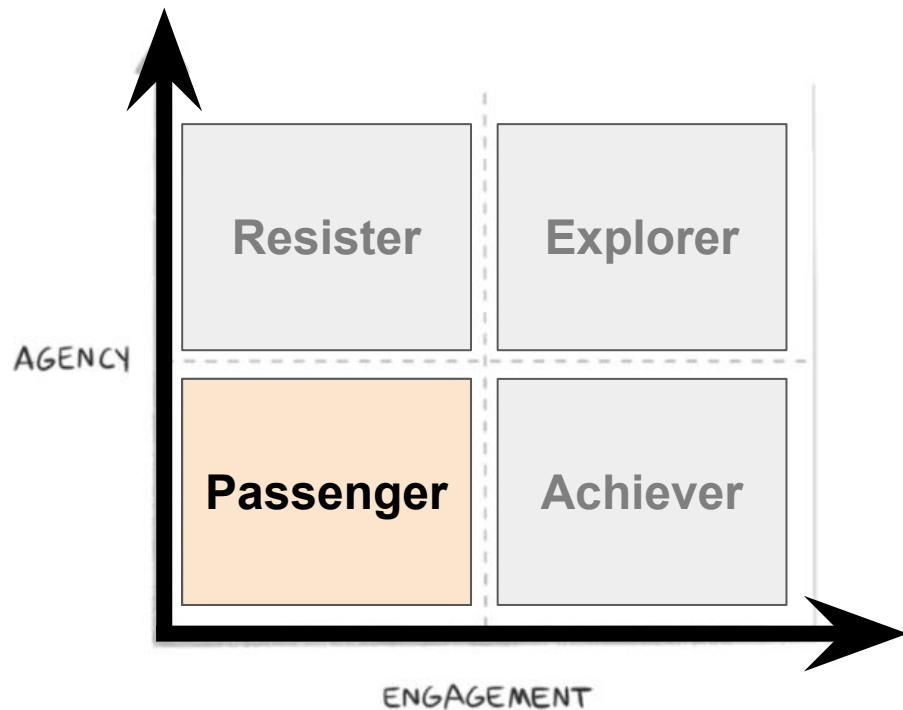
FOUR MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Four Modes of Engagement



(Anderson & Winthrop, 2025, p. 18)

The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel

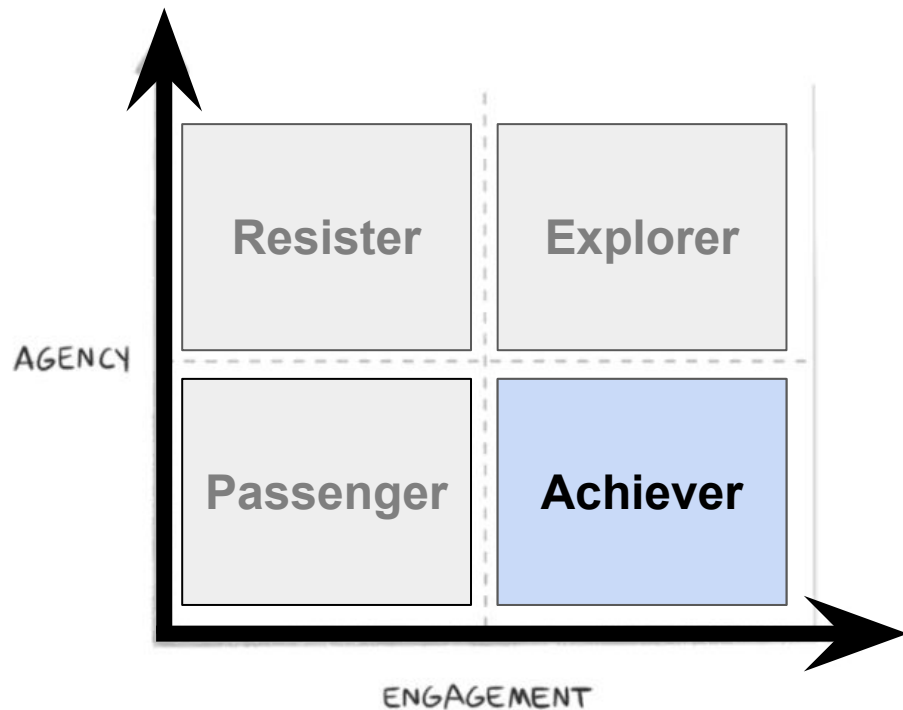


Cognitive
what we think



Agency
what we initiate

The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel

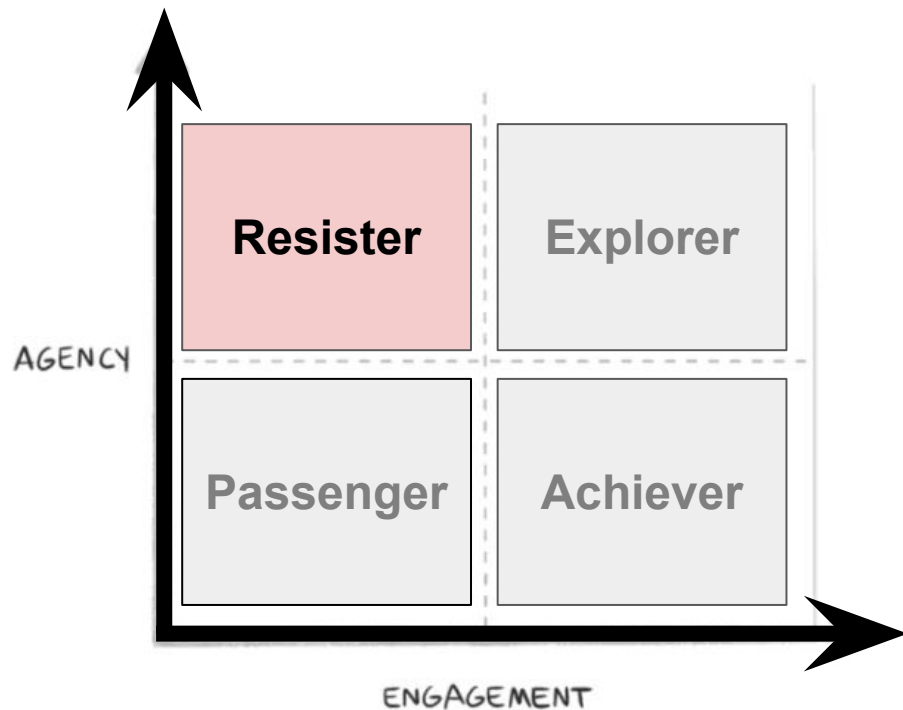


Cognitive
what we think



Agency
what we initiate

The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel

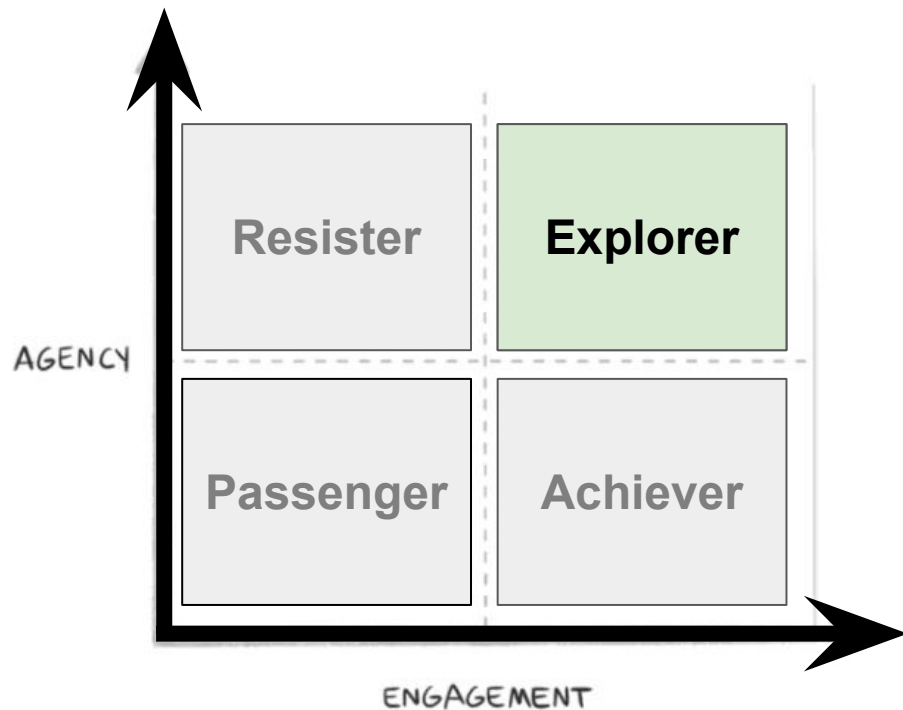


Cognitive
what we think



Agency
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The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
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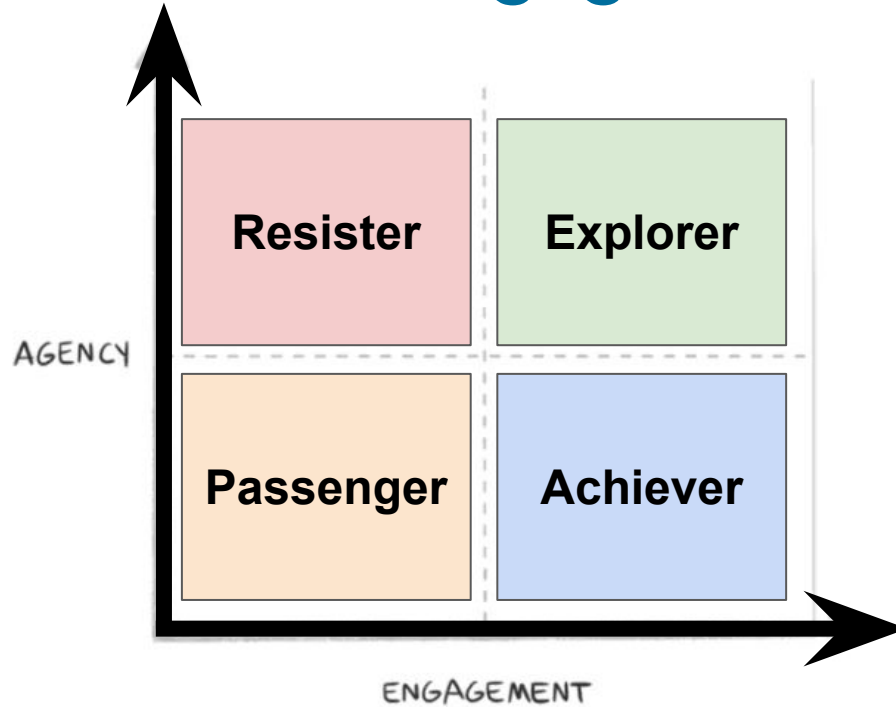


Cognitive
what we think



Agency
what we initiate

The Four Modes of Engagement



(Anderson & Winthrop, 2025, p. 18)

Let's Reflect

How did you feel as you heard about each mode of engagement?

Where would you “rate” your teen as being in terms of engagement?

Activity	Exp	Pass	Ach	Res
Science				
Math				
ELA/Literacy				
History/Social Studies				
World Language				
Art				
Gym				

Activity	Exp	Pass	Ach	Res
Science				
Math				
ELA/Literacy				
History/Social Studies				
World Language				
Art				
Gym				
Extracurricular Sports				
Theater				
Music				
Dance				

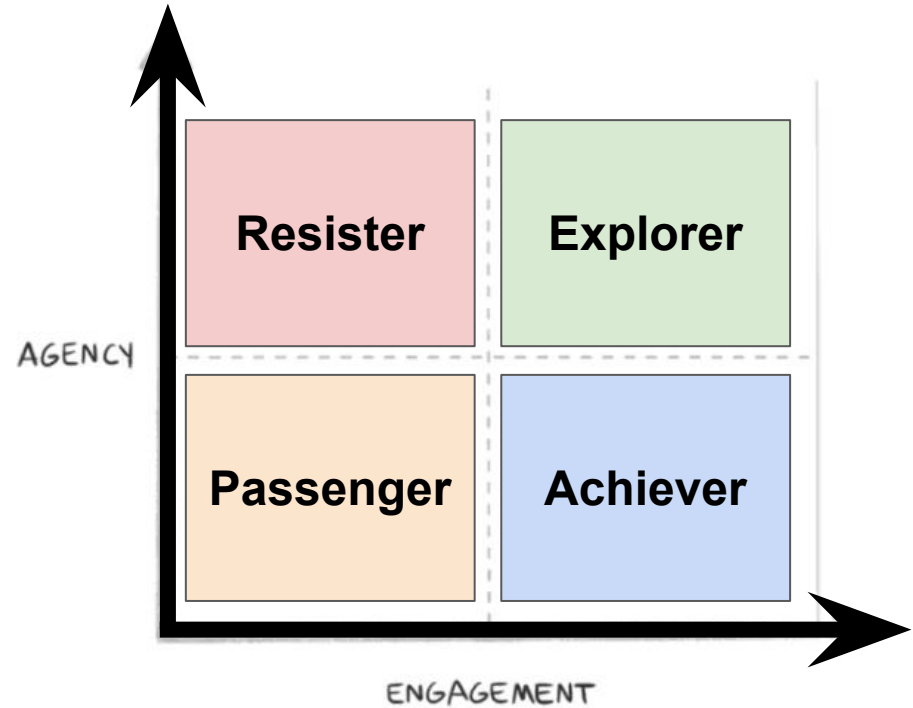
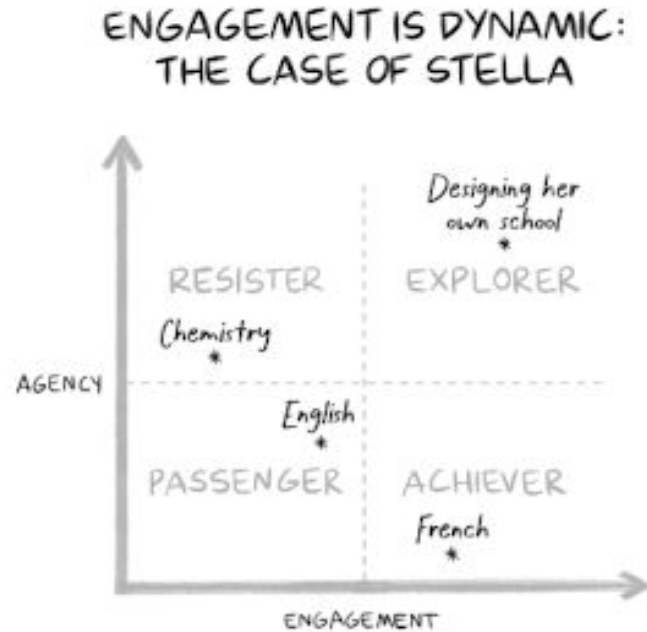
Activity	Exp	Pass	Ach	Res	Activity	Exp	Pass	Ach	Res
Science					Photography				
Math					Cosplay				
ELA/Literacy					Animals/Animal Care				
History/Social Studies					Carpentry/Metal Work				
World Language					Crafting				
Art					Drones				
Gym					Coding				
Extracurricular Sports					Robotics				
Theater					Esports				
Music					Video Games				
Dance					Astronomy				
Role Playing Games (RPGs)					Improv/Comedy				
Anime					Film/Television				
Time with Friends					Influencers				
Driving					Debate				
Podcasts					Chess/Strategy Games				
Creative Writing					Makerspace Labs				
School-Based Clubs (e.g., Model UN, DECA)					Activism				
Martial Arts					Parkour				
Cooking					Magic				

Download this Resource!

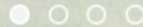


<https://bit.ly/TheDisengagedTeen>

The Four Modes of Engagement



SUPPORTING TEENS IN EACH MODE



Think back to the engaged student . . .



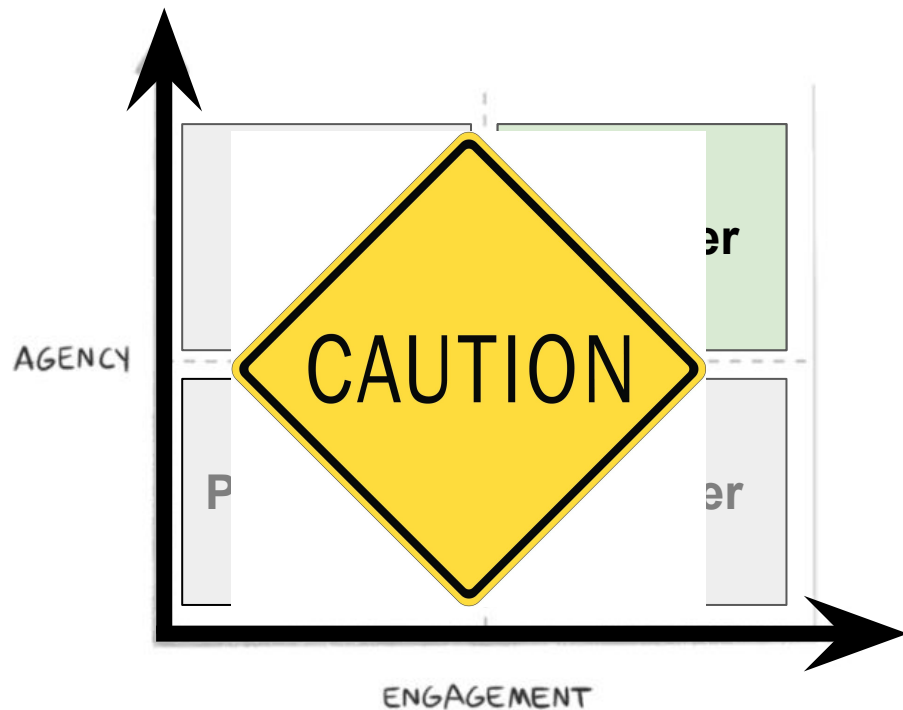
Describe what a teacher of this “highly engaged” student in your school is doing.



Parents have influence too!



The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
what we feel



Cognitive
what we think



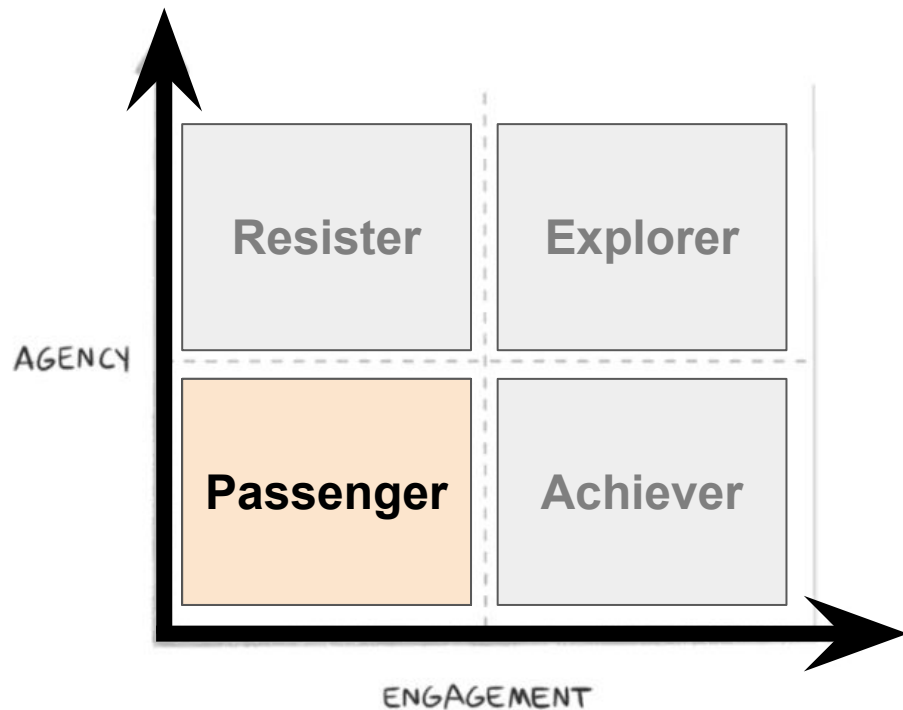
Agency
what we initiate

We need an “in” . . .



- Tell me more
- I don't remember that from when I went to school. Can you explain it to me?
- I don't know the answer to that, but let's ask ChatGPT or Google
- Are you still discussing _____ in History class? How is that going?
- I used to know how to graph equations, but I forget. How does it work?
- What makes you say that?
- What do you wish the teacher would have done to explain it differently?

The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



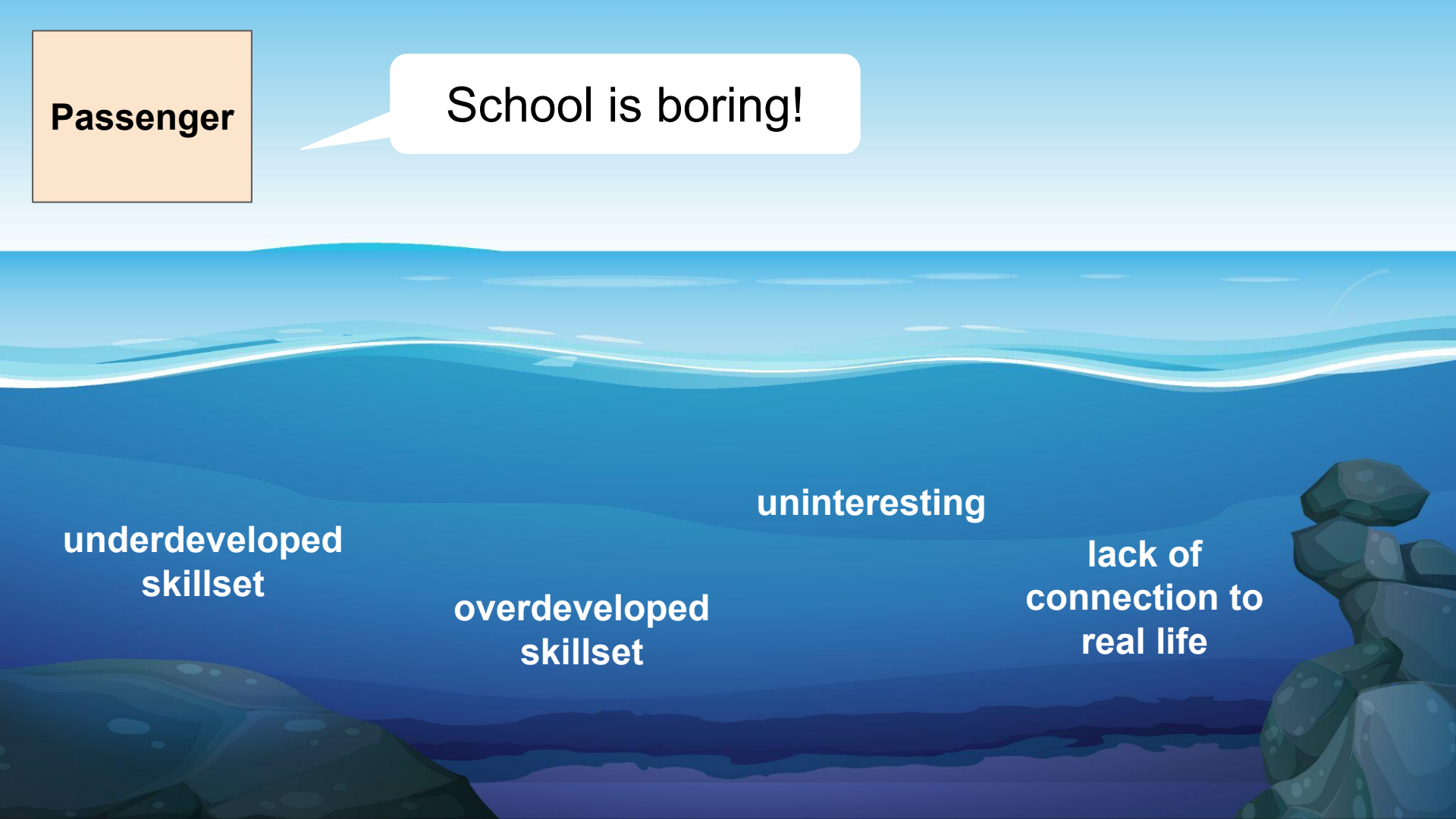
Emotional
what we feel



Cognitive
what we think



Agency
what we initiate



Passenger

School is boring!

**underdeveloped
skillset**

**overdeveloped
skillset**

uninteresting

**lack of
connection to
real life**



Supporting Students in **Passenger** Mode



- Share your passion
- Encourage Peers that Inspire



- Meet them where they are
- Offer Explanations for *why*



- Use invitational language & Provide Choice
- Foster interests outside of school



**Help them to reflect
on what they need**



Supporting Students in **Passenger** Mode

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

STEP 1: Perspective
Taking

STEP 2: Acknowledge

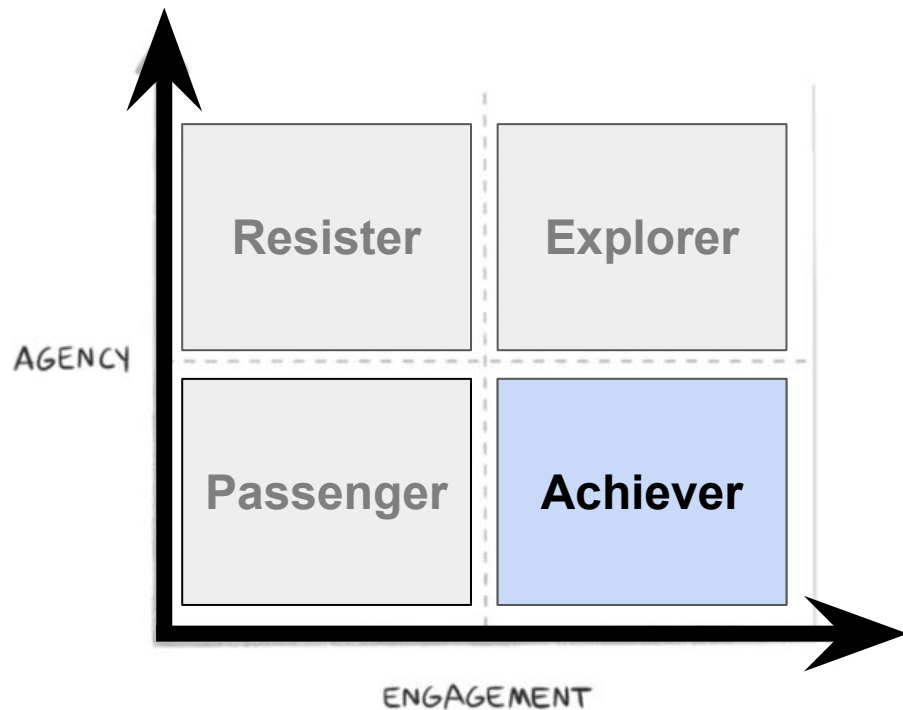
STEP 3: Explain

STEP 4: Invitational
Language

STEP 5: Patience



The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
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Agency
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Supporting Students in **Achiever** Mode



- Recognize teens as a whole person
- Focus on the importance relationships



- Encourage authentic contribution
- Encourage students to do things out of their “*supportive struggle*”
- Create opportunities for downtime



**Help them to reflect
on what they need**



Supporting Students in **Achiever** Mode

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

What would you do for downtime if you didn't have access to tech?

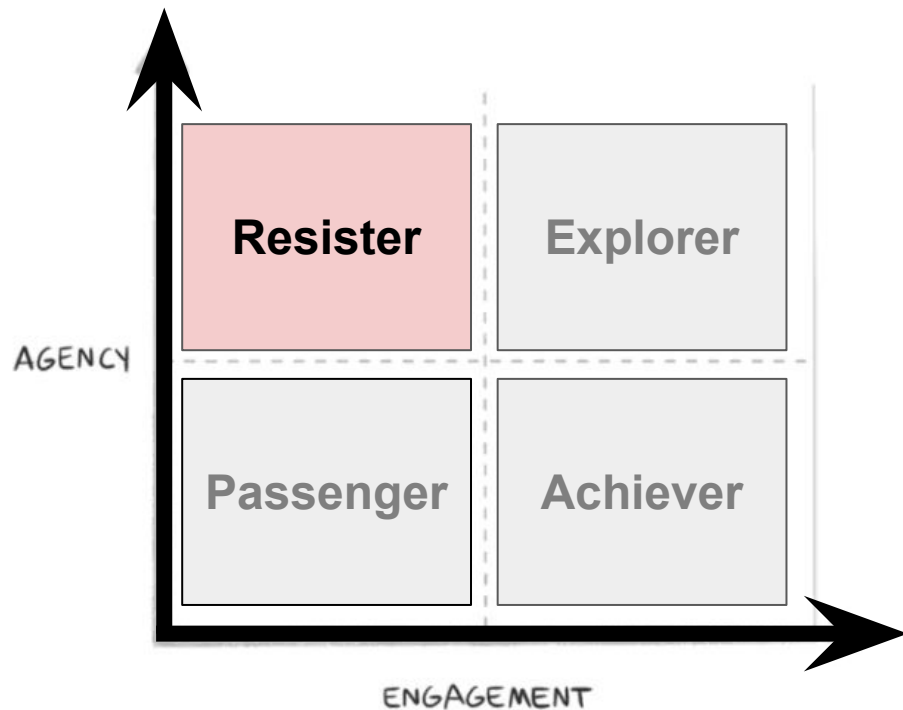
What is something you are afraid to do because you think you might not be good at it?

What would you do if you were not focused on achieving?

What charges your battery?



The Four Modes of Engagement



Behavioral
what we do



Emotional
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Cognitive
what we think



Agency
what we initiate



- LISTEN - Identify barrier(s) to engagement (e.g., bullying, mental health struggles, overwhelm) and co-create a plan



- Acknowledge and validate emotions/experiences
- Model/teach coping skills and support co-regulation



- Focus on the future/tie to present



- Help students identify strengths, interests, and values

Supporting Students in **Resister** Mode



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



Be nonjudgmental.

“I’ve noticed you have been feeling really down lately. I am here if you need me.”



Acknowledge struggle.

“I see things are hard for you. I want you to know you can share anything with me.”

Express a desire to understand.

“I can’t imagine how hard this must be for you, but I want to understand and help you in any way I can.”



Validate feelings.

“I see you are upset. Remember you are not alone in this. What is one thing I can do right now to support you?”



Supporting Students in

Resister

Mode

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



Share personal experience.

“I remember a time when I felt overwhelmed and struggled to find my way out. I know our experiences are not the same, but I am happy to tell you about it if it would be helpful to you.”



Offer alternative ways of connecting.

“If talking feels like too much, we can go for a walk or do something you enjoy. Just being together can help too.”



Give unconditional support.

“It’s okay to feel not okay. Sadness is as much a part of life as joy. But you are not alone.”

Thank you!

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