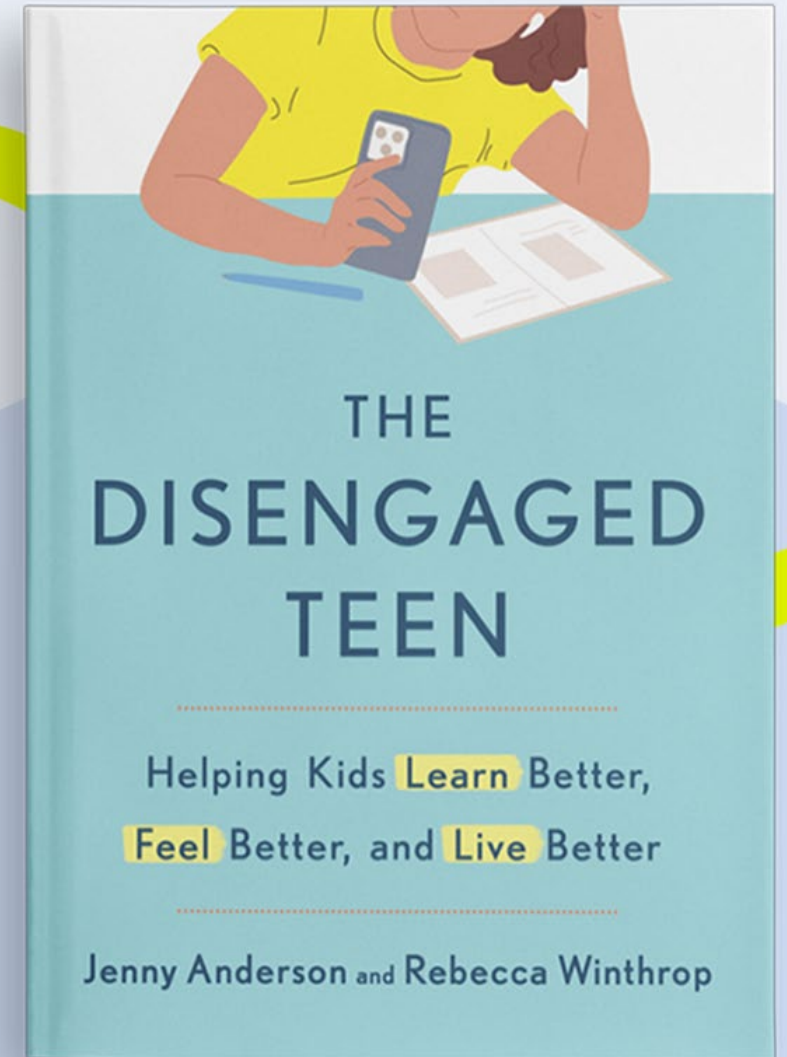




The Disengaged Teen

Expert Strategies Every Parent Should Know

4/23/2026





You'll be in listen-only mode for today's event.

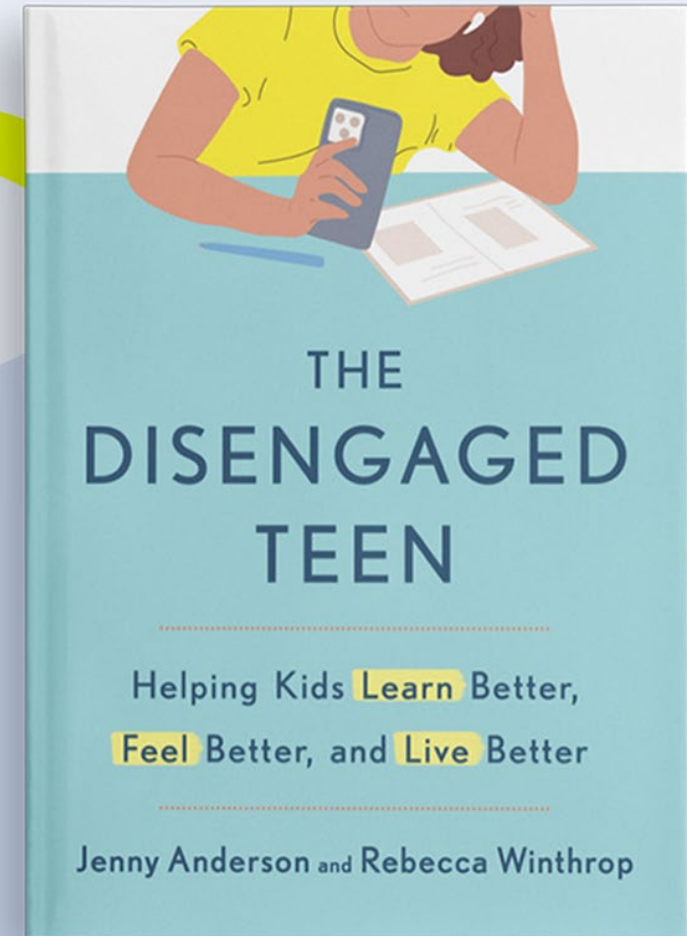
You'll be directed to a feedback survey at the end of the event. Tell us how to make BigFuture Live even better!

Sign-up for more BigFuture Live events at bigfuture.org/parents.

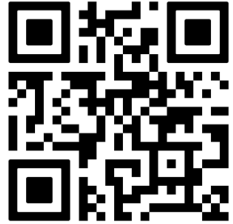


What We'll Cover Today:

- Why engagement matters
- ***Your questions***
- 4 modes of learning
- ***Your questions***



Resources to Support Your Teen



The Disengaged Teen

Learn more about the book, get a study guide, and more.



Jenny's Substack: How to Be Brave

Helping parents raise curious, courageous learners using evidence, instinct and grace.



Rebecca's Newsletter: Winthrop's World of Education

Reflections on how parents and educators can collaborate to help children flourish.

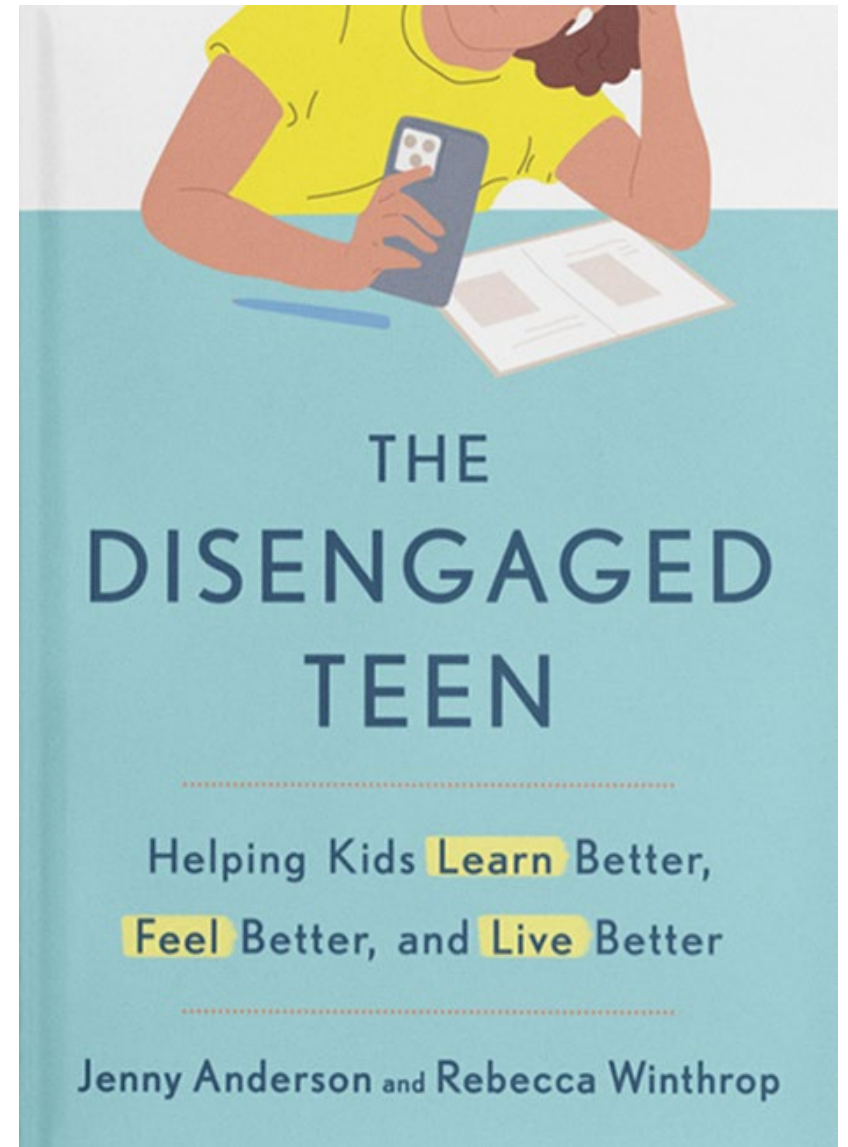
Let's Meet the Experts



Jenny Anderson
Award-winning Journalist,
Speaker, and Author



Rebecca Winthrop
Director of the Center for
Universal Education at Brookings

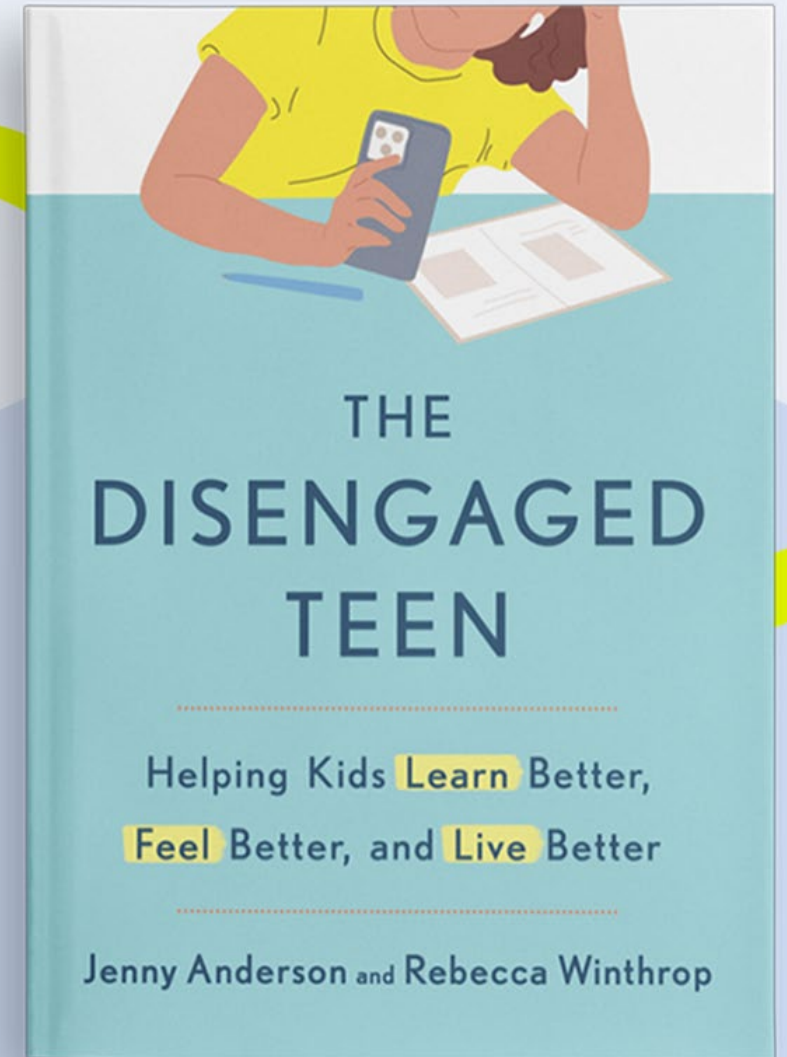




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ail



THE DISENGAGED TEEN

Helping Kids **Learn** Better,
Feel Better, and **Live** Better

Jenny Anderson and Rebecca Winthrop



@DRREBECCAWINTHROP



WINTHROP'S WORLD OF EDUCATION



@JENNYANDERSONWRITES

substack HOW TO BE BRAVE

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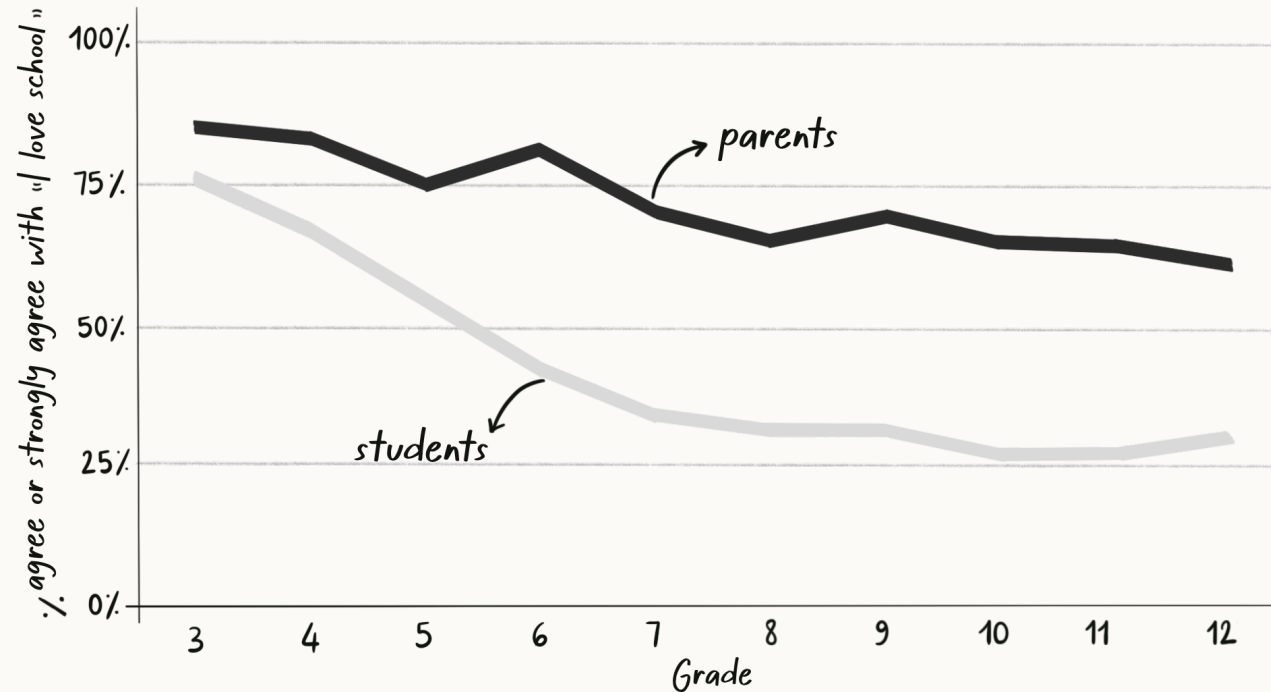
HOW ENGAGED ARE STUDENTS?

GRADES ONLY TELL PART OF THE STORY

MOST STUDENTS ARE DISENGAGED AND PARENTS STRUGGLE TO SEE IT

There must be a nail

HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL VS
HOW PARENTS THINK STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL



Source: Rebecca Winthrop, Youssef Shoukry, and David Nitkin, *The Disengagement Gap: Why Student Engagement Isn't What Parents Expect*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution and Transcend, 2024).



WHAT IS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT?

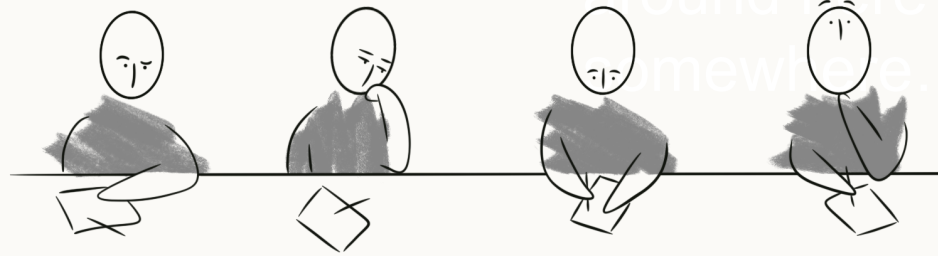
MOTIVATION VERSUS ENGAGEMENT?

There must be a nail
around here
somewhere...

Engagement is **what you
do with your motivation.**

A LOT OF ENGAGEMENT IS **HARD TO SEE**

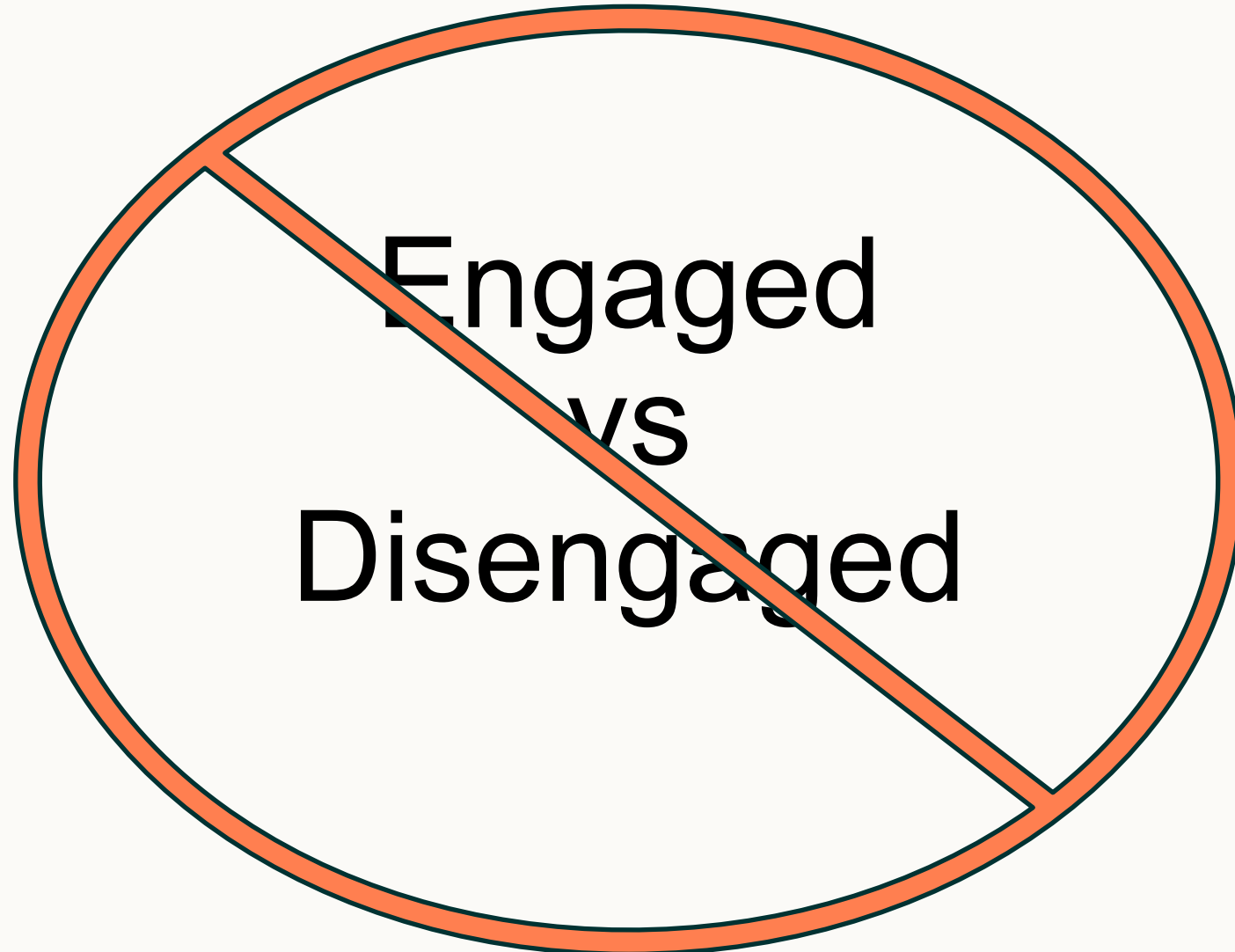
WHAT YOU SEE



WHAT THEY FEEL AND THINK



WE NEED **A BETTER MAP** TO SEE ENGAGEMENT





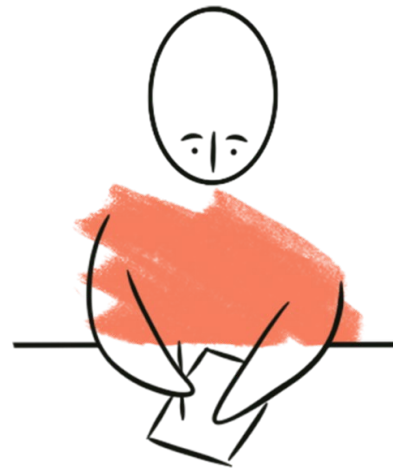
**A NEW WAY TO SEE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:
THE FOUR MODES**



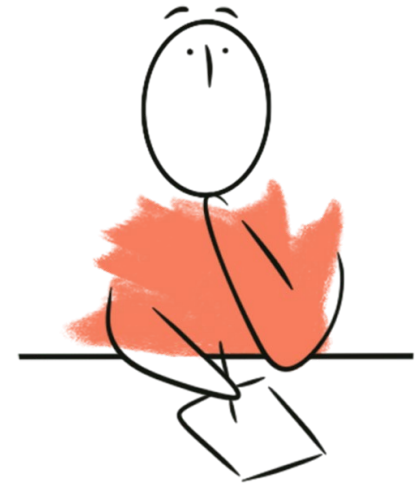
**RESISTER
MODE**



**PASSENGER
MODE**

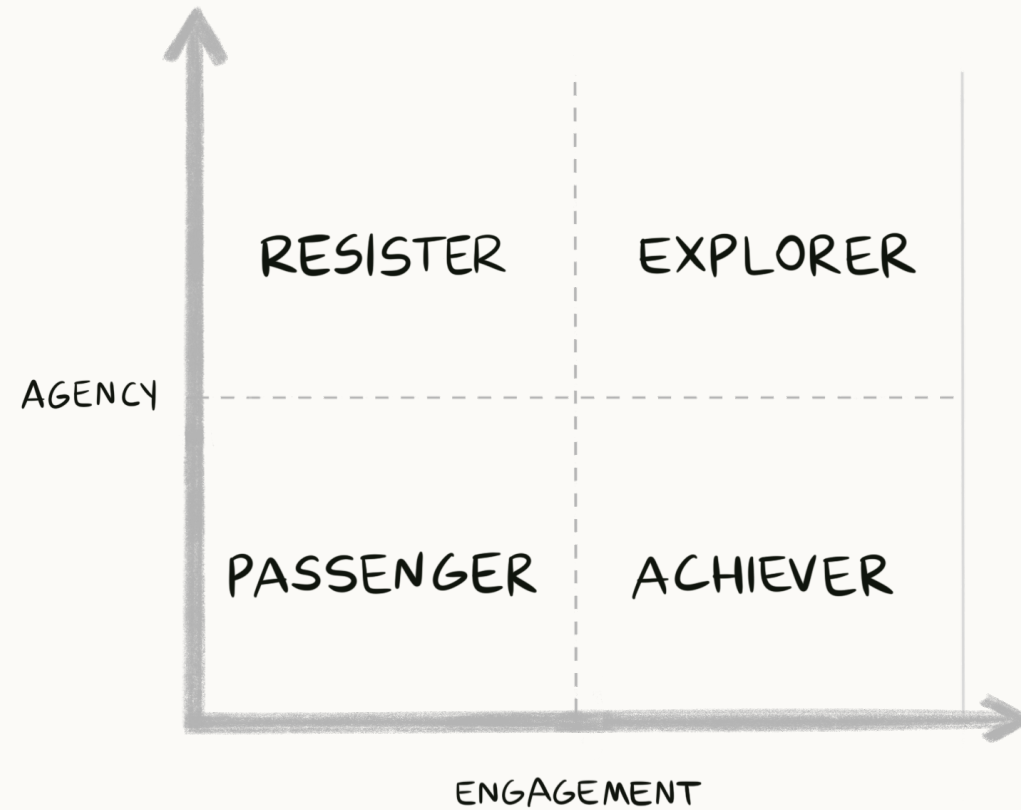


**ACHIEVER
MODE**



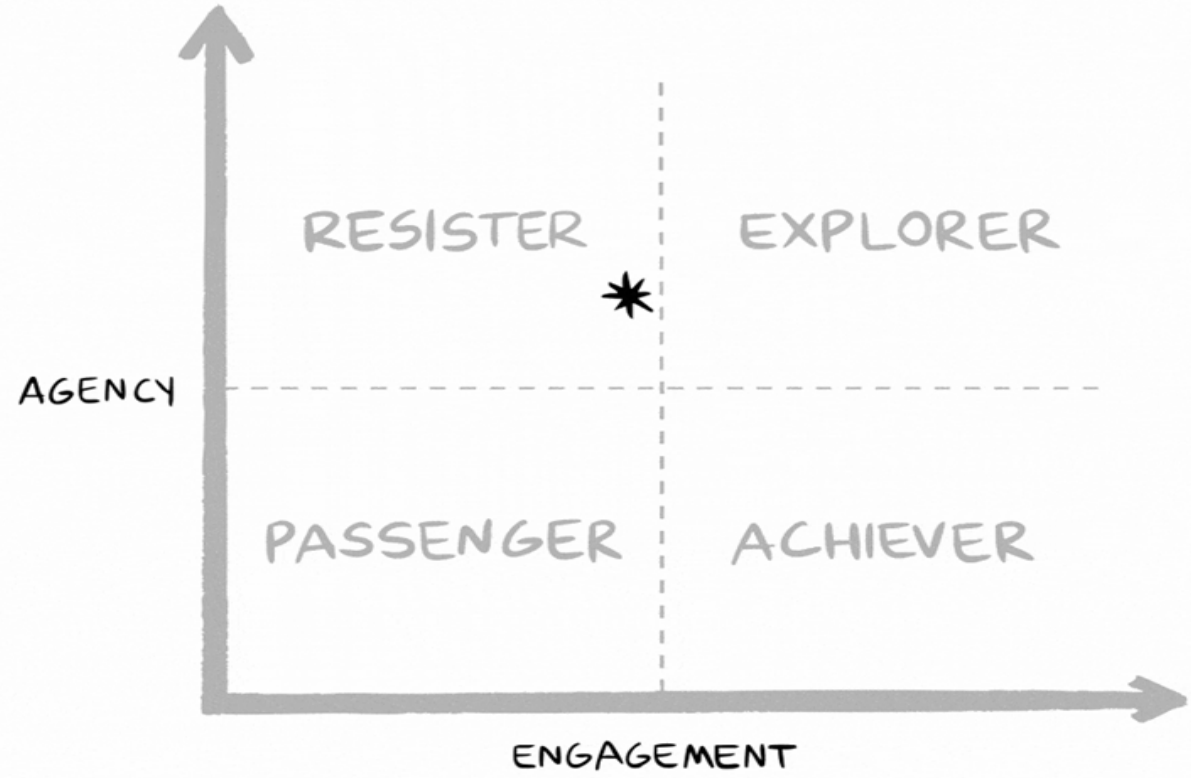
**EXPLORER
MODE**

THE FOUR MODES OF ENGAGEMENT



Engagement: what kids think, feel, and do. Agency: what kids initiate.

ENGAGEMENT IS DYNAMIC





QUESTIONS?

THE ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT:

***HELPING KIDS GET UNSTUCK AND FIND MORE
EXPLORER MOMENTS***

HELPING KIDS IN PASSENGER MODE

Reasons why:

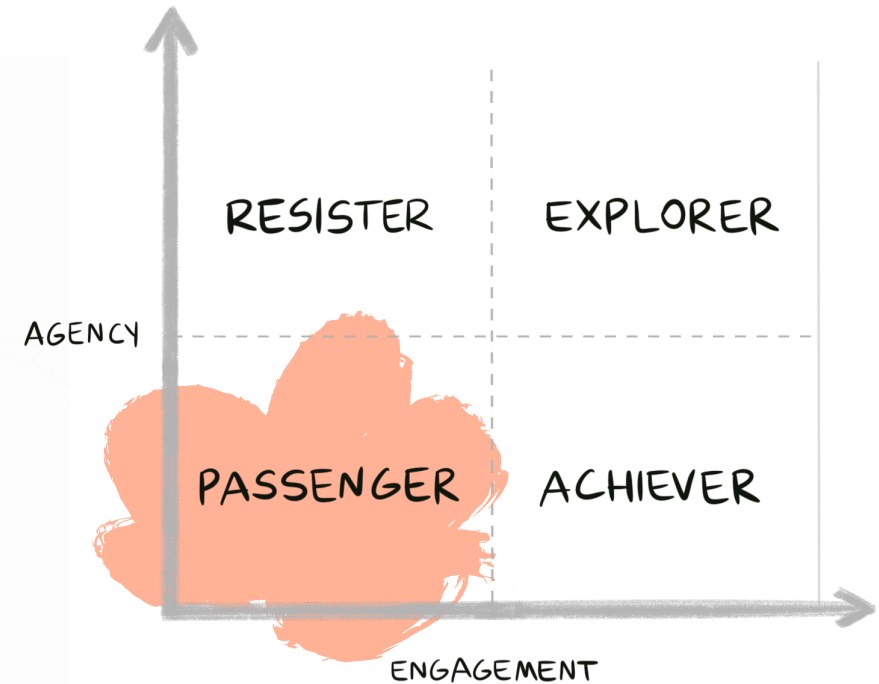
- Outside ZPD
- Missing relevance
- Neurodivergence

Possible solutions:

- More Autonomy
- Less Nagging
- Learning-to-Learn Cycle

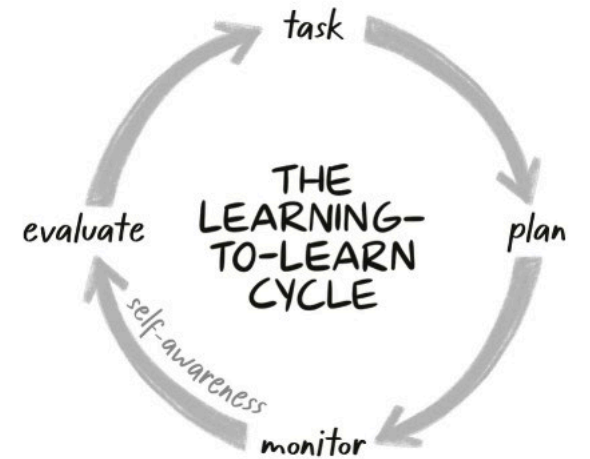
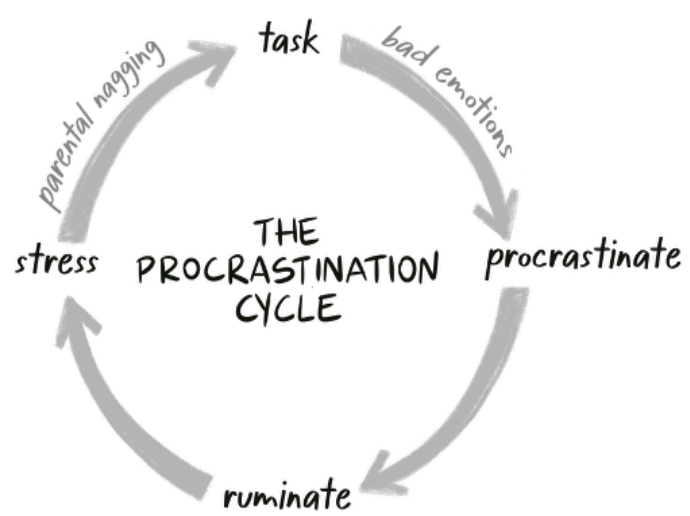


THE FOUR MODES OF ENGAGEMENT



HELPING KIDS IN PASSENGER MODE

**From The Procrastination Cycle
to
The Learning-to-Learn
Cycle**



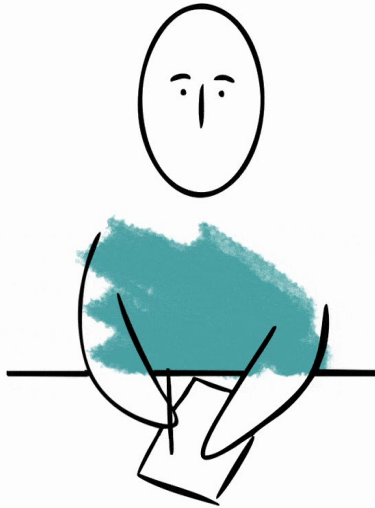
HELPING KIDS IN ACHIEVER MODE

Reasons why:

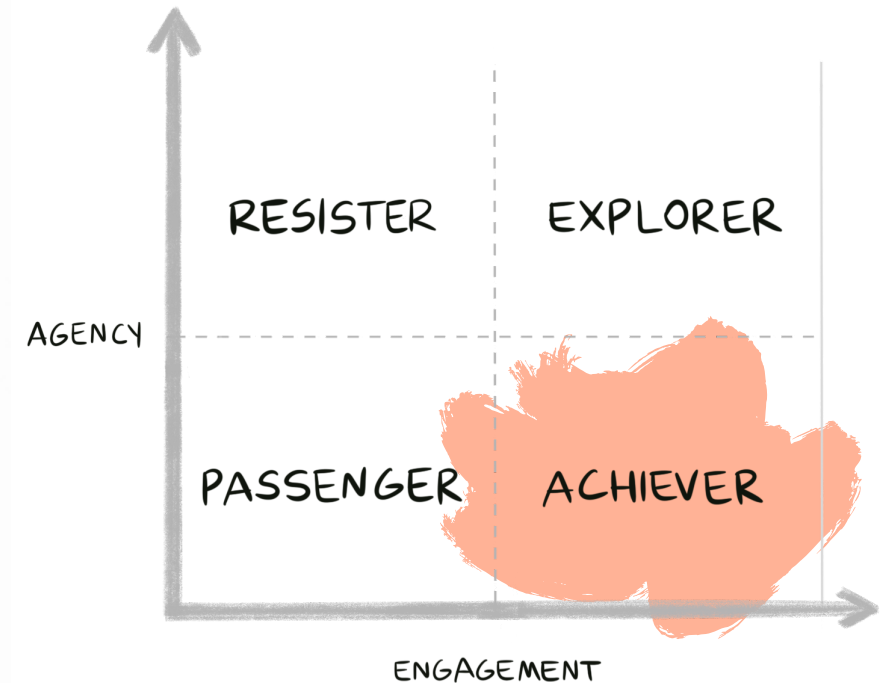
- Perfectionism
- Fear of failure
- Competition

Possible solutions:

- Sleep
- Mattering
- Broad pathways
- Productive Struggle – Small risks

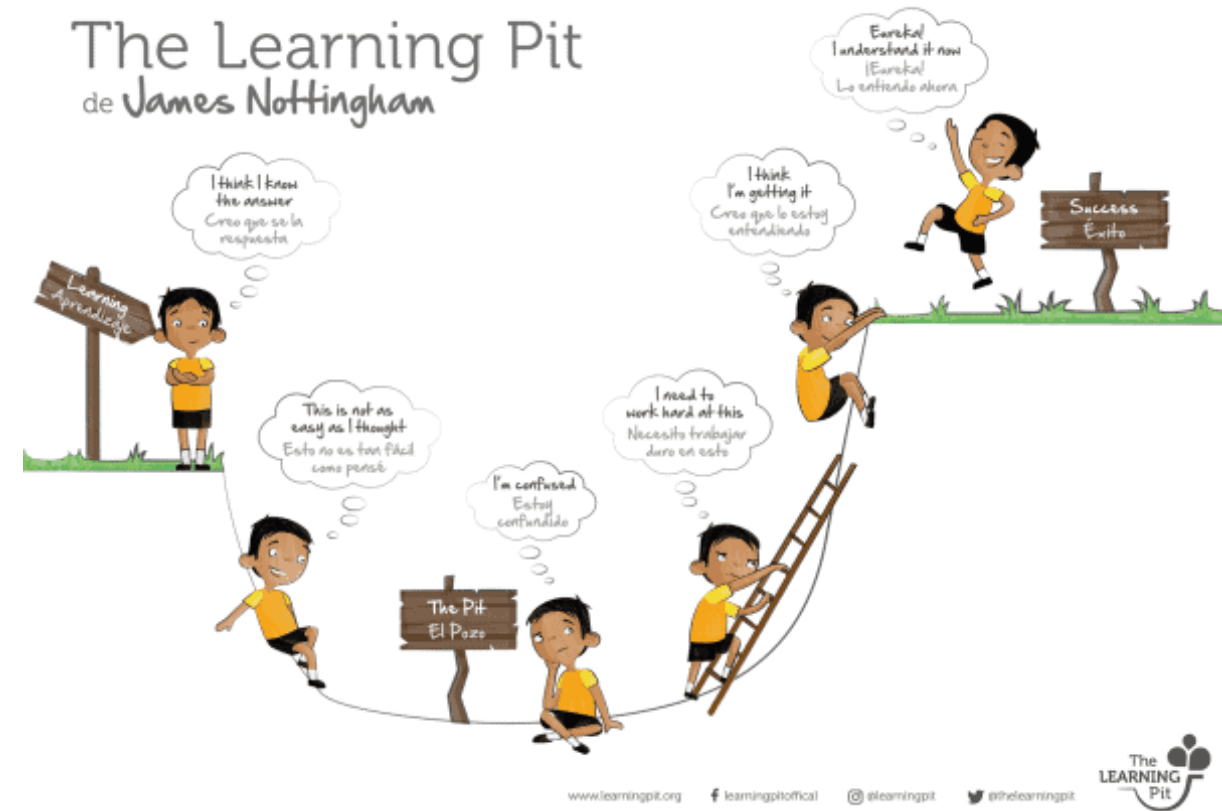


THE FOUR MODES OF ENGAGEMENT



HELPING KIDS IN ACHIEVER MODE

Learning Pit



HELPING KIDS IN RESISTER MODE

Wide variety of reasons:

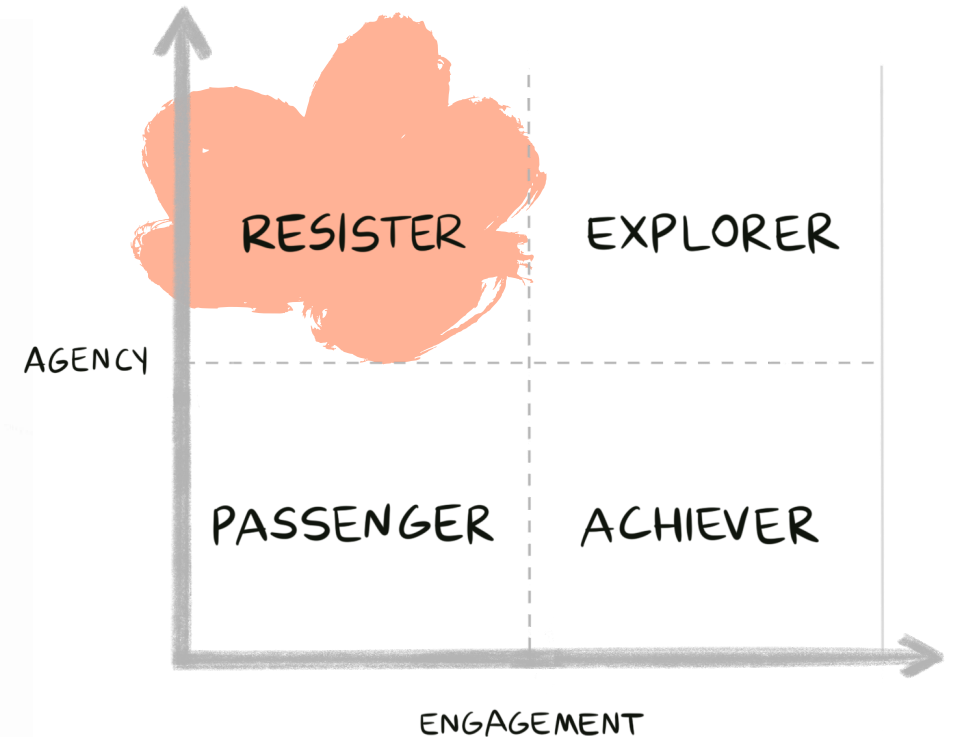
- Overwhelm
- Bullying
- Mental health

Possible solutions:

- Spot Strengths
- Get to the WHY
- Future Possible Self



THE FOUR MODES OF ENGAGEMENT





INVEST IN THE FOUR R'S

- Relationships
- Rigor
- Relevance
- Real-world learning



QUESTIONS?

Resources to Support Your Teen



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