

Disassembling, Evading, and Disengagement

Students need challenges, but also to expect success. Additionally, they have to understand both the instructions and the purpose or value of course content or activities. Otherwise, problems can arise: disassembling, evading, or active disengagement.

Disassembling: Self-doubt or uncertainty—for instance, about instructions, process, or personal ability—encourages students to “make excuses, deny their difficulties, pretend to understand, or participate in some other behavior designed to protect their ego rather than developing the task-related knowledge or skill” (Barkley, 2010, p. 14). In other words, students do not want to appear ignorant. Always doubt students’ nodding.

Evading: When students believe they can accomplish a task but fail to understand its purpose or value, they might daydream or engage others off-topic (ibid).

Active Disengagement: When students don’t believe they can accomplish a task and fail to understand its purpose or value, they might isolate, appear angry, or even openly resist (ibid).

Preventative Measures

- Routinely provide positive feedback and celebrate students’ accomplishments.
- Routinely connect course content to real-life examples or applications.
- Routinely connect current content to previous or future content.
- Routinely connect course content to other courses in the curriculum.
- Routinely connect course activities to the learning objectives in the syllabus.
- Routinely introduce activities with your reasoning for their design.
- Consistently provide instructions for activities in writing, at least on the board, so students can review them.
- With complex instructions, offer an introductory Q&A session.
- Conclude modules and activities with discussions of their applicability.

For more information or to schedule an individual teaching consultation, please contact [Dr. Gray Kane](#).

Reference

Barkley, Elizabeth F. (2010). *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.