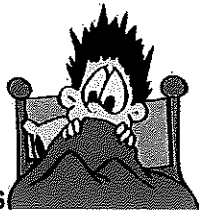


The Seven Types of Tricky Students & how to engage them (& lead them towards success)

Andrew Fuller

Despite what you may think, the seven types of tricky students don't include grumpy, sleepy, cranky or dozy. However there are predictable types and once you learn to recognize them you can craftily develop cunning plans to engage them.



1. The invisible worriers

These kids master the art of invisibility. They go missing in action. You won't hear a murmur from them. They won't ask for help, ask a question if they are confused or offer an answer if they know it. Wide eyed, they shun the spotlight and cringe if picked out from the crowd.

One of the oldest parts of the brain called the basal ganglia is likely to be in overdrive. This brings with it vigilance, anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed.

The neurochemical surging through their brains is cortisol.

The key to engaging the invisible worriers is to lower cortisol and the level of activity in the basal ganglia.

Take your time- if you push things they clam up.

Develop calm repetition in classrooms

Remind students how something new relates to things they have already accomplished

Meditation and focusing activities

Mindfulness

Theatre sports

Challenges, quizzes, puzzles, Fermi questions.

Rhythmic activities

Hand warming

Biofeedback games

Concentration and memory games

If you have a few invisible worriers in a class you may have to reduce small group work until they feel more confident.

Hooks of Engagement

Greeting at the door

In English
SRA activities

DVDs, TV series

Enacting, theatre sports

Word sorts, puzzles

Thematic activities

Role play, dress ups

Word of the day

Books

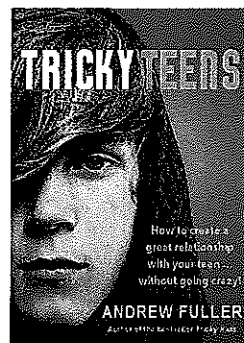
Cloze activities

Chatter box

Readers theatre

Parody

Story cubes



This is material drawn from Andrew's most recent book "*Tricky Teens*" (Finch Press, 2014).

2. The defense attorneys



Dispute? Complain? These kids will complain until the cows come home.

The part of their brain that is running hot is the anterior cingulate gyrus. These kids often have laser brain they get so focused on an idea or a dispute that can't let it go. They don't know when to stop. They get brain lock.

Because they get brain locked they really don't know how to let things go. This means that if you don't change their direction they will battle on and on. At the first instance of a dispute, move these kids.

The defense attorneys are often quite high on adrenaline and dopamine. They can be highly motivated especially when it comes to battles of wills.

These kids can hold grudges for a long, long time.

If you assert that the moon is blue they adamantly will say it is greenish. If you say, "you always seem to argue with me". They'll reply, "no I don't!"

The main way to engage defense attorneys is to lower their level of adrenaline while utilizing their dopamine.

Movement is critical to engaging these students. They get so locked in mentally unless they have a physical shift they don't change.

Other strategies include:

- Devil's advocate debates
- Out do your own argument
- Find what is wrong with this information games
- Spot the error
- Challenges and personal bests

The tricky students are vulnerable to getting stuck. Their ideas go around and around in repetitive loops. Their behaviours are often repetitive. To shift these kids it is desirable to alter the scene, timing, and content of the dispute.

In Science

Doing an experiment

Having the experiment already set up

Field trips

Gadgets: digital microscopes, testing equipment

Room set up: lab coats, specimens, posters, sensory stimulators

Building set up

Personnel technology

You Tube

Images

PPT zoomed in

Google pictures

Gross things

Big books

Show and tell,

Making things

Squishy toys

In SOSE

Use an interesting letter (spies) as they walk in

Plays, modeling, costumes

Graphic organisers, flow charts

Reading groups

Thinking hats

Philosophy

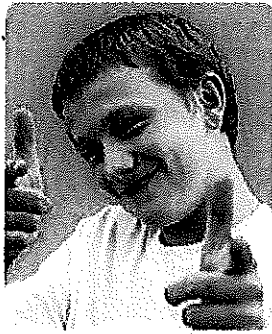
Mock trials

Newspapers/news clips

Bones in sandpit

Forensic

3. It's my way or I don't play



These kids are over-focused and rigid. This includes the perfectionists, the sticklers for rules and the nitpickers.

The pre-frontal cortex is likely to be in over-drive creating a focus on rules and being a stickler for details. Their behaviour often conceals an anxiety about not being able to structure the events in their world.

The key to engaging these budding control freaks is to increase the use of tools that help them to structure.

Planning
Anticipation and prediction games
Mazes
Concentration games
Ladders of understanding
Scaffolding
Music
Increase their levels of dopamine using humour, challenges and puzzles.

4. The Perpetually Disgruntled

Everything is too much trouble for this group. Let's sweat the big stuff the small stuff and middle sized stuff while we are at it.

Students who get this often wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep. Sleep disturbance is common.

The emotional processor of the brain, the limbic system is often in over-drive. They are negative and stuck on being so

The key to engaging the disgruntled is to help them step away from their own thoughts.

Gratitude exercises
Being the thinker behind the thoughts
Evaluating different perspectives
Thought stopping
Challenges
Humour
Dopamine increasing activities- social interaction, repetitive movements

In Mathematics

Engaging conversations

Practical applications

Brainteasers

Perplexity in the classroom

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Square and Triangular
Numbers Investigation
Grades 3-7

Mathematics games and
activities: cards, blocks
dominoes, dice

Real world applications

Hands on activities

Mini whiteboards

Group work rotations

Surveys

Background of formulas

Maths jeopardy

Volume and proportions
snow/slime

Angry Bird slingshot

Super maths world

Skittles counting sorting
eating

Terminator

Blocks, tiles and dominoes

5. Listless do-littles

These kids are like sloths- they don't do much, they don't say much, they don't move much. They are motivationally deficient. Despite their low energy for learning some of them manage to muster enough energy to be the court jesters of the class.

The key to engaging the listless do-nothings is to use activities that raise dopamine- social interaction. Humour, challenges and thought stopping.

6. Ticking time bombs

These kids stand out. They often have literacy problems and poor memory. Some of them misinterpret others' actions as negatively intended. A few have white coal incendiary temper.

The part of the brain that is most likely involved are the temporal lobes.

The key to engaging the ticking time bombs is exercise, movement and brain gym. Calming activities will also assist this group.

7. The lights are on but....

The lights are low nobody's home. These are spacy, dreamy kids who often feel overwhelmed by the demands of school and life. Usually they have poor concentration and find it difficult to articulate their thoughts.

These students often put off schoolwork until it is too late to complete it in time.

They appear sluggish, tired and often complain of being chronically bored.

Get a Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) completed if you have access to a psychologist.

To get major shifts with the engagement of these students you will need to get parents working with you. Life-style issues such as diet, sleep, physical activity and lowering family stress are critical elements.

It may also be important to organize a more stimulating environment for these students.

In History

Personal experience

Showing "old stuff"

Visiting sites

ICT enhancement for example virtual sites

Enactments

Dress ups

Theme days

Horrible Histories

On this day

Models

Word quizzes

Fake book

Movie clips

In Geography

Maps – making & creating

Site visits

Using technology

DVDs

3D mapping,

Google Earth

Geoscience centre

Post cards

Foreign money

Passport

Newspaper articles

YouTube

TED Ed, Ted Talks

SIM city