THE SEAT SERIES · FREE ATTENDANCE SCIENCE™ RESOURCE

SEAT 06

Teachers · All grades

The Hand That Stopped Going Up

Why do some students quietly disengage, and how do I win them back?



10 slides · 2 handouts · evidence from Schools Spared, Children Punished and the Attendance Science™ research base

Tyrell's questions

“

Tyrell used to raise his hand eagerly. More than once he was told his questions were off topic. By eighth grade he stopped asking and found older boys after school who never dismissed him. His grades fell that same semester. The bond had gone looking for a new home.

Source: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 4 (Tyrell, composite case)



Every story in this series is a composite or a published case. Names are invented.

What teachers are asking

Why do some students quietly disengage, and how do I win them back?

1

Disengagement looks like apathy from the outside.

2

Repeated small dismissals push students away.

3

Unstructured afternoons fill the gap.

Shared words before shared work

S

Strain

The gap between a student's goals and real opportunities (Agnew, 1992).

D

Differential association

Adopting the values of whichever group offers belonging.

U

Unstructured time

Unsupervised peer time with no adult leader or schedule.

The numbers behind the moment

58,000+

adolescents in 21 countries in the ISRD4 study we co-led

ISRD4 cross-national study, 58,000+ adolescents in 21 countries (co-led by Gentle-Genitty)

#2

unstructured, unsupervised time ranked just behind delinquent peers as a predictor of offending

ISRD4 cross-national study, 58,000+ adolescents in 21 countries (co-led by Gentle-Genitty)

50%

of principals rated opportunities for attachment their strongest asset

Gentle-Genitty (2009), dissertation, Indiana University: middle school principals' perceptions

Classify before you consequence

Avoidance

A classroom where questions feel unwelcome. Change the response.

Truancy

Choice shaped by a new peer group. Offer structured belonging.

Withdrawal

Afternoons alone because adults work. Connect to programs.

Refusal

Withdrawal into anxiety. Partner with counseling.

Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: $0

Welcome the question

Respond to every student question with interest, even when it is off topic.

02

Cost: $0

Find the last try

Ask what happened the last few times the student tried to engage.

03

Partner

Fill the afternoon

Connect the student to one structured club, team or program.

A PRESENCE™ prompt for your building

P	R	E	S	E	N	C	E
Problem definition	**Research evidence**	Environmental context	Statistical analysis	Equity assessment	**Network and partnership**	Compliance and legal	Evidence-based recommendations

YOUR PROMPT

Compare after-school program enrollment with chronic absence for the same students. Gaps in structured time point to your first partnership.



Common missteps, and how you will know it works

- Using strain theory to excuse harm; naming a cause is different from excusing it
- Assuming every disengaged student seeks the same replacement
- Waiting until a new peer group has filled the vacancy

LEADING INDICATOR · Moves first

Students re-engaged in class participation

LAGGING INDICATOR · Confirms it worked

Absence and discipline for students added to a program

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HANDOUTS Seat Card (A) and Find Your Data worksheet (B)

KEEP GOING IN THIS SERIES

Seat 01: Classify Before You Consequence
Seat 02: Early Absence Is a Logistics Signal
Seat 03: Building the Habit of Showing Up

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Every seat filled is one more person working to make showing up possible.