

**COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE LEARNING TRAITS**  
AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Trait	Characterized By:	Approach
BLOCKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low frustration tolerance</li> <li>• Immobilization/hopelessness</li> <li>• Freezing up/blocking</li> <li>• “It’s beyond me.”</li> <li>• “I’ll never get it.”</li> <li>• “I’m stuck”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine what the tutee does know &amp; discuss it;</li> <li>2. Show him that he has some foundations already laid</li> <li>3. Begin with what knowledge the tutee has and build, in simple steps</li> <li>4. Offer continual support.</li> <li>5. Reinforce success consistently.</li> </ol>
CONFUSION (Variation of Blocking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bafflement/disorientation/ disorganization</li> <li>• Helpless feelings about the class</li> <li>• “I just don’t know what to do.”</li> <li>• “I studied for the test and got a ‘D’.”</li> <li>• “I’m not sure where we’re going.”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize the above four approaches</li> <li>2. Give structure and order to the tutee’s tutorial sessions, notes and papers.</li> </ol>
MIRACLE SEEKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global interest or concern but with little specificity</li> <li>• Enthusiasm about being with tutor, but fairly passive in actual tutoring process</li> <li>• High (often inappropriate) level of expectation</li> <li>• Evasion or inability to concentrate on concrete tasks</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the used for? What would result? What would happen?</li> <li>2. Demonstrate, apply, use, construct, find solutions, collect information, preform, solve, choose appropriate procedures, make a lesson, demonstrate how, illustrate how, show how, apply, explain.</li> </ol>
OVER ENTHUSIASM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations/demands of self</li> <li>• Talk of limited time, long-range goals vs. immediate tasks</li> <li>• Global interest/enthusiasm</li> <li>• Often found with older students: e.g., “Look, I’m 30 years old; I don’t have the time that these kids do.”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain counterproductive nature of this eagerness.</li> <li>2. Be understanding, yet assure him that he does have time.</li> <li>3. Utilize last three approaches in Miracle-Seeking listed above.</li> </ol>
RESISTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variation of sullenness/hostility/ passivity</li> <li>• Disinterest in class/work/tutor</li> <li>• Defensive posture toward class/work/tutor</li> <li>• Easily triggered anger</li> </ul>	<p>Allow student to ventilate his feelings. Spend first session, possible second, on building the relationship.</p> <p>Be pragmatic, yet understanding; (e.g., “I know class doesn’t turn you on, but you need it to graduate so let’s make the best of it.”)</p> <p>As opposed to Miracle-Seeking, establish your credibility.</p> <p>If it comes up, assure student that his complaints about a class are confidential.</p>

<p>PASSIVITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-involvement/inattention low affect</li> <li>• Boredom</li> <li>• Little discussion initiated/few questions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emphasize the attitude (e.g., “I guess you don’t like asking a lot of questions in class, do you?”)</li> <li>2. Attempt to build a relationship and mobilize the student.</li> <li>3. Utilize as many mobilizing techniques as possible; question problems, assign mini-tasks to be accomplished by next session.</li> <li>4. Reinforce all activities and successes.</li> </ol>
<p>EVASION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manipulation</li> <li>• Verbal ability/glibness vs. focused problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Global, non-specific praise of tutor’s skill, course content</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As with first item in Miracle-seeking, down play your role.</li> <li>2. Focus the student on specific tasks; involve his continuation with questions and problems.</li> <li>3. If evasion continues, you should ask, in a non-threatening way, why the student has come for tutoring and what he expects from you; (“You know, we’ve met several times already, but we haven’t gotten much done—what do you think we should plan for future sessions?”)</li> </ol>