



**Motivation and Underachievement:
How they Affect your High Ability Student**

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<http://www.johnston.k12.ia.us/schools/elp/resources.html#presentations>



**+ Motivation: Essential
to Achievement**

- Drive & Desire for success

REQUIRES:

- Interest
- Initiative
- Dedication
- Self-Direction

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+ Underachievement: Potential vs. Performance

(Cash & Heacox, 2014)

- “Chairman of the Bored” - self-image formed by 9 years
- Underachievement is easier to reverse the earlier it's caught
 - Prevention through appropriate curriculum is even better
- Counseling is key, but needs to start early
 - Can bring about behavior changes and teach strategies for self-efficacy



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+ Underachiever: General Characteristics

- Intelligence
- Lack self-awareness.
- Lack the character-based skills to achieve success & self-esteem.
- Substitute excuses for effective action.



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It's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game!

- “The ability to function in competition is central to achievement.” (Rimm, 124)
- Respond to a loss, but wait until after emotional tension is reduced to begin a dialogue
- School and life are important “games,” but much to be learned from sports and music

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To reverse the cycle?

- Persistence
- Patience
- Positive Attitude
- Parents & Teachers
 - Work together
 - Make no excuses
 - Set the values
 - Change child, not setting
 - Learn to deal with pain– we live in a competitive world
 - Promote pursuit of passions– early goals and success can be replicated.



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+ Communication between students, teachers, and parents

- Chances of success greater if parents and teachers cooperate
- Parents often disappointed and feel helpless
- BOTH environments are likely reinforcing underachieving patterns, both parents and teachers must change their approach to these children
- Parent-Teacher conference sets the stage for important alliance – both concerned, care, and understand it is a complex problem

+ Motivate through self-management

- WE cannot make the change, but we can perhaps be the catalyst
- Teach methods, strategies or skills for students to direct their actions toward achievement of goals;
 - Persistence
 - Independence
 - Goal Setting
 - Time Management
 - Study Skills
 - Effective Technology skills

+ A word about “PRAISE”



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- “Best or brightest”... not the BEST idea.
- Format praise to be specific: “Look at how clearly you’ve explained the process of how you solved this problem. You have listed each step in order so I know exactly what you were thinking” vs. “Good job on problem number 3.”
- Don’t praise for little effort, something thrown together at last minute. Praise when improvement shown.
- Compliments should be related to effort or outcome, not vague generalities.

+ Your Toolbox

(Kanevsky & Keighley 23-25)



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- **Control**- Students must value their goals in school, believe they can do it. This can be taught. Show ways to break down goals, teach problem solving systems, including setting priorities.
- **Choices**- Follow by self-evaluation. Gradually move towards higher goals. Model templates for handling similar situations with each new choice that is made. Discuss ideas for making choices.
- **Challenge**- Provide intellectual challenge. Appropriately differentiated programming = potential achievers.
- **Complexity**- rich content, high level thinking
- **Care**- Talk to students about their goals and their gifts. Model upbeat self-talk, enjoy victory. Learn from defeat. Celebrate small gains. Share your life experiences, frame roadblocks as challenges. Model ways to mentally recharge and sustain enthusiasm.

+ Resources

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