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Conference

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TAMRA STAMBAUGH

SATURDAY 19 MAY

Session 3

**When Students Don't Perform to
Their Potential: Underachievement and
What We Can Do about It**

MELBOURNE

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Think about students in your classroom who are academically successful. What characteristics do they possess? What role does environment play?

Academic Behaviors	Skills and Attitudes About Learning and School	Environmental Factors

What about students who are underachieving? What characteristics do they possess? What role does environment play?

Academic Behaviors	Skills and Attitudes About Learning and School	Environmental Factors

What types of activities do achieving and underachieving students enjoy or prefer? How are these similar and different? Patterns?

Enjoyable Activities for Achieving Students	Enjoyable Activities for Underachieving Students

What are the challenges of teaching underachieving students? What successful strategies have you discovered?

Barriers to Teaching Underachieving Students	Strategies You Have Found Successful

Common Characteristics of Underachieving Students

- Low self-esteem, efficacy and self-concept
- Distrustful and pessimistic
- Anxious, impulsive
- Socially immature
- Dependent; less resilient
- Afraid of failure/success
- Negative attitude toward school
- Rebellious
- Self-critical and perfectionistic
- Focuses on external locus of control
- Lack goal-directed behavior
- Creative
- Honest in rejecting unchallenging coursework
 - Reis & McCoach, 2011

Common Myths and Harmful Beliefs

- They are lazy.
- They just need to work harder.
- They aren't underachieving, their parents have too high of expectations.
- Their parents don't care.
- They just need to apply themselves more.
- They'll grow out of it.

Contributing Factors and Potential Causes

- Parenting styles that were inconsistent, permissive, or overly authoritarian had similar effects
- Families that focused on grades over learning had more underachieving and perfectionistic students
- Dysfunctional and chaotic environments at home and school
- Stereotype threat
- Masked learning ability
- Student self-perceptions and efficacy
- Definitions of success among school and family or culture
- Too much pressure to succeed (internal or external)
- Self-regulation and study skills
- Mismatch between school environment and ability
- Dual diagnoses and undetected learning disabilities or health issues
- Negative environmental factors

Achievers and Underachievers Differ the Most on the Following:

- Attitudes toward teachers and school
- Goal valuation
- Self-regulation strategies
- Environmental perceptions
- Efficacy
- Motivation
 - McCoach & Siegle, 2003

Common Types of Underachievers

(adapted from Rahal, 2010 and Mandel & Marcus, 1995)

Type	Characteristics	Motto	Strategies
Cool Coaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does just enough to get by • Procrastinates • Has multiple excuses for behavior; blaming • Responsibility avoidance • Does not meet deadlines • Manipulates others 	<p><i>If I don't try I can't fail</i></p> <p><i>Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest pursuits • Shorter deadlines • Family support and information about class assignments • Strength-based approaches • Agency and efficacy – Help them own their actions
Anxious Annie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs constant reassurance • Conforming to adults • Pleasing • Constant worry about meeting other's expectations • Somatic symptoms • May have dominating or uninvolved parents 	<p><i>I am as good as what other people think.</i></p> <p><i>I am never good enough.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal bests and progress tracking • Learning vs performance goal setting • Curbing negative thought patterns • Help them understand the purpose or goal of an assignment • Set time limits for getting work done • Self- monitoring and self-assessment strategies • Limited praise; linked to positive independent behaviors
Identity-Searching Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent achievement profiles 	<p><i>I can do it alone.</i></p> <p><i>I can do it all.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show relevance in specific subject areas • Listen without judging or giving advice ("I get the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple interests that change frequently • Exhausted and overcommitted • Highly motivated in areas of interest • Big dreams • Self-reliant • Will perform when they value the task 		<p>impressions that...; It sounds as if....; I noticed that..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them "try on" different identities with parameters • Teach them to look at short and long term consequences • Allow a sense of control (forced choices)
Defiant Dave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily frustrated • Plays to win • Gives up easily if not the best • Blames others for actions 	<p><i>I don't know and I don't care</i></p> <p><i>This is stupid.</i></p> <p><i>Defying authority makes me look mature.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear expectations ahead of time • Hold them accountable and help understand cause-effect relationships and short and long term consequences • Don't engage in power struggles • Agree to disagree • Use reasoning models as a way to process information objectively • Maintain control • Show "tough love"
Wheeler Dealer Daisy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charming • Manipulative • Popular • Out for oneself • Makes fun of others • May bully • May have a dysfunctional home life • Need immediate gratification • Easily gets others on their side 	<p><i>What can we negotiate?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults need to stay in constant communication with each other or they will be manipulated • Set rules and expectations ahead of time • Help the student take responsibility for their actions and understand consequences • Hold them accountable after clear expectations • May need counseling

Strategies

- Underachievement is a symptom; not the problem. Find the source of the problem.
- There are no magic solutions or one-size-fits all strategies. It is trial and error. The longer the underachievement pattern has been going on, the longer it will take to remedy it.
- Symptoms may look the same but for very different reasons. Find out why the underachievement pattern is occurring. Are there patterns or certain instances when underachievement is more common? (i.e., long term projects, short term projects, writing assignments, certain subject areas) When did it start? Are there self-confidence issues or unhealthy perfectionism? Are they adequately challenged? Do they know how to study? Do they have a healthy sense of oneself self and learning? Do they care or understand and value the outcome? Is the environment supportive and accepting of achievement patterns? Once we know what the underlying cause is, then we can implement the appropriate strategies to support the student.
- Parents need to be involved in the process for long-term, positive results.

Five R's:

- Replace – negative attitudes with more positive ways to think about success and failure as part of learning
 - Small successes, feedback, meaningful praise, reframing and mindset
 - Effort over achievement
- Reconnect – the student with ways to be successful in school including viewing oneself as a learner who can be successful
- Rebuild – gaps in learning, skills that support achievement
- Reduce – behaviors that are intended to be self-protective and distracting to learning
- Relate – build relationships with students and help them build positive relationships with others in the classroom
 - Adapted from Cleveland (2011)

Four C's:

- Choices (Interest pursuits)
- Challenges (attainable with small successes)
- Control (perceived sense of control over their life, outcomes, and environment)
- Compliments (feedback about personal bests and effort)

Motivation and Goal Valuation

- Explain why a lesson or lesson goal is important. Why are we learning this? Why do we need to know this? How will this play into their own personal goals or provide them with rewards they desire (i.e., getting into college, learning to read, preparing for a project they want to do or are interested in)
- Find out what they are interested in and appeal those interests through choice-based and authentic projects.

- Out of school interests and pursuits can enhance in school achievement.
- Help students set short term and achievable goals that are meaningful to them.
- Bring different experts into the class to talk about their jobs and how they use what they learned in school or how doing well in school contributed to their success. Ask them specifically to tie their career objectives to your classroom initiatives.
- Remember Vygotsky's zone of actual and proximal development. Provide lessons just above a student's level of readiness but still attainable.
- Provide immediate and targeted feedback with a concrete next step.
- Be excited about the subject area. Explain that the topic is exciting or fascinating instead of difficult or challenging.
- Help students understand future implications and consequences of their choices.
 - When I try hard in this class it's because _____
 - I would spend more time on my schoolwork if _____
 - If I do poorly in this class then _____
 - When I don't try hard in this class it's because _____
 - I would rather do _____ than my work for this class
 - Doing well in this class will help me _____
 - Doing poorly in this class will keep me from _____
 - This class is important to me because _____
 - The thing I am most interested in learning more about is _____
 - The most interesting thing that I learned in _____ class was _____
 - From Siegle and McCoach, 2005

Efficacy

- Help them see that they are smart enough. Provide examples of past achievements "Remember when you...."?
- Use charts to show pre-post growth. Help students map their growth. Review pre-post test data and set new goals.
- Celebrate new personal bests, not comparisons to the classroom.
- Garner small successes and short-term attainment of goals. Success breeds success.
- Praise and attribute success to their effort; "You've learned that..." Provide feedback for next steps to promote ongoing learning.
- Attribute hard work to success and developing expertise. This means providing adequate levels of challenge in the classroom so that all students have to work at a level that is challenging for them.
- Provide specific criteria for success so that they know what it means to be successful.
- Mindset training: www.perts.net
- Changing negative beliefs to positives (i.e., blaming, should,

Self-Regulation

- Self-regulation skills need to be taught as needed and "in the moment". Students are not as likely to apply study skills or note-taking skills or organizational habits if they do not think they need them immediately.

- Map out long-term goals into small steps. Talk out loud about how you approach tasks and provide steps and outlines.
- Teach note taking and annotating. Model this.
- Provide models and frameworks for thinking.
- Set routines for turning in and collecting work.
- Curriculum compacting and pursuits of interest

Proactive Approaches

- Affective Curriculum embedded in content
- Biography study of successes and failures and overcoming adversity
- “I can” and “I will” statements
- Focus on personal bests
- Meet physical and basic needs
- Provide clear objectives and expectations for assignments
- Teach models for thinking and learning (i.e., Paul’s Reasoning Model, Note-taking, Scaffolding with Jacob’s Ladder)
- Differentiation with readiness and interest combinations
- Ensure parents as partners
- Allow ownership in setting up classroom rules; model desired behaviors
- Explain why
- Provide students with their own “job description” for your classroom
- Show you care. Underachieving students who reversed their pattern attributed success to a teacher or other caring adult.

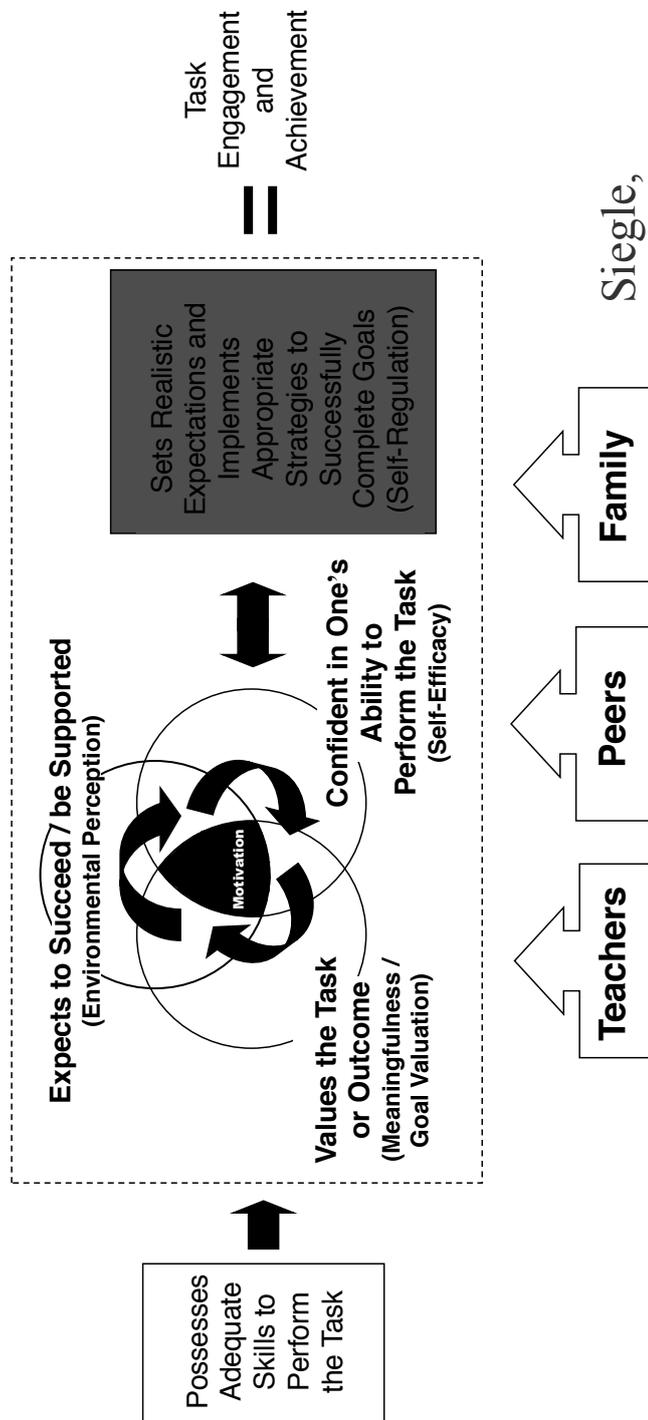
Resources

https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/underachievement_study/

<https://secure.edweek.org/media/fo-motivation-resources.pdf>

<https://www.perts.net/orientation/hg>

Achievement-Oriented Model



Each of the four elements of the model (Meaningfulness, Self-Efficacy, Environmental Perception, and Self-Regulation) is usually present in individuals who achieve at a level commensurate with their abilities. Some of these factors may be stronger than others, but overall, achievement-oriented individuals display a combination of all four traits. Remediation can be based on diagnosing which element or elements are deficit and addressing them. Two individuals might have very different remediation programs based on their achievement-orientation profiles.

<p>Regulating Emotions</p>	<p>Coping with Adversity and Challenge</p>	<p>Engaging in Healthy Risk Taking</p>	<p>Developing Identity</p>
<p>Using Emotion</p> <p>Discuss how one might channel emotions into a creative outlet and use emotions to create change or for a specific purpose or goal through literary texts or situations</p>	<p>Facing Adversity and Challenges</p> <p>Create or articulate solutions and discuss implications for facing adverse situations and challenges in a productive way</p>	<p>Engaging in Productive Risk-Taking</p> <p>Design or explain a plan for productively engaging in healthy risks that promote one's achievement</p>	<p>Actualizing Potential to Advance a Goal</p> <p>Create unique ideas, plans, and products that show an understanding of one's identity and how that identity allows for goal attainment</p>
<p>Expressing Emotion</p> <p>Explain how emotions are conveyed through the use of literary elements in a text and convey one's own emotions in positive ways.</p>	<p>Analyzing Adverse Situations and Conditions</p> <p>Explain how adverse situations in self and others contributes to varying conditions and outcomes.</p>	<p>Considering Multiple Perspectives</p> <p>Articulate, seek, or review multiple perspectives, ideas, or situations and weigh the outcomes</p>	<p>Understanding Roles and Affiliations</p> <p>Discuss how one's role and affiliation (or perception of their role/affiliation) supports or inhibits their personal growth</p>
<p>Understanding Emotion</p> <p>Identify and understand different emotions and emotional language used to convey a message.</p>	<p>Recognizing Adversity and Challenge</p> <p>Recognize adversity and challenge expressed in fictional and real life texts and situations; explain how these challenges affect the individuals involved.</p>	<p>Identifying and Calculating Risks</p> <p>Identify potential risks a situation and discuss the potential cause and effects of such risk on one's situation or outcome</p>	<p>Knowing Oneself</p> <p>Explain fictional and individual characteristics and traits and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each as part of recognizing one's identity or how identity is crafted.</p>
<p>Stambaugh & VanTassel-Baska, 2018</p>			

<p>Developing Empathy</p>	<p>Managing Stressors</p>	<p>Motivating to Achieve</p>	<p>Developing Talent</p>
<p>Collaborating with Others Design collaboration plans or explain effective ways to collaborate or interact with others to achieve a specific purpose or goal</p>	<p>Creating a Plan for Management Create a plan for managing stressors that includes specific criteria and outcomes or critique the effectiveness of one's plan for managing stress</p>	<p>Reflecting on Patterns of Achievement Develop attainable goals for long-term learning; synthesize patterns of achievement in oneself and others</p>	<p>Demonstrating High Level of Performance in a Given Area Create a new product, idea, or plan for developing one's strengths and attaining goals</p>
<p>Communicating and Responding to Others Communicate effectively and professionally in a variety of ways and in response to one's needs; consider others' ideas and perspectives as part of a communication plan</p>	<p>Applying Control Techniques Apply healthy ways to manage stress to provided with various situations, scenarios, or contexts</p>	<p>Assessing Strengths and Interests Explain how the use of one's strengths and interests contributes to one's achievement</p>	<p>Applying Learning to Practice Explain how to use or create opportunities and develop strengths to acquire knowledge; practice healthy habits for success and meeting one's own goals</p>
<p>Understanding Others' Needs and Values Identify and explain the needs of others through perspectives other than one's own; put oneself in another's situation and discuss ideas from that perspective</p>	<p>Identifying Conditions/Situations that Cause Stress Identify and explain conditions that cause stress in others and oneself</p>	<p>Identifying Barriers to Achievement Identify and explain personal and external barriers to achievement</p>	<p>Recognizing Internal and External Factors that Promote Talent Development Identify and explain personal and external factors that impede or promote talent development, including what is and is not in one's control</p>
<p>Stambaugh & Van Tassel-Baska, 2018</p>			

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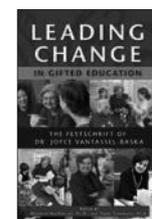
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