



Strategies for Underachieving Gifted Students

1. **Praise:** Using the right kind of praise can be very effective. Rather than saying “good job,” be specific in your praise. Look for something particularly clever or interesting in the student’s approach. For example: “I like the unique way you designed_____” or “Your approach to this idea is very original because_____.”
2. **Intrinsic Motivation:** Help students to take ownership of learning by providing engaging assignments and tasks that build on strengths. Offering a gifted student choices can help him feel more involved and, therefore, more invested in the educational process.
3. **Organization:** Gifted does **not** mean organized. Some of the most creative thinkers need help getting creative thoughts into some manageable and usable form. Provide students with a variety of strategies to create a framework for those “big ideas”. (Refer to “ Strategies for Teaching Gifted Students...”)
4. **Self-evaluation:** Use student-to-student or self-evaluation in classroom tasks. This will help students to identify problems and solutions. Be sure that the student has a specific set of criteria for the task or a project being evaluated. For example the student and teacher could create a rubric together (use websites for ideas).
5. **Counseling:** Depending on the factors contributing to low performance, working with a counseling professional can help give the student more confidence to achieve.

Characteristics of Underachieving Gifted Students

- Lack of self-confidence
- Fear of failure or fear of success
- Academic skill deficits
- Inability to persevere
- Lack of integration toward goals
- Excessive need for attention
- Avoidance of responsibility
- Thoughts of worthlessness
- Avoidance of competition
- Negative thought patterns e.g. believe himself unintelligent despite test results and/or feels unable to succeed despite his high intelligence.

*adapted from document generated by Susan Zackowski