

Goal Valuation: Valuing the Goals of School

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Goal Valuation

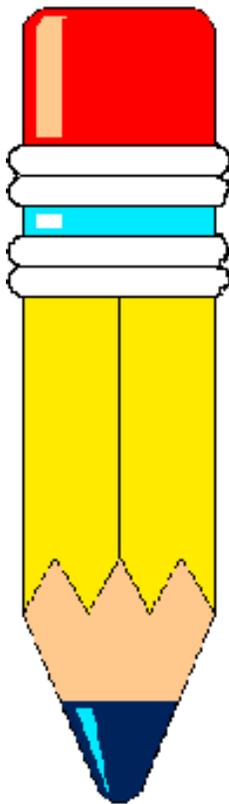


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Introduction: Goal Valuation Intervention

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Often underachievers appear to be unmotivated to complete their schoolwork or to engage in classroom activities. Let us begin by reframing this problem as a general question. What motivates a person to put forth effort to accomplish a given task? There are 2 basic reasons that a person engages in an activity. Either the person enjoys the activity, or the person values the outcome or byproduct of the activity in some way. For example, Fred might study Social Studies because he enjoys learning about history whereas Rico might study Social Studies because he wants to get a good grade in the class. Fred studies because he finds the class INTERESTING; Rico studies because he finds the class USEFUL.

Some students underachieve in school because they do not value the outcomes of school, nor do they enjoy completing schoolwork. To reverse underachievement that stems from an apparent lack of motivation, we must first determine how to build value into the student's scholastic experiences. The purpose of the goal valuation intervention is to increase the motivation and achievement values of underachieving middle school students.

This intervention consists of two distinct components:

- First, we suggest general classroom strategies that you can use in your classroom with all students to increase the intrinsic and utility value of your class. We also offer suggestions about how to effectively administer rewards in a classroom setting.
- The second (and perhaps most important) part of the intervention consists of individual conferences with the underachieving student. You are expected to meet with the student individually for 15-20 minutes a week throughout the course of the intervention. During these short meetings, you will help the student to develop achievement goals. These weekly meetings are the heart of this goal valuation intervention.

Outline of Goal Valuation Intervention Strategies

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[Click for a video overview of intervention strategies.](#)

Intrinsic Value Strategies

Provide interest enhancing activities, anecdotes, games, challenges, etc. that linked to the instructional objectives.

Provide variety and choices for learning and/or showing mastery of the content.

Provide optimally challenging learning activities.

Use preassessment to match instruction to the student's current levels of academic functioning.

Provide opportunities for active learning opportunities.

Provide opportunities for immediate feedback.

Enthusiastically present content and treated students as eager learners.

Attainment Value Strategies

Provide students with opportunities to engage in authentic, significant tasks.

Provide students with opportunities with tasks that are personally meaningful to the student.

Provide students with models who value academic achievement.

Utility Value Strategies

Explain the purpose of the lesson/assignments.

Connect learning to students' current wants and/or future goals and aspirations.

Show the real world applications/ ramifications of the concepts covered in class.

Share personal stories about how others have used the knowledge or skills we are learning.

Invite a parent, student, or community member to share how they use information from your course.

Relate learning activities to the objectives of the course.

Develop connections between prior knowledge, current learning, and future uses.

Rewards

Provide student with an opportunity to obtain a reward for reaching a specific instructional goal.

Individual Conferences: Meet with student once a week for 15-20 minutes to discuss goals and values.

Use constructive confrontation techniques.

Use active listening techniques.

Complete the assigned session activities.

Complete the assigned worksheets with the student.

Help student to clarify academic goals.

Help student to make plans to achieve academic goals.

Goal Valuation



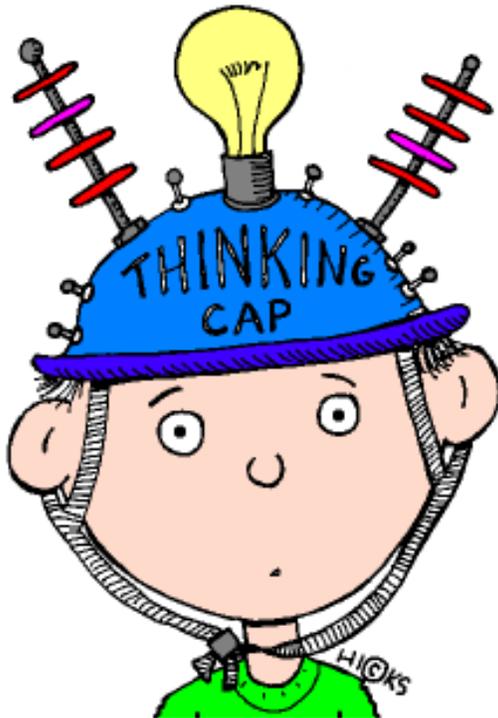
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What are achievement values?

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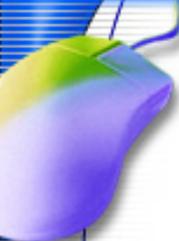
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Achievement values are "the incentives or purposes that individuals have for succeeding on a given task" (Wigfield, 1994, p. 102). Children's achievement values affect their self-regulation and motivation because goals influence how children approach, engage in, and respond to academic tasks (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). "When students value a task, they will be more likely to engage in it, expend more effort on it, and do better on it" (Wigfield, 1994, p. 102). Research indicates that children's subjective task values are strong predictors of children's intentions and decisions to continue taking coursework in both Math and English (Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Eccles and Wigfield hypothesized that students' motivation to complete tasks stems from the attainment value, utility value, and intrinsic value associated with the task (Wigfield, 1994), as well as with the costs associated with engaging in the task. In the remainder of this CD, we will provide strategies and interventions designed to increase the value associated with scholastic tasks. You can implement the suggested classroom strategies with the entire class. They should have a positive impact on any student's motivation. The individual conferences are designed specifically for use with academic underachievers.

Introduction to the Classroom Strategies

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In this portion of the intervention, we introduce you to a variety of strategies to increase students' task values in your classroom. These pages serve as general tips or suggestions. You can use these strategies with your entire class or with the individual student. Many of these strategies may be things you do in your class already. Some may seem to you like "just good teaching." We ask that you read the strategies, try to incorporate at least some of them into your classroom. Then, at the end of each week, record which of these strategies you used on the [strategy checklist](#).

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Strategies to Increase the Intrinsic Value of Tasks in Your Class

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Intrinsic value refers to the interest and enjoyment that students experience when engaging in an activity. When students enjoy scholastic tasks, they are intrinsically motivated to do well. Both interests and personal relevance produce intrinsic value for a student. Generally, students are intrinsically motivated to pursue activities that are moderately **novel, enjoyable, exciting, and optimally challenging**. When schoolwork is too easy, students become bored. When tasks are too difficult, students become frustrated and anxious (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Teachers should create classroom environments that provide students with opportunities to engage in **interesting, personally relevant, challenging** activities. Students bring a variety of experiences and interests to the classroom, and learning becomes personally meaningful when students' **prior knowledge** and diverse experiences are connected with their present learning experiences.

Educators can also increase the intrinsic value of their classes by creating an enriching environment and providing opportunities for students to explore their interests. In a recent study, researchers used self-selected enrichment projects based on students' interests as a systematic intervention for underachieving gifted students. This approach specifically targeted student strengths and interests and helped reverse academic underachievement in over half of the sample (Baum, Renzulli, & Hebert, 1995).

To increase the intrinsic value in your class, plan learning activities that capture your students' attention and spark their **curiosity, creativity, and enthusiasm**. The following list contains general strategies for increasing the intrinsic value of classroom tasks and activities.

Imagine...

Dan is an eighth grader who moved to the school district in the beginning of seventh grade. Since then, his grades have been fairly low. He receives B's, C's, and D's in most subject areas, and he is failing Algebra. Dan is a wonderful artist who excels at any assignment that allows him to utilize his artistic talent. Dan is very disorganized. Dan is a

quiet, almost withdrawn adolescent who possesses a childish charm. His teachers and his mother speak regularly to discuss his schoolwork; however, it seems to have no impact on his achievement. How could you help Dan to develop an interest in his math or language arts class?



Strategies to Increase the Intrinsic Value of Tasks in Your Class

Using the following strategies could help Dan to develop an interest in his language arts class.

1. Set the stage.

Start out with a BANG! Start units with interest grabbing puzzles, mysteries, teasers, paradoxes, or demonstrations to immediately pull students into the upcoming material. These activities should connect to the learning outcomes.

2. Give Choices.

Whenever possible, offer your students authentic choices about the ways in which they learn and show mastery of the material in your class. If you have trouble developing a menu of choices, you can ask your students for ideas about alternative projects or products. (Sometimes giving choices may not be appropriate-- sometimes students really DO need to all do the same thing at the same time... However, building in choices when possible and appropriate increases students' intrinsic motivation.)

3. Provide Challenge.

Students are more likely to become engaged with material that is optimally challenging. Classroom activities should be appropriate to their current knowledge and skill levels. Material that is either too hard or too easy is anti-motivational. Ideally, teachers should deliver instruction that is just above the skill range of the students. The activity should be something that the students can master, but not without effort and appropriate strategy use (Morrone & Schutz, 2000). Ensure that your students are challenged (but not frustrated) by classroom activities.

4. Use PRETESTING/PRESASSESSMENT.

Pretest your students to find out what they already know about the material and skills that you are about to cover in your class and to ensure that they have the prerequisite skills and knowledge to be successful in the upcoming unit. An ideal pretest will include questions that all students should have mastered as well as questions that, if answered correctly, indicate mastery of upcoming instructional objectives. Use students' pretest results to provide instruction that is optimally matched to their level of mastery. If students have already mastered an instructional objective, allow them time to pursue interest based enrichment opportunities, rather than giving them "more of the same."

5. Promote active learning.

Most students tend to prefer activities that allow active participation or response. Activities that allow students to interact with you or one another, or allow them to manipulate materials are usually more intrinsically motivating to students. Research shows that students prefer active learning to passive forms of learning.

6. Provide immediate feedback.

Students also tend to enjoy activities that allow for immediate feedback. This immediacy of feedback is one reason that computer games are so popular. Immediate feedback enhances the psychological impact of the activity. When possible, build opportunities for immediate feedback into classroom activities.

7. Make it a game!

Incorporate game-like features or elements of fantasy into classroom activities (Brophy, 1998). With a bit of imagination, ordinary seatwork assignments can be turned into "test yourself" challenges. Embellish activities in ways that encourage students to playfully engage in the learning activities. Embellish activities with challenges, fiction and/or fantasy, obstacles to overcome, hidden information, etc. However, you should ensure that the learning activities do not detract from the intended objectives. Distinguish between fun activities that involve actual learning

and simply having fun.

8. **Assume students are eager to learn.**

Treat your students as if they are already eager learners. "To the extent that you treat your students as if they already are eager learners, they will be more likely to become eager learners" (Brody, 1998, p. 170). When introducing a new concept or activity, tell students how that activity will be enjoyable or interesting. For example, when introducing a more complex topic, refer to it as more "interesting" and more "intriguing", rather than as more difficult. When you are starting a unit that you are afraid your students will NOT like, do NOT say things like "You may find this exercise a little tedious", "I thought this book was a little boring myself", "you may not like this," etc. Be enthusiastic about your subject area and the lessons that you teach.

9. **Variety is the spice of life!**

Everyone enjoys jobs that contain a variety of activities and provide them with opportunities to use a variety of skills. Try to avoid overly repetitious activities. Try to use different types of learning activities throughout the course of the semester.

10. **Teach big ideas.**

Use "minds-on" activities to engage students. Zahorick suggests that minds on activities get students in touch with powerful ideas that anchor content structures, reflect major instructional goals, and provide the basis for authentic applications.

11. **Be enthusiastic.**

Identify good reasons for viewing a topic as interesting, intriguing, meaningful or important (also utility value) then communicate those reasons to your students as you teach. This doesn't mean that you need to be a three-ring circus. "The primary objective of projecting enthusiasm is to induce students to value the topic or activity, not to amuse, entertain, or excite them" (Brody, 1998, p. 173).



Strategies to Increase the Attainment Value of a Task

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Attainment value is the **importance** students attach to the task as it relates to their conception of their **identity** and **ideals** or their **competence** in a given domain (Wigfield, 1994). For example, students who identify themselves as athletes set goals related to their sport. Students who pride themselves on being good students seek affirmation in the form of grades or test scores. These students are motivated to attain the goals because they are associated with the students' perceptions of who they are. Providing students with models who value academic achievement may be one way to increase attainment value. In addition, educators can personalize the school experience by helping students to integrate academic goals into their ideals. Educators can help students to become more personally invested in their educational experience by making it meaningful for them.

Jody, an eighth grader, has a high IQ and high achievement test scores. (She scored above the 99th percentile on both tests.) She spends many evenings writing beautiful but slightly macabre short stories. Jody looks up to writers such as Edgar Allen Poe. "He was so cool...Dark, and disturbed, and brilliant... Most writers are so dark.... Who wants to be

*normal?
How
boring!" In
school, Jody
hardly puts
forth any
effort in any
of her
classes.
After all,
doing well in
school is so
predictable...
so
conventional!
"Most of my
favorite
writers did
poorly in
school.
Everybody
knows that
real creative
geniuses
weren't
brown-
nosers."
How could
you help
Jody to see
the
importance
of school
given her
present
value
system?*



Strategies to Increase the Attainment Value of Tasks

1. **Provide students with models who value academic achievement.** Rimm (1995) suggested that same sex models who resemble the student in some way are the most effective models.
2. **Personalize students' school experience by helping them to integrate academic goals into their ideals and values.** Educators can help students to become more personally invested in their educational experience by making it meaningful for them.
3. **Give students tasks that have meaning and integrity in their own right** rather than tasks that are subparts of some larger entity. Students experience a sense of accomplishment when they do a complete job from beginning to end.
4. **Allow students to engage in projects that have large scale ramifications or implications** (i.e.- creating a new invention, helping someone in need).
5. **Interact with the student on a more equal level** and show unconditional positive regard for the student.
6. **Use vocational interest testing and personality testing.**

7. **Allow students the opportunity to engage in “deep” discussions, when possible.** Entertain multiple viewpoints on a topic within class discussions.
8. **Show the student that you value him/her as a unique individual.** Encourage the student to express his/her individuality in projects and assignments.



Strategies to Increase the Utility Value of Your Class

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Utility value is how the task relates to **future goals**. While students may not enjoy an activity, they may **value a later reward** or outcome it produces (Wigfield, 1994). The activity must be integral to their vision of their future, or it must be instrumental to their pursuit of other goals. Because goals can play a key role in attaining later outcomes, educators and parents should help students see beyond the immediate activity to the long-term benefits it produces. Teachers need to be able to answer the common query, "Why do we have to study this stuff?" Research on gifted underachievers has demonstrated the importance of valuing academic and career goals on students' eventual reversal of their underachievement.

One way to increase the value of the task is to positively reinforce students for completing the task. Extrinsic motivation is the motive to complete an activity to receive an external reward or positive reinforcement that is external to the activity itself. Extrinsic motivators include rewards such as stickers, praise, grades, special privileges, prizes, money, material rewards, adult attention, or peer admiration. Teachers should use extrinsic motivators carefully, as some research suggests that providing extrinsic rewards for an intrinsically motivating activity can decrease a person's subsequent intrinsic motivation for that activity (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

To recap, **utility value** refers to the perceived usefulness of the task. Students who find academic tasks useful for present or future goals are more likely to put forth effort for those academic tasks. Below are strategies to increase the utility value of academic tasks. Utilizing these strategies can help you to motivate underachievers.



Imagine this...

Brad is failing his eighth grade classes. "I'll work harder next year when I'm in high school," he says. "After all, my grades this year don't count for anything. Besides, I'm never going to use any of this stuff ever again anyway!" How would you help Brad to see the utility value of his classes?

Strategies to Increase the Utility Value of Tasks

1. **Explain the purpose for lessons and assignments.** At the beginning of every unit, explain why mastering these skills or learning this information

is important to students. If you cannot think of a reason that students need to learn what you are teaching them, you may want to consider modifying the unit. Before every lesson state "why we are learning about this and how it is useful" in 1-2 sentences.

2. **Show connections between classroom learning/assignments and "the real world."** Show the real world applications of the concepts that they are learning in class.
3. **Help your students to recognize that the knowledge or skills that they are developing in your class will:**
 - help them to **meet their own current needs or wants**,
 - **provide them with social rewards** or opportunities for social advancement, or
 - **prepare them for occupational or other future successes** (Brophy, 1998).
4. **Share personal stories** about people with whom your students can identify who use similar knowledge or skills to solve problems, create products, or make their lives easier or more comfortable.
5. **Invite parents, community members, older students and former students** to share ways in which they use information/skills from your class in their classes, jobs, or hobbies.
6. **Model the intellectual traits that you would like your students to display**, such as reasoning, curiosity, intellectual enthusiasm. Be an eager, curious learner within your classroom. When tackling a difficult concept, reason out loud to show students the logic of your thought processes.
7. **Show how classroom activities match the instructional goals of the class.** "If teachers help students understand the overall goals of the course and how those goals are consistent with their own goals and interests, students may better understand and appreciate the importance and usefulness of a particular activity" (Morrone & Schutz, 2000, p. 154).
8. **Show students how new learning builds from their previous knowledge and skills.**



Tips for Rewarding Students for Good Performance (Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation)

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Recent theories suggest that **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** motivation are not two opposing constructs, but rather two ends of a motivation continuum (Alderman, 2000). The intrinsic / extrinsic motivation continuum represents the extent to which actions are controlled by reward and the extent to which actions are self-determined (Alderman, 2000). A person can engage in activities to simultaneously fulfill both intrinsic and extrinsic goals. For example, when someone chooses a



career that is also intrinsically rewarding, working can produce both intrinsic rewards (i.e. interest and enjoyment) and extrinsic rewards (i.e., salary and prestige). As educators, we must find a way to make school both intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding for our students.

If a student is not intrinsically motivated to do well, using extrinsic motivators such as rewards or punishments can sometimes prod the student into action. However, using rewards and punishments effectively is an art. Sometimes using extrinsic motivators can backfire. As a general rule, positively reinforcing good behavior or high achievement is far more effective than punishing bad behavior or low achievement. However, even rewards need to be used carefully, since even rewards can have an adverse impact on subsequent motivation. In *Punished by Rewards*, Alfie Kohn argues that rewarding students for activities that are intrinsically motivating can decrease their motivation to engage in those activities in the future. While we disagree with Kohn's conclusion that rewards are ineffective and controlling, we would suggest that rewards are more effective if you follow a few general guidelines.

Strategies for rewarding students: (From Brophy, 1998)

General Guidelines

1. Offer rewards as incentives for meeting performance standards on **low level tasks** or **skills that require a great deal of practice or drill and repetition** rather than as primary incentives to do things that you hope will be intrinsically motivating for the student (such as reading, interest based research projects, participating in volunteer projects, etc.)
2. Rewards can act as motivators only for those students who believe that

they **have a chance to earn the rewards** if they put forth reasonable effort. For example, if the teacher offers a reward for the neatest paper, the sloppiest child in the class is unlikely to try to win the award.

3. **Rewards are only effective when students value the reward.** For example, if students don't care about grades, then using grades as a reward for good performance does not serve as an extrinsic motivator for the child.
4. Rewards are most effective when they are delivered in ways that provide students with **informative feedback** about their performance. Explain the importance of learning, performance, and improvement, and use the incentives as markers for mastering key concepts or improving skills, rather than as the entire point of doing the work.

Decreases in performance and intrinsic motivation may occur when...

1. Rewards are presented in ways that call a great deal of attention to them in front of the rest of the students. This can be very embarrassing for the student who receives the award.
2. Rewards are given for mere participation in an activity rather than contingent on achieving specific goals. Rewarding participation can result in subpar performance.
3. Rewards are artificially tied to the behaviors as control devices rather than being natural outcomes of the behaviors. Ideally, if you can design a system where a behavior is naturally reinforcing, you will have the best long-term outcomes. However, sometimes it may be necessary to offer "carrots" for particular achievements. This is effective in the short run. However, when you stop offering the carrot, you are likely to stop seeing the desired behavior. Therefore, rewards can be a great "quick fix", but they are rarely a long-term solution.

Final Note: Remember, what may seem like it would be motivational to one person, can actually be antimotivational for someone else. Consider the following scenario taken from the motivation and motivational tools website, <http://www.motivation-and-motivational-tools.com/>

"In Mrs. George's seventh grade classroom, Cole always sat at the back of the room, trying to be as invisible as possible. He'd always been quite shy and withdrawn, but also lonely with feelings of isolation. As he began his adolescent growth spurt, Cole's height and strength progressed to the point where he was able to do well in soccer. And his circle of friends grew. He finally started to feel like "one of the guys."

Then one fateful day, Mrs. George, who had been waiting for opportunities to help Cole feel successful and more confident in his own abilities, asked him a direct question in class. When Cole responded correctly, she praised him quite emphatically. Cole was mortified. He blushed and ducked his head and felt more embarrassed than he had in months. He thought that he'd been made to look like the teacher's pet and would be alienated by his newfound friends. He vowed

never to answer a question correctly out loud after that.

So in effect, what Mrs. George had intended as positive reinforcement turned out to be serious disincentive for the behavior she'd been hoping to cultivate."

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Introduction to the Individual Conferences

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[Click for introductory video on the individual conferences.](#)

The core of this intervention is the individual conference. During the individual conferences, you and the student will meet individually for 15-20 minutes per week. The individual conferences are designed to help the student explore his/her goals and aspirations as well as reasons that he/she may choose to achieve or underachieve in school. On this CD, you will find worksheets and directions to walk you through the conferences.

- Do not meet in front of other students. The conferences should be private and confidential. You may want to meet with the student before or after school, during a study hall, or during lunch. Try to find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed or distracted.
- Do not talk to the other students in your class about the study. It is important that the student you are working with feels safe and does not feel "singled out."
- The person who conducts the conferences should have a positive relationship with the student. The classroom teacher can conduct the conferences, or another member of the faculty can assume responsibility for the conferences. A counselor, school psychologist, social worker, teacher of the gifted, another teacher with whom the child feel especially close, or another specialist can take responsibility for the weekly meetings if the classroom teacher is unable to conduct the conferences or if another faculty member has a more open, positive relationship with the student.
- It is important that the person who takes responsibility for conducting the conferences meets with the student once a week for 15 minutes for the entire duration of the intervention.
- Before you meet with the student, you should print a copy of that week's worksheet. When meeting with the student, you should ask the student the questions on the worksheets, and you should record the student's answers on the worksheet, and you should save the completed worksheets in a binder or folder. At the end of the intervention, we will ask you to send us the completed forms, so please make sure to keep the forms.



A note regarding the format of the conferences: We suggest that you spend 15-20 minutes a week in individual conferences with the student. We have structured the conferences into sessions; however, depending on the discussion within your actual session, you may cover the material more or less quickly than we have outlined. If you don't finish an activity during one session, carry the remainder of the activity over to the next session. After session 8, the sessions follow a standard "maintenance" format. Therefore, you will easily be able to complete all of the activities, even if some of them take you 2-3 sessions.

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General Guidelines for the Individual Conferences

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Conferences should occur at least once a week for 15-20 minutes. The purpose of the individual conference is to help the student to clarify his/her goals and to develop greater task value for math/language arts class. Conferences should be held in a private setting. Don't try to have student conferences when all of his/her classmates are present.

An individual conference approach to help underachievers (From Mandel & Marcus, 1988, 1995).

1. Have student set his or her own stated goal. Be supportive.
2. With the student, explore and document how the student actually prepares for and executes academic responsibilities.
3. Focus on specific problem areas. Have student describe in detail what is going on in school from his or her own perspective.
4. When student offers excuses for poor performance, isolate each those excuses and explore them further with the student.
5. Once an excuse has been clarified, link each excuse to its natural future consequence. Explicitly help the students make the elementary connection between effort and achievement.
6. Ask the student to develop specific solutions for each stumbling block or hindrance that he or she might face along the way.
7. Ask the student to develop an action plan for him/herself. Understand that the student may or may not follow-through on the self-developed action plan. Be careful not to demand or pressure the student. This could create a student shut-down or a power struggle. The student needs to feel as if he or she has developed the action plan him or herself.
8. Follow-up on whether student completes the proposed actions. If he/she does not, ask for specific reasons why not. He/she "can no longer use the last excuse because to do so would mean recognizing that the underachievement has been a choice." (Mandel & Marcus, 1988, p. 293)
9. Keep repeating steps 3-7 with another excuse each time. Focus on details rather than generalities, and avoid interpreting the student's motivation or affect. Eventually, the underachiever should find it more and more difficult to avoid the perception that he/she is responsible for what happens.
10. Shift to a nondirective approach... Shift from "excuse-buster" to supportive, non-judgmental listener.

In the individual conferences we encourage you to make use of a technique called **constructive confrontation**. (Mandel & Marcus, 1995; Egan, 1969)

Constructive Confrontation is a face to face challenge in which you address a discrepancy in the thoughts, feelings, or actions of another person. Constructive confrontations force the confronted person to clarify the inconsistencies in his/her behavior, and results in a closer bond between the confronter and the confrontee. Constructive confrontation is NOT blaming or negative confrontation. It's important to maintain a very objective tone, and to not be hostile or to seem too personally invested when using constructive confrontation techniques. Your goal is to point out inconsistencies, not to judge or to get emotional. Your tone should be inviting, not accusational. You should give the impression that you are there to help the student to solve his own problems because you want to help, but NOT because his problems are somehow also your problems.



Important advice: Don't take a student's dislike of your class or your teaching style personally. It's easy to feel hurt when you listen to a student say that he doesn't like your class. Remember, you are working with a student who has a serious achievement problem. His dislike of your class is a symptom of a greater problem. Your goal is to help him conquer his problem, NOT to convince him that your class is great. As you work through this process, the student should develop a better attitude toward your class as a by-product of his developing more task values.

Examples of constructive confrontation:

(In a calm, matter of fact manner) *"You say that you want to get a good grade in math class, but you never hand in your math homework or study for math exams. Can you explain this discrepancy to me?"*

Secrets of constructive confrontation: (From Mandel & Marcus, 1995)

1. First, be ABSOLUTELY SURE that your motive is constructive.
2. Focus on the facts.

Example: "Tell me more about what happened, specifically."

3. Use active listening techniques. Click here to learn more about [active listening techniques](#).
4. Invite the student to solve the problem.

"How can you solve that problem?"

"How can you avoid making the same mistake next time?"

"How can you ensure that you remember to take your books home?"

5. Confront Problems when they occur.

Don't let tensions build. Stick with the facts now or in the immediate past. Don't dwell on things that happened last year. Also, confront problems as they occur, and when they are small enough to be more easily fixable.

6. Confront strengths, not weaknesses.

Focusing on strengths that are NOT being used is a much more effective motivator than focusing on the student's weaknesses. The importance of focusing on psychological strengths cannot be overstated. Children who are constantly criticized start to really believe that there is something wrong with them. On the other hand, children who are praised for their accomplishments start to feel good about themselves and believe in their potential.

7. Be selective about when and how often you confront.

Confrontation should be used judiciously to call attention to the discrepancies between the underachiever's words and his actions or to call attention to discrepancies within his statements. However, the 15 minute individual meetings should not be one big confrontation.

8. Be clear about who owns the problem (And it's NOT YOU!)

Don't let the underachieving student shift the responsibility for his work onto your shoulders!

9. Don't accept pat answers at face value-- keep probing!

10. Don't accept vague statements. Pursue facts by asking specific questions.

11. Approach every school problem by asking a systematic list of problem solving questions.

Here are some sample questions:

1. What are your academic goals for this semester?
2. Are you meeting your stated goals?
3. If you're not happy with your grades or academic performance, what in particular are you not happy with?
4. Do you want to do anything about it?
5. What's happening in the course that you want to change?
6. What specifically do you need to do to meet your goals?
7. What could go wrong with your plans?
8. Given your stated goals, how can you counteract negative forces standing in the way of your academic success?

Active Listening

NRC
G/T

(Adapted from www.osr.state.ga.us/bestprac/class/cm-3.htm)



An important skill for teachers to master is **active listening**. When teachers listen actively, they send children the message that they are important enough to have the teacher's undivided attention. When a teacher is an active listener, she is able to guide children to solve problems for themselves. Active listening is a bit of a misnomer since it is your responses that are key in this technique.

Depending on what the child has said, an active response would be to (a) **paraphrase** what you have just heard (this could include helping the child label feelings or describe a situation), and when appropriate, (b) **ask a question that will lead the child to her own solution**. When a child has clearly described something that happened, an active response is one where the teacher restates the situation, labeling any feelings that have been shared. For example, Deloris comes to her teacher and says, "It's my turn to play with the kangaroo puzzle, and Lisa won't give it to me." An active response would be, "You sound angry, Deloris. What can you do to work this out with Lisa?" If Deloris has solved problems before she may be able to suggest talking to Lisa or sharing the puzzle. If not, the teacher would offer to go with her and guide her to tell Lisa what the problem is and help them come up with a solution. Although it would be easier for the teacher to tell Deloris and Lisa that they have to share or take the puzzle away until the children stop arguing, the active listening response lets the children know that the teacher has confidence that they can work it out. Teachers who use active listening understand that their goal is for children to learn to become active problem-solvers for themselves.

There are **four basic active listening techniques: encouraging, restating, reflecting, and summarizing**. Use encouraging responses such as "uh-huh", "go on", "I see", and "tell me more about that" to encourage the student to continue talking. You may be surprised at how much more a student will say with a minimal amount of encouragement. Restating responses such as "it sounds like you didn't do very well on your math test" or "you forgot your homework" mirror the facts that the student has shared. You may want to use restating responses to show that you understand what the student has said to you. You may also want to use restating responses when you think that the student may notice inconsistencies in his or her own statements. Reflecting responses such as "you seem to feel that..." or "you seem to be afraid that..." capture the essence of the feelings that the student has expressed. Summarizing responses pull important ideas and facts together. Summarizing statements establish a basis for further discussion and also help you to review what you've discussed and the progress that you have made. Examples of summarizing statements include "You're really not certain what you want to do" or "You seem pulled in two directions..." The chart details the purpose and procedures for the four different active listening techniques.

Active Listening Techniques

(From www.poynter.org/Research/lm/lm_listen2.htm)

TYPE OF STATEMENT	PURPOSE	TO ACHIEVE PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
A. ENCOURAGING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To convey interest. To keep the person talking. 	<p>Don't agree or disagree. Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "I see..." "Uh-huh..." "That's interesting..." Tell me more about that
B. RESTATING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To show that you are listening and understand. To let the person know your grasp the facts. 	<p>Restate the other's basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "If I understand, your idea is..." "In other words, this is your decision..."
C. REFLECTING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To show that you are listening and understand. To let others know you understand their feelings. 	<p>Restate the other's basic feelings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "You seem to feel that..." "You sound like you were pretty disturbed by this..."
D. SUMMARIZING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To pull important ideas, facts, etc. together. To establish a basis for further discussion. To review progress. 	<p>Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed..." "If I understand you, you feel this way about the situation."





Individual Conferences: Session 1



[Click for video about Session 1.](#)

A note regarding the purpose and format of the conferences: The individual conferences are designed to help the student explore his/her goals and aspirations as well as reasons that he/she may choose to achieve or underachieve in school. We suggest that you spend 15-20 minutes a week in individual conferences with the student. We have structured the conferences into sessions; however, depending on the discussion within your actual session, you may cover the material more or less quickly than we have outlined. If you don't finish an activity during one session, carry the remainder of the activity over to the next session. After session 8, the sessions follow a standard "maintenance" format. Therefore, you will easily be able to complete all of the activities, even if some of them take you 2-3 sessions.

Introductory Questions for Discussion:

(These questions are designed to help you to get to know your student better, and to begin productive conversation about utility and interests in a non-threatening way. Have fun with these questions, and try to get the student to open up and feel comfortable with you and the idea of the weekly conference format.)

What are your interests? Tell me about your favorite activities both in and out of school.

Tell me about your best school experience.

What do you like to do when you have the day off from school?

Tell me about what you want to do and be as an adult.

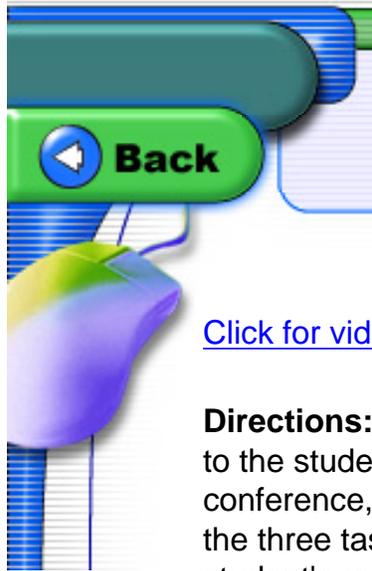
There are 2 major reasons that students find value in a class.

1. **Interest:** They are interested in the topic or enjoy the way it is presented/the work that they do in class.
2. **Utility:** They find the information or skills they are learning useful, or they believe that they will be useful in the future.

"I want to help you to find value in my/this class so that you can succeed in it, and so that the success is somehow meaningful to you. The purpose is not for me to tell you why you should want to do well in my/this class, but rather for you to discover whether you want that for yourself. I am here to help you, but this is your journey. I want you to feel free to be honest about your feelings; however, please express yourself in a way that is appropriate for school."

Use the the **goal value exploration** sentence completion activity (worksheet 1). Read the sentences to the student and ask him or her to complete the sentences. Fill in the student's responses on the worksheet. After the conference session, analyze the student's responses. You will discuss the student's responses to the worksheet with him/her during session 2.

1. **Look for patterns within the responses on the Goal Value Exploration worksheet.**
Does the student seem to have high or low interest in the class?
Does the student seem to perceive the class as having high or low utility for him/her?
2. **What kinds of attitudes and values does the student display?**
What things do interest the student?
What does the student value?
Where does the student put forth effort?
How could some of that enthusiasm be channeled into school?



Student Worksheet 1: Goal Value Exploration Teacher Version



[Click for video about Student Worksheet 1.](#)

Directions: During the individual conference, read the following questions aloud to the student, and record his/her responses on this worksheet. After the conference, examine his/her responses. Code the first two responses as one of the three task values (or cost). Then use the following questions to analyze the student's responses. Some free response questions do not directly align with any of the "task values" per se, but they should give you insight into what the student values. You will discuss the student's responses during the next conference session.

Before session 2, examine the students responses to the Goal Value Exploration worksheet to gain insights into what motivates this student.

A. Look for patterns within the responses on the Goal Value Exploration worksheet.

Does the student seem to have high or low interest in the class?

Does the student seem to perceive the class as having high or low utility for him/her?

B. What kinds of attitudes and values does the student display?

What things do interest the student?

What does the student value?

Where does the student put forth effort?

How could some of that enthusiasm be channeled into school?

1. When I try hard in this class, it's because _____

2. I would spend more time on my schoolwork if _____

3. If I do poorly in this class, then _____(wppen).

(Cost)

4. When I don't try hard in this class, it's because _____.

(Cost)

5. Doing well in this class will help me to _____.

(Utility Value)

6. This class is important because _____.

(Utility Value)

7. The thing that I am most interested in learning more about is _____.

(Interest Value)

8. The most interesting thing that I learned in this class this year is _____.

(Interest Value)

9. I feel best about myself when _____.

10. I feel worst about myself when
_____.

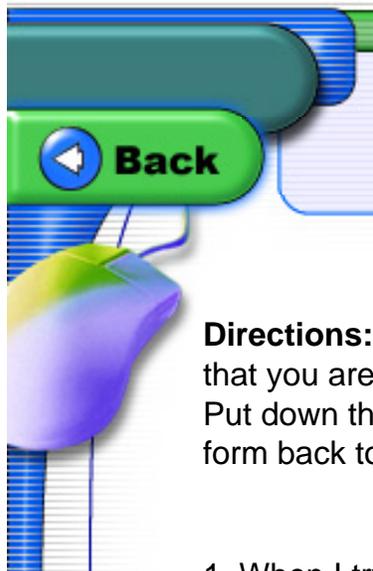
11. I am most proud of
_____.

12. I wish that I could
_____.

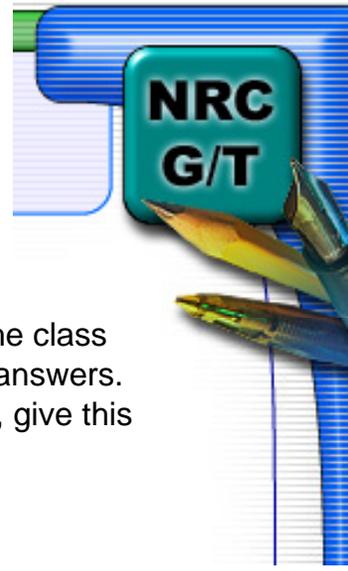
13. When I grow up, I want to _____.

(Utility Value)

14. I really value _____.



Student Worksheet 1: Goal Value Exploration Student Version



Directions: Please complete all of the following sentences regarding the class that you are focusing on for this program. There are no right or wrong answers. Put down the first idea that comes into your head. When you are done, give this form back to your teacher/counselor.

1. When I try hard in this class, it's because _____.
2. I would spend more time on my schoolwork if _____.
3. If I do poorly in this class, then _____ (will happen).
4. When I don't try hard in this class, it's because _____.
5. Doing well in this class will help me to _____.
6. This class is important because _____.
7. The thing that I am most interested in learning more about is _____.
8. The most interesting thing that I learned in _____ class this year is _____.
9. I feel best about myself when _____.
10. I feel worst about myself when _____.
11. I am most proud of _____.
12. I wish that I could _____.
13. When I grow up, I want to _____.

14. I really value



Individual Conferences: Session 2

**NRC
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[Click for video about Individual Conference 2.](#)

Discuss the answers to the Goal Value Exploration sheet of sentence completions from session 1. Use the following guiding questions and your analysis of their responses:

1. Look for patterns within the responses on the Goal Value Exploration worksheet.
Does the student seem to have high or low interest in the class?
Does the student seem to perceive the class as having high or low utility for him/her?
2. What things do interest the student?
What does the student value?
Where does the student put forth effort?
How could some of that enthusiasm be channeled into school?

Additional Questions For Discussion:

1. Are you doing as well in this class as you could?

2. Are you doing as well in this class as you would like to?

3. When do you put forth the most effort to do well in school?

4. What do you find interesting about this class?

5. How is the class useful to you now?

6. How will the class be useful to you in the future?

- If you have not done so already, explain interest and utility value to the student.
- Talk to the student about how he/she perceives his/her interest and utility values. Ask the student to provide concrete examples that illustrate his/her likes or dislikes within the class. Don't accept vague or general answers or "I don't know." Instead, ask clarifying questions to try to tease out the students thoughts and feelings about the class.
- Tell the student that next week you will be discussing ways to increase the value of class/school.

- Explain to the student that people usually engage in activities wither because they enjoy them (intrinsic value) or because they expect some sort of reward, pay-off, or future benefit (utility value).
- Ask the student to **brainstorm** the interest/intrinsic value and utility value of the class, and to bring his/her ideas to the conference session next week.

Goal Valuation



NRC/GT

Individual Conferences: Session 3

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conference 3.](#)

Note to the teacher/counselor: Remember, there are four reasons that students find value in a class.

1. **Intrinsic Value/ Interest**: They are interested in the topic or enjoy the way it is presented/the work that they do in class.
2. **Utility/Usefulness**: They find the information or skills they are learning useful, or they believe that they will be useful in the future.
3. **Attainment Value/Personal Identity**: Learning the material or doing well in the class is important to their conception of who they are as a person.
4. **Cost**: The cost of doing poorly in the class is too great.
 - Talk to the student about how he/she perceives his/ her interest, utility, identity values, as well as the costs of achieving and the costs of failing the course. Connect his/her responses to your analysis of the student's goal value exploration worksheet for session 1. **(Note: in our experience, some students, especially younger students will have a hard time relating to the "attainment value" and "cost" ideas. If those concepts don't seem to make sense or generate discussion for your student, you can feel free to confine your discussions to utility and interest. Think of UTILITY and INTEREST as essential components of the intervention and attainment/identity and cost as OPTIONAL components of the intervention).**
 - Ask the student to explain which of the task values he/she thinks is most important and why.
 - Ask the student to **brainstorm** ways that he/she could increase the value of class. Record all of his/her ideas below.

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Discuss how you and/or the student might realistically incorporate at least one of the better ideas into class.

Goal Valuation    **NRC/GT**

Individual Conferences: Session 4

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conference 4.](#)

Last week, you and the student discussed how you both might realistically incorporate at least one of the better "task value" ideas into class. Begin this session by evaluating the effectiveness of this strategy.

Were you and/or the student able to incorporate this idea into class?

If not, why not?

If so, how did it work?

Is there anything that you can do to make it work better?

Review the list of ideas from session 3.

Are there any other ideas from the list that you want to try?

How will you implement these ideas into class?

How and when will you next evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented ideas from last session and this session?

ACTIVITY: Excuses, Excuses (from Vernon, 2002: What Works with Children and Adolescents)

Materials:

1. 8-10 index cards or small pieces of paper
2. A pencil or pen
3. A trash can or a garbage bag for depositing excuses

Procedure:

1. Discuss what stops your student from doing better in school. If she can't think of reasons, you can give some generic starting reasons, such as not doing homework, having better things to do, not feeling like it, etc.
2. As the student comes up with reasons for not doing better, have him write each one down on a separate index card.
3. Tell him that sometimes these reasons are like excuses, and that if he looked at these excuses as if they were trash, he could tear them up, toss them in the trash can, and not have them interfere the next time he has to do/achieve something.
4. Suggest to the student that she review what she has written, reflect upon whether or not they help her accomplish her work, and have her tear up the cards and throw them in the trash if they interfere with her achievement.
5. Tell him that now that some/all of his excuses are gone, he can set some goals to improve his performance.
6. Ask the student to share a specific area of performance that she would like to improve. If she can not think of one on the spot, ask her to think about it and to come to the next session with at least one area that she would be willing to work to improve.

(From Vernon, 2002, p. 201)

Individual Conferences: Session 5

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conference 5.](#)

Goal discussion:

This week, you and the student are going to discuss goals for the year, and strategies to attain those goals. Be careful not to impose your own goals for the student, but guide the student to pick positive and realistic goals. Fill-out the **goal setting plan** below with the student. You may want to review the discussions from previous sessions as you complete the goal setting sheet.

Student Worksheet 2: Goal Setting Plan: (Based on Heacox, 1991)

1a. What is one area of your class performance that you really want to improve? (This is your long term goal. It may take you several weeks, months, or even a whole school year to improve this goal.)

1b. This goal is important to me because

2. What is one thing that you can do NOW to help you reach your long-term goal?

(This is your short-term goal. You should be able to accomplish this goal in 2-4 weeks.)

3. What steps do you need to reach your short-term goal?

4. What things or people might keep you from reaching your goal? These are your obstacles.

5. What can you do to get around your obstacles? These are your solutions.

6. What special materials or help do you need to reach your goal? These are your resources.

7. How will you reward yourself when you achieve your goal? These are your incentives.

8. How and when will you check on your progress toward your goal? Who will help you to check on your progress?

Checkpoint 1 Date: _____

Checkpoint 2 Date: _____

I am committed to working toward achieving my short term goal and my long term goal.

Student's signature: _____

Today's date: _____

Witness (Teacher's) signature: _____

Goal Valuation



NRC/GT

Individual Conferences: Session 6

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conference 6.](#)

1. Goal discussion:

It is important to discuss the student's goals for his/her academic career.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Describe what you think that your life will be like 10 years from now. (Tell the student to feel free to Dream Big, but to also be realistic.)

2. How will you get there from here? What will it take to get where you want to go from here?

1. Have the student brainstorm his or her long term goals.

2. What steps must you take to achieve your long term goals?

3. What things could keep you from achieving your long term goals?

4. How can you get a head start toward achieving your long term goals now?

5. How does this class (or school) fit into achieving your long term goals?

2. Re-explore utility, attainment, and interest values for the class in question.

1. What was the most interesting thing that you learned in class this week?
2. How can you make class more interesting for yourself?
3. What was the most useful thing that you learned in class this week?
4. How can you make class more useful to you?
5. What accomplishment from class are you most proud of?
6. What can you do to feel even better about yourself in class?

3. Review whether the **strategies** that you and the student developed during session 3 for increasing the task value of the class are working, and make any necessary modifications.

MODIFICATIONS to Strategies from session 3:

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Utility Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Identity Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Can you and/or the student might realistically incorporate any of these ideas into class or school?

4. Closing:

- Give the student the opportunity to talk freely about anything class related that might be on his or her mind.
- You and the student should close by summarizing what the student accomplished between last week and this week, and what the student will try to accomplish between this week and next week.
- Call attention to any **progress** or **positive steps** that the student has made. Also mention any areas that continue to need attention, and relate those areas to the students stated goals.

This week's accomplishments:

Next week's goals:

Progress or positive steps:

Areas that continue to need attention:

Individual Conferences: Session 7

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conference 7.](#)

1. Thinking about the consequences of underachievement (From Vernon, 2002).

In this activity, we are going to create a mock underachievement chain reaction.

Materials:

- 15 strips of paper
- A stapler
- A pencil

Procedure:

1. Have the student take a strip of paper, identify one consequence of underachieving, and put a number one on that strip.
 2. Have the student take a second strip, and identify a consequence that could happen as a result of the first consequence.
 3. Follow the same procedure until the student has completed all 15 paper strips.
 4. Discuss the consequences listed on each of the rings of the chain.
 5. Have the student staple each of the papers into a circle and interconnect 1 with 2, 2 with 3, etc. so that he/she makes a paper chain out of the 15 paper strips.
 6. Talk about the wisdom of beginning a chain of underachievement. Have the student take the paper chain home to as a reminder that today's actions have a ripple effect and have real consequences on the future.
2. Review whether the strategies that you and the student developed for increasing the task value of the class are working, and make any necessary modifications.

MODIFICATIONS to Strategies from session 3:

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Utility Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Identity Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Can you and/or the student might realistically incorporate any of these ideas into class or school?

4. Closing:

- Give the student the opportunity to talk freely about anything class related that might be on his or her mind.
- You and the student should close by summarizing what the student accomplished between last week and this week, and what the student will try to accomplish between this week and next week.
- Call attention to any progress or positive steps that the student has made. Also mention any areas that continue to need attention, and relate those areas to the students stated goals.

This week's accomplishments:

Next week's goals:

Progress or positive steps:

Areas that continue to need attention:

Individual Conferences: Session 8

**NRC
G/T**

[Click for video about Individual Conferences 8-10.](#)

Weekly routines: Now, we will get into a pattern of routines for the remaining individual conferences.

1. **Rate your week** (Based on Wilde, 1995): Ask the student to rate her school-week on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being very poor, and 10 being outstanding. Then ask him/her to explain why she rated the week the way that he/she did.

Week 8 Rating: _____

Reason:

2. Self-Evaluation of Achievement

How do you think that you are doing in class?

What is your current grade in the class? (How do you know?)

Often, students do not know their grades in a given class. They simply don't keep track, and so they always report that they are doing "well". Now is an excellent time to show the student how to keep track of class grades and work out some sort of system so that the student can keep track of his or her own grades in the future.

3. Re-explore utility, attainment, and interest values for the class.

1. What was the most interesting thing that you learned in class this week?

2. How can you make class more interesting for yourself?

3. What was the most useful thing that you learned in class this week?

4. How can you make class more useful to you?

5. What accomplishment from class are you most proud of?

6. What can you do to feel even better about yourself in class?

4. Review whether the strategies that you and the student developed for

increasing the task value of the class During sessions 3 and 7 are working, and make any necessary modifications.

MODIFICATIONS to Strategies from session 3:

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Utility Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Identity Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Can you and/or the student might realistically incorporate any of these ideas into

class or school?

5. Closing:

- Give the student the opportunity to talk freely about anything class related that might be on his or her mind.
- You and the student should close by summarizing what the student accomplished between last week and this week, and what the student will try to accomplish between this week and next week.
- Call attention to any progress or positive steps that the student has made. Also mention any areas that continue to need attention, and relate those areas to the students stated goals.

Goal Valuation



NRC/GT



Individual Conferences: Session 9

**NRC
G/T**



1. Rate your week (Based on Wilde, 1995): Ask the student to rate her school-week on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being very poor, and 10 being outstanding. Then ask him/her to explain why she rated the week the way that he/she did.

Week 9 Rating: _____

Reason:

2. Self-Evaluation of Achievement

How do you think that you are doing in class?

What is your current grade in the class? (How do you know?)

3. Re-explore utility, attainment, and interest values for the class.

1. What was the most interesting thing that you learned in class this week?

2. How can you make class more interesting for yourself?

3. What was the most useful thing that you learned in class this week?

4. How can you make class more useful to you?

5. What accomplishment from class are you most proud of?

6. What can you do to feel even better about yourself in class?

4. Review whether the strategies that you and the student developed for increasing the task value of the class during session 3, 7 and 8 are working, and make any necessary modifications.

MODIFICATIONS to Strategies from session 3:

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Utility Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Identity Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Can you and/or the student might realistically incorporate any of these ideas into class or school?

5. Closing:

- Give the student the opportunity to talk freely about anything class related that might be on his or her mind.
- You and the student should close by summarizing what the student accomplished between last week and this week, and what the student will try to accomplish between this week and next week.
- Call attention to any progress or positive steps that the student has made. Also mention any areas that continue to need attention, and relate those areas to the students stated goals.

This week's accomplishments:

Next week's goals:

Progress or positive steps:

Areas that continue to need attention:

Goal Valuation



NRC/GT

Individual Conferences: Session 10

**NRC
G/T**

1. Rate your week (Based on Wilde, 1995): Ask the student to rate her school-week on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being very poor, and 10 being outstanding. Then ask him/her to explain why she rated the week the way that he/she did.

Week 10 Rating: _____

Reason:

2. Re-explore utility, attainment, and interest values for the class.

1. What was the most interesting thing that you learned in class this week?

2. How can you make class more interesting for yourself?

3. What was the most useful thing that you learned in class this week?

4. How can you make class more useful to you?

5. What accomplishment from class are you most proud of?

6. What can you do to feel even better about yourself in class?

3. Review whether the strategies that you and the student developed for increasing the task value of the class in sessions 3, 7, 8, and 9 are working, and make any necessary modifications.

MODIFICATIONS to Strategies from session 3:

Ideas for increasing the Interest Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Utility Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the Identity Value of _____ Class:

Ideas for increasing the cost of doing poorly or decreasing the cost of doing well.

Can you and/or the student might realistically incorporate any of these ideas into class or school?

4. Closing:

- Give the student the opportunity to talk freely about anything class related that might be on his or her mind.
- You and the student should close by summarizing what the student accomplished between last week and this week, and what the student will try to accomplish between this week and next week.
- Call attention to any progress or positive steps that the student has made. Also mention any areas that continue to need attention, and relate those areas to the students stated goals.

This week's accomplishments:

Next week's goals:

Progress or positive steps:

Areas that continue to need attention:

Goal Valuation    **NRC/GT**

 Back

Research

 NRC
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Achievement values are "the incentives or purposes that individuals have for succeeding on a given task" (Wigfield, 1994, p. 102). According to expectancy-value theory, the value that a person places on either the task or the outcome and his perceived probability of success determine the amount of effort that he will exert attempting to successfully complete the task. The motivating potential of anticipating outcomes is largely determined by the subjective value that the person places on the attainment (Bandura, 1997). Two people may hold the same belief that their behavior will result in a particular outcome, but they may evaluate the attractiveness of that outcome quite differently (Bandura, 1997). The person who values the outcome or finds the outcome more attractive will be more motivated to attain the outcome. Value may compensate for low probabilities of success. People may put forth effort when they value the outcome, even when they believe that their probability of success is quite low. For example, people who enter sweepstakes or buy lottery tickets are motivated to engage in an activity with an extremely low probability of success due to the extremely high value attached to the outcome. As the jackpot becomes larger, more people engage in lottery ticket buying behavior, even though the probability of winning the lottery remains extremely low. This example demonstrates the power of value in determining people's behavior.

Children's achievement values affect their self-regulation and motivation (Wigfield, 1994) because goals influence how children approach, engage in, and respond to academic tasks (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). "When students value a task, they will be more likely to engage in it, expend more effort on it, and do better on it" (Wigfield, 1994, p. 102). Research indicates that children's subjective task values are strong predictors of children's intentions and decisions to continue taking coursework in both Math and English (Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Eccles and Wigfield, two leading researchers in the field of motivation, expanded Atkinson's expectancy value model to include a variety of achievement related influences that impact individuals' expectancies and values (Wigfield, 1994). In particular, they hypothesized that students' motivation to complete tasks stems from the attainment value, utility value, and intrinsic value associated with the task (Wigfield, 1994), as well as with the costs associated with engaging in the task.

Intrinsic Value

Intrinsic value often results from the enjoyment an activity produces for the participant (Wigfield, 1994). When students enjoy scholastic tasks, they are intrinsically motivated to do well. Both interests and personal relevance produce intrinsic value for a student. Generally, students are intrinsically motivated to pursue activities that are moderately novel, interesting, enjoyable, exciting, and

optimally challenging. When schoolwork is too easy, students become bored. When tasks are too difficult, students become frustrated and anxious (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Teachers should try to create classroom environments that foster intrinsic motivation by providing students with opportunities to engage in interesting, personally relevant, challenging activities.

Students bring a variety of experiences and interests to the classroom, and learning becomes personally meaningful when students' prior knowledge and diverse experiences are connected with their present learning experiences. Educators can do this by creating an enriching environment and providing opportunities for students to explore their interests. In a recent study, researchers used self-selected enrichment projects based on students' interests as a systematic intervention for underachieving gifted students. This approach specifically targeted student strengths and interests and helped reverse academic underachievement in over half of the sample (Baum, Renzulli, & Hebert, 1995). Emerick (1992) also found underachievers responded well to "interventions incorporating educational modifications which focus on individual strengths and interests" (p. 140).

Attainment Value

Attainment value is the importance students attach to the task as it relates to their conception of their identity and ideals or their competence in a given domain (Wigfield, 1994). For example, students who identify themselves as athletes set goals related to their sport. Students who pride themselves on being good students seek affirmation in the form of grades or test scores. These students are motivated to attain the goals because they are associated with the students' perceptions of who they are. Providing students with models who value academic achievement may be one way to increase attainment value. Rimm (1995) suggested that same sex models who resemble the student in some way are the most effective models. In addition, educators can personalize the school experience by helping students to integrate academic goals into their ideals. Educators can help students to become more personally invested in their educational experience by making it meaningful for them.

Utility Value

Utility value is how the task relates to future goals. While students may not enjoy an activity, they may value a later reward or outcome it produces (Wigfield, 1994). The activity must be integral to their vision of their future, or it must be instrumental to their pursuit of other goals. Because goals can play a key role in attaining later outcomes, educators and parents should help students see beyond the immediate activity to the long-term benefits it produces. Teachers need to be able to answer the common query, "Why do we have to study this stuff?" Research on gifted underachievers has demonstrated the importance of valuing academic and career goals on students' eventual reversal of their underachievement. Peterson (2000) followed achieving and underachieving gifted high school students into college. She found gifted achievers developed early career direction and focus, suggesting that having aspirations and future goals may encourage academic achievement. Emerick (1992) reported that former underachievers were able to reverse their underachievement through the

development of attainable goals that were both personally motivating and directly related to academic success.

One way to increase the value of the task is to positively reinforce students for completing the task. Extrinsic motivation is the motive to complete an activity to receive an external reward or positive reinforcement that is external to the activity itself. Extrinsic motivators include rewards such as stickers, praise, grades, special privileges, prizes, money, material rewards, adult attention, or peer admiration. Teachers should use extrinsic motivators carefully, as Lepper's overjustification hypothesis suggests that providing extrinsic rewards for an intrinsically motivating activity can decrease a person's subsequent intrinsic motivation for that activity (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

Cost

Finally, Eccles and Wigfield stress the importance of "cost" in an individual's decision to engage in an activity. "Cost refers to how the decision to engage in one activity (e.g., doing schoolwork) limits access to other activities (e.g., calling friends), assessments of how much effort will be taken to accomplish the activity, and its emotional cost" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). When the cost of an activity is too high, individuals may choose not to engage in that activity, even if they enjoy the activity or value the outcome of the activity. Therefore, we must assess the hidden costs of academic achievement when working with underachievers. Conversely, the high cost of failure can also impel someone toward achievement.

We have explored four different components of students' **value structure**:

- **intrinsic value (interest)**
- **attainment value (personal importance and meaningfulness)**
- **utility value (usefulness)**
- **cost**

Each of these four components contributes in an additive fashion to students' overall incentive to engage in a particular achievement. For example, students who find a task both interesting and useful should display greater motivation than students who find the activity either useful but not interesting or interesting but not useful. Students who experience high utility value, high interest value, high attainment value, and low cost for a given task should be highly motivated to complete the task. While strengthening value in one area (i.e.- interest) can compensate for low task value in another area (i.e.- utility), ideally we want to maximize all three components of task value and minimize the cost of engaging in the activity.

In the remainder of this handbook, we will provide strategies and interventions designed to increase the task value associated with scholastic tasks. You can implement the suggested classroom strategies with the entire class. They should have a positive impact on any student's motivation. The individual conferences are designed specifically for use with academic underachievers.

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Goal Valuation



Back

NRC/GT

Daily Strategy Report

At the end of each day, please take a minute to record which strategies you successfully used with your student by placing a check in the appropriate column and row. Indicate any unusual or unexpected circumstances under the Comments section. You may implement some of the strategies each day, while other strategies may not be used. Our goal is to implement as many of the strategies as possible as frequently as possible. Because this is a research project, we need an accurate accounting of how often each strategy is used. Please complete the form as honestly and accurately as possible. At the end of each week, please visit our website and transfer this information to our electronic form.

Record for Week Beginning: _____

<i>Intrinsic Value Strategies</i>	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Comments
Provided interest enhancing activities, anecdotes, games, challenges, etc. that linked to the instructional objectives.						
Provided variety and choices for learning and/or showing mastery of the content.						
Provided optimally challenging learning activities.						
Used preassessment to match instruction to the student's current levels of academic functioning.						
Provided opportunities for active learning opportunities.						
Provided opportunities for immediate feedback.						
Enthusiastically presented content and treated students as eager learners.						
<i>Attainment Value Strategies</i>	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Comments
Provided students with opportunities to engage in authentic, significant tasks.						
Provided students with opportunities with tasks that are personally meaningful to the student.						
Provided students with models who value academic achievement.						

Utility Value Strategies	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Comments
Explained the purpose of the lesson/assignments.						
Connected learning to students' current wants and/or future goals and aspirations.						
Showed the real world applications/ ramifications of the concepts covered in class.						
Shared personal stories about how others have used the knowledge or skills we are learning.						
Invited a parent, student, or community member to share how they use information from your course.						
Related learning activities to the objectives of the course.						
Developed connections between prior knowledge, current learning, and future uses.						
Rewards						
Provided student with an opportunity to obtain a reward for reaching a specific instructional goal.						
Individual Conferences: Circle the date the conference was held and record the length of time	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Time:
Used constructive confrontation techniques.						
Used active listening techniques.						
Completed the assigned session activities.						
Completed the assigned worksheets with the student.						
Helped student to clarify academic goals.						
Helped student to make plans to achieve academic goals.						

[Close Window](#)

For all course pages to print correctly please follow these steps:

For Microsoft Internet Explorer:

IE typically is not set to print background color or images, including table cell colors. To get the table cells colored backgrounds and images to print, click on the browser's Tools menu. Select Internet Options, then click on the Advanced tab. Scroll down to find the Printing heading and check the box called Print Background Colors and Images. This setting affects both page backgrounds and table cell backgrounds.

For Netscape Navigator:

Netscape seems to always print colored table cells either with colors or shading, depending on your printer. But you can separately control whether it will print the page background color or image. Click on the File menu, then select Page Setup, and then in the Page Options section, check Print Backgrounds to include the page background in your printout.