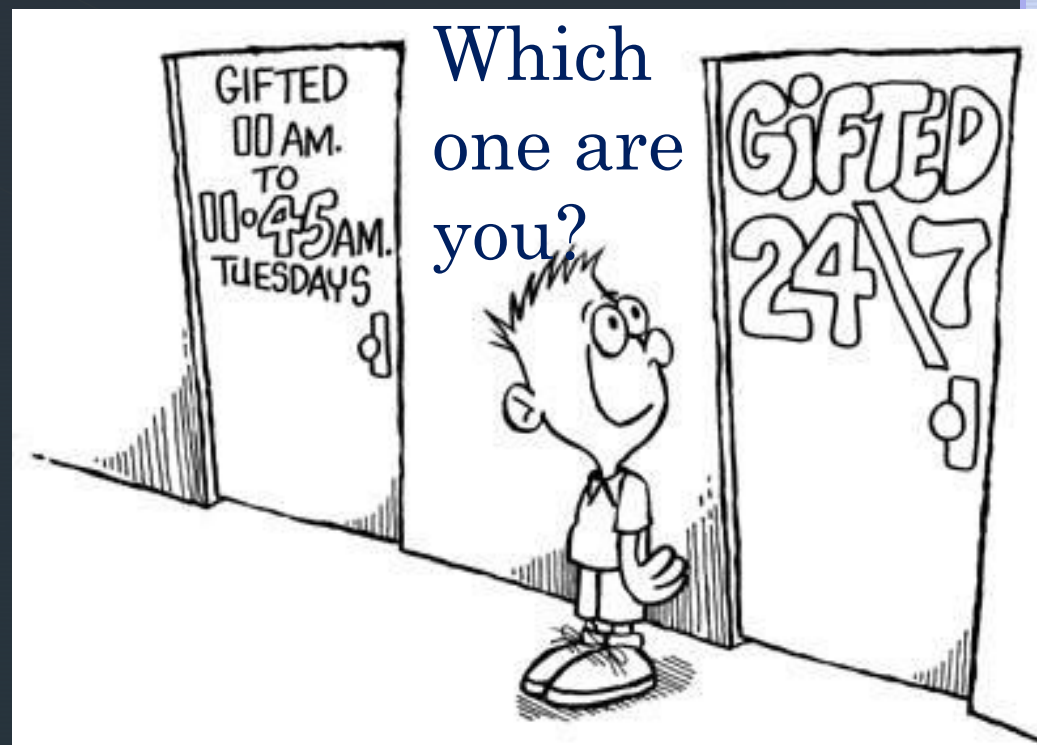


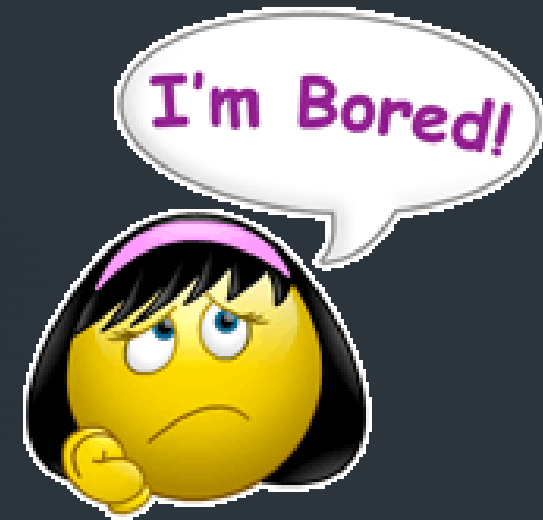
UNDERACHIEVING GIFTED STUDENTS



Stephanie Kobetitsch

What I KNOW – or think I KNOW

- Sometimes gifted students get bored and disinterested so they don't perform as well as they could in school.
- Most underachieving gifted students are girls – trying to fit in with their peers. (Support comes from a previous assignment)
- Underachieving students want others to not try their best too. (I found no support for this item.)
- Underachievers put in little effort because their interest lies elsewhere.



What I Learned

Sometimes gifted students get bored and disinterested so they don't perform as well as they could in school.

- Gifted students have a low perceived value and importance in school learning. (Video: *Gifted Education: Underachievement*)
- The underachievement may be based on the school's inability to offer challenging courses. (article- "*Underachievement in Gifted and Talented Students with Special Needs*")
- A traditional school environment may not provide the right setting and the student may become disengaged. (article- "*Underachievement in Gifted and Talented Students with Special Needs*")



What I Learned

Most underachieving gifted students are girls – trying to fit in with their peers.

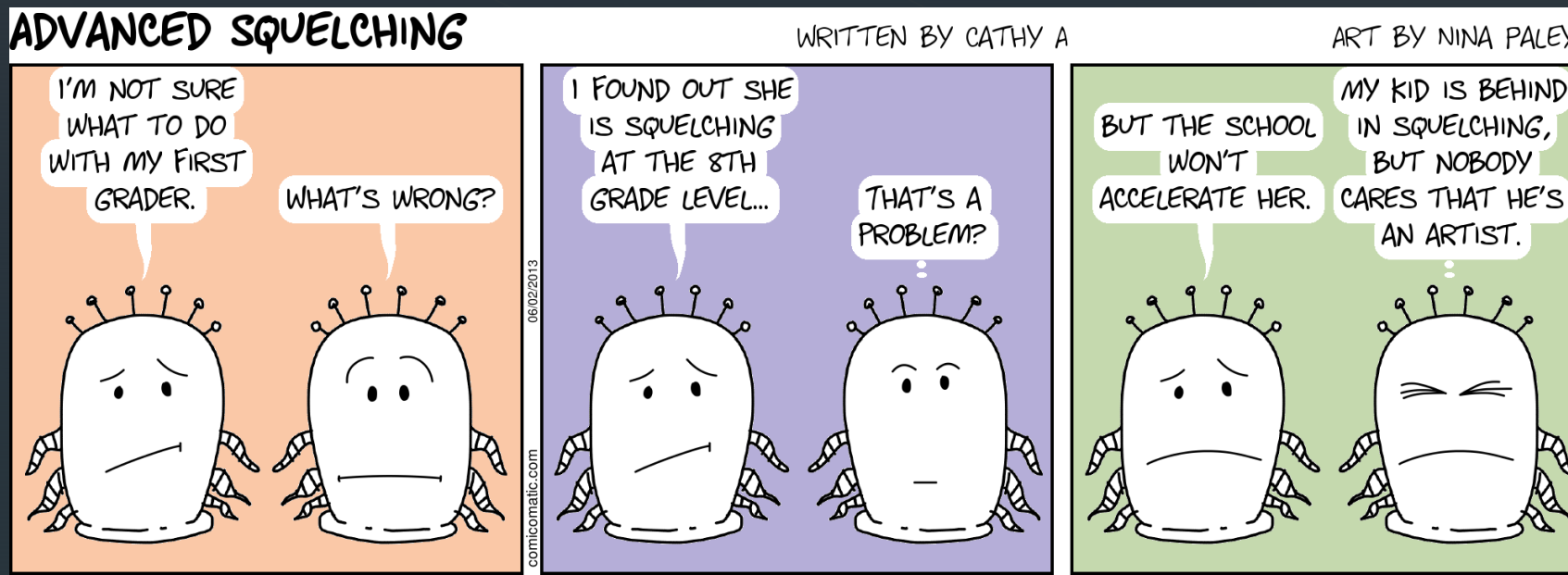
Usually in middle school, the need to fit in takes over and gifted girls may change their academic behavior to blend in with their peer group. This may look like a sudden and dramatic change to parents and teachers. (article- “*Profiles of the Gifted and Talented*” by Betts, G., Neihart M.)



What I Learned

Underachievers put in little effort because their interest lies elsewhere.

- Sometimes gifted students are not representing themselves academically, but outside of school they are excelling. For example, they are thriving in sports, music, or another hobby. (Video 2- *Gifted Education: Underachievement*)
- Underachievement is content and situation specific- it's based on what & when they are learning . (article – *Underachieving Gifted Students* by Carol Bainbridge)



What I WANT to Know

How do I motivate an underachieving gifted student?



"GIFTED CLASS, INDEED! ONE IS GIFTED IN SCIENCE, BUT CAN'T READ — ONE IS GIFTED IN READING, BUT WON'T EVEN TRY MATH..."

What I Learned

To motivate an underachieving student is to not let them become an underachieving student! To do this, schools need identify gifted children early and hook them with a rich educational experience that crosses all subjects. (article "*What in the World is a Gifted Underachiever?*")

STRATEGIES

- provide appropriately challenging academic activities (differentiation is key)
 - avoid attaching the "UA" label to a student
 - focus on & praise students' strengths
 - Nurture self-esteem and a positive self-perception
 - establish realistic expectations
 - understand that the definition of UA varies with each person
 - put failure into perspective; less than 100% success does not equal failure
 - put the child in charge of his/her own education
 - daily/weekly/monthly written contracts of work to be completed
 - reward system for attempting or completing work
 - verbal praise for self-initiating behaviors
 - peer tutoring of other students in areas of strength
- (Video 2- *Gifted Education: Underachievement*)

What I WANT to Know

How do I know if a student is underachieving or if that's their actual level?



What I Learned

“There is no explicit threshold we use to determine that a child is or is not an underachiever.” Josh Shaine

Gifted students are usually the ones we all love, the underachiever may go unnoticed. It's important to identify them early and keep them interested! (article “*What in the World is a Gifted Underachiever?*”)

What I WANT to Know

How many underachieving students are actually Gifted – just not recognized as Gifted?



"Mr. Wickers called me 'gifted' in front of the whole class. I'm ruined."

What I Learned

“Research has estimated that about **HALF** of all identified gifted students do not perform well academically (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1984; Richert, 1991). This estimate does not include the thousands of gifted who remain unidentified because of underachievement or because of other factors such as poverty, cultural difference (Peterson, 1999), geographic isolation, or learning disabilities.” It’s shocking to think that there are that many unidentified gifted students not receiving the challenging courses they deserve. (article- *Meeting the Needs of Gifted Underachievers- Individually!* by J. Smutney)

What I WANT to Know

What is an indicator that the student is underachieving?



"My teacher says I'm an underachiever, but I think she's an overexpecter."

What I Learned

There are characteristics of an UA-

- low self-perceived academic ability
- negative attitudes toward school, teachers, and/or classes
- poor self-management and low motivation
- low perceived value and importance in school learning
- more socially immature; lack self-discipline
- unpopular with peers & have fewer friends
- resistant to influence from teachers or parents
- may become withdrawn in classroom situations

(Video 2- *Gifted Education: Underachievement*)

► I Learned:

“Researchers estimate that between **18-25% of gifted students drop out** without graduating from high school – due to disengagement.” (article “*What in the World is a Gifted Underachiever?*” by Jill Williford Wurman)

“Early career guidance emphasizing creative problem solving, decision making, and setting short- and long-term goals often helps them to complete required assignments, pass high school courses, and plan for college (Berger, 1989). Providing real-world experiences in an area of potential career interest may also provide inspiration and motivation toward academic achievement.” (article – “*Underachieving Gifted Students*” by Carol Bainbridge)

▾ I Learned Strategies:

- **Supportive Strategies.** Creating a nurturing and supportive class environment will help students to stay engaged in their education. Holding a class meeting weekly or monthly to express concerns; design engaging curriculum based on students interests and needs; allowing students to skip areas where they have shown mastery. (article – “*Underachieving Gifted Students*” by Carol Bainbridge)
- **Intrinsic Strategies.** Positive attitudes are praised and words of encouragement are given for effort and attempts. Students have input on class rules as well as projects. Students peer and self evaluate work prior to teacher grading. (article – “*Underachieving Gifted Students*” by Carol Bainbridge)
- **Remedial Strategies.** Teachers recognize that all kids are not created equal. They all have individual strengths and weaknesses. Students are given the opportunity to excel in areas of strength and get help with a challenge. (article – “*Underachieving Gifted Students*” by Carol Bainbridge)

What I KNOW

Sometimes what you think you know, and what is TRUE are different from each other. I'm so glad I was able to research some of my "knowledge".

What I WANT to Know

As a lifelong learner, this list varies over time, however, having the opportunity to research Gifted underachievers has been eye-opening!

What I LEARNED

This list will continue to grow... 😊

