
Current Conditions

Your Aspiration Communication

“When I talk with a student about her future I am more interested in who she is going to be, than in what she is going to do.”

–Russell J. Quaglia

“What are you doing this summer?” Near the end of the school year, most students and teachers can answer this question about their future. Summer camps, vacations, work, hanging out with friends, attending summer school are all part of a person’s summer schedule. Perhaps a more meaningful question in June is: “Who are you going to be this summer?” Having a sense of purpose for the warmer weather is as much about *who we are* while loafing, learning, and laboring as it is about the activities themselves. Help students add purpose to their summer by asking who will be a good friend at camp, who will think of others while on vacation, and who will take on the challenge of summer learning with a positive attitude and sense of accountability. Having purpose is as much about who we are as it is about what we do.

PURPOSE

A sense of purpose includes a clear intention, commitment to that intention, and thinking beyond the self.

8 Strategies for a Purposeful Summer

- ✓ Invite a new person along on a summer adventure.
- ✓ Listen attentively to another’s plans for the summer.
- ✓ Volunteer to help clean up a local park.
- ✓ Discover a new interest or hobby.
- ✓ Ask questions and wonder about places you visit.
- ✓ Welcome experiences outside your comfort zone.
- ✓ Take initiative when friends say they are bored.
- ✓ Show people who you are through your actions.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- ◆ How do I convey who I am to my students?
- ◆ How can I encourage students to think about purpose?

E-mail your Aspirations stories, thoughts, or ideas to qisa@qisa.org

Aspirations in Action

What accounts for the difference between a student who talks about goals and one who actually reaches them? What makes the difference between a student who works hard at every-day tasks and one whose hard work leads to a promising future? The difference is in the student's aspirations—his or her *ability to set goals and think about the future while being inspired in the present to reach those goals*. As the definition suggests, there are essentially two pieces of the aspirations puzzle: dreaming and doing.

QISA believes today's schools need to foster student aspirations by encouraging students to be both dreamers and doers. We can all think of students who have lofty dreams but don't put forth the necessary effort to reach those dreams. On the flip side we all know students who put forth effort and work hard every day, but have no real goals for the future to work towards. Presenting yet another challenge are those students who don't think about the future at all and don't put forth effort in anything. It is only when students *dream and do* that they are able to reach their fullest potential.

The Aspirations Profile

In order to help schools and educators foster student aspirations, QISA has developed The Aspirations Profile which presents a visual model of the behaviors that support and hinder success. The Aspirations Profile has two dimensions: Dreaming and Doing. Within the dimensions are four categories: *Hibernation, Perspiration, Imagination and Determination*. These categories help us better understand the specific challenges of fostering aspirations with different students.

Aspirations Profile

High	Imagination Sets goals for the future but does not put forth the effort to reach those goals	Determination Sets goals for future and puts forth effort in the present to reach those goals
Dreaming	Hibernation Has no goals for the future and puts in no effort in the present	Perspiration Works hard in the present, but has no goals for the future
Low	Low	High

The Aspirations Profile is designed to provide a simple framework for understanding the patterns of behavior that impact students' ability to reach their hopes and dreams. If educators have a clearer sense of where students fit into the Aspirations Profile, they may find it easier to provide opportunities that help students reach their fullest potential. Today's educational system *can* help all students become dreamers and doers. Educators can help all students strive for, and reach, the *Determination* category. Schools, classrooms, and co-curricular programs must ensure that every student has the self-worth to succeed, is actively engaged in the learning process, and has a sense of purpose not only to make a difference in their own life, but in the world around them.

For more on The Aspirations Profile visit www.qisa.org/aspirations.php