Webinar 2: The Hidden Power of Grit and Self-Control

Presented by:
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Participants will:
- Learn the importance of grit, self-control and deliberate practice for academic success
- Become aware of goal-setting and planning techniques that are more likely to cultivate self-control and produce goal attainment

"...academic tenacity is about working hard, and working smart, for a long time. More specifically, academic tenacity is about the mindset and skills that allow students to:
- look beyond short-term concerns to longer-term goals.
- withstand challenges and setbacks to persevere toward these goals."

(Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014)
How Do We Promote Academic Tenacity?

PART I:
- Mindset

PART II:
- Grit and Self-Control
  - Goal setting
  - Mental contrasting with implementation intentions
  - Deliberate practice

PART III:
- Optimism and Resilience

Growth Mindset
- Value learning over looking smart or being right
- Believe in effort as a virtue
- Are resilient in the face of setback
- Welcome new challenges

Fixed Mindset
- Value looking smart over the process of learning
- Believe effort indicates low ability
- View setbacks as evidence of inability
- Less likely to welcome challenges

Mindset Summary
- Be aware of your own mindset
- Be careful to praise effort, strategy or process as opposed to talent or intelligence
- Celebrate mistakes
- Teach children about the brain
- Use the word “yet”
- Encourage self-reflection
- Consider using student mentors to reinforce these concepts with other students
Thinking
- It begins with a growth mindset
- Students need to think of themselves in certain ways to want to learn and to learn successfully

Self-Regulation
- They need to regulate themselves in ways that promote learning

(Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014)

Perseverance and passion for long-term goals
- Being gritty means:
  - Finishing what you start
  - Staying committed to your goals
  - Working hard even after experiencing failure or when you feel like quitting
  - Staying the course for more than a few weeks

(A. L. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007)

Ability alone does not bring about success in any field
- Grit is more predictive than IQ in academic performance
  - Smarter students may be less gritty
- Research at West Point Military Academy
- National Spelling Bee Research

(A. L. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007)
(A. L. Duckworth & Seligman, 2005)
Strategy #1: Encourage Students to Dream Big

- Ask students: “What kind of adult would you like to be?” “What is your wish?”
- Provide exposure to various careers and activities.
  - Not the sole responsibility of the guidance counselor
  - Make connections between students and mentors, coaches, and role models
- Offer examples of people who succeeded but had to struggle to achieve success.
- Student research / presentations

http://characterlab.org/character/grit/

“If your dreams are big enough, you can see past your circumstances.”

– Dr. John Hodge

Dream Boards

Materials you need:
- A piece of posterboard
- A picture of yourself
- Three things you can see up front
- Three things you can dream of

Courtesy of Ed Gerety:
https://app.box.com/s/1pgd1q66kh84yt1ka
In what ways do you currently provide exposure to various careers and activities?

Strategy #2: Connections between Academics and Long-Term Goals

- 2009 study:
  - Intervention with high schools students
  - Intended to show relevance of science to their lives
- Results:
  - Intervention group expressed more interest in science
  - Earned higher grades

*Important note: gains in grades ONLY seen when students came up with the reasons themselves*

Chef

- Math?
- Science?
- Language Arts?
- Social Studies?
- Other?
Forensic Investigator

Video Discussion

• What is one thing that Dr. Duckworth said that resonated with you?
• Describe the components of effective feedback.
• When do you think that kids should be allowed to quit an activity?

Self-Control vs. Grit

• Grit deals - perseverance in pursuit of long-term goals
• Self-control - the ability to resist the “hourly temptation” and control impulses in the short-term
• The “marshmallow studies”
Other Benefits of Self-Control

- Self-control measured during first decade of life predicts the following in adulthood:
  - Income
  - Savings behavior
  - Financial security
  - Physical and mental health
  - Substance use/abuse
  - Criminal convictions

(Moffitt et al., 2011)

“Even Einstein wasn’t Einstein before he put in years of passionate, relentless effort.”

(Dweck, 2010)

Strategy #2: Talk about Deliberate Practice

- Vast majority of exceptional adults were never child prodigies (as cited in Ericsson & Charness, 1994)
- Expert performance is acquired SLOWLY over a very long period as a result of deliberate practice (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993)
- 10,000 hour rule (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993)
Strategy #3: Talk about Deliberate Practice

- Characteristics of deliberate practice:
  - Focus on weakness; challenge exceeds current skill
  - Repetition
  - Includes immediate and informative feedback
  - Feels difficult; highly effortful
  - Keep trying; look for new methods
  - Stay focused – limit distractions and avoid multitasking

(Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Romer, 1993)

Deliberate Practice Activity

- "I used to be a varsity basketball player in high school. I wasn’t recruited by the colleges I wanted to play for, and wasn’t drafted by the first two NBA teams that could have chosen me. I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost more than 300 games. On an occasion I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot, and I missed. I have failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

- "Deliberate Practice Activity"

- "I struggled for nine years before I had a successful album. Several albums flopped and I was dropped by mainstream label Columbia Records. People often think of me as an overnight sensation because they didn’t see the years of hard work, rejection, and dedication it took to make it."

- "People don’t understand that when I grew up, I was never the most talented. I was never the biggest. I was never the fastest. I certainly was never the strongest. The only thing I had was my work ethic and that’s how I got to where I am today."

- "I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance."

- "Began playing a six-string guitar at age 12 and practiced four hours a day, six days a week. My parents raised me in a Soviet-like culture. I was entitled to success."

- "I don’t think you can ever wake up and expect you’re going to succeed that day without having put in a lot of work. I think that’s kind of part of being a work ethic. It’s always feeling like you’re never really done."

- "Genius is 1% talent and 99% percent hard work..."
Faced a hard road, enduring a rough and often abusive childhood, as well as numerous career setbacks… "The big secret to life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you’re willing to work."

"People often ask me if I know the secret of success and if I could tell others how to make their dreams come true. My answer is, you do it by working. The difference in winning and losing is most often… not quitting."

"Something worth having is worth putting all of yourself into it. Practice, rehearsal, working on it when no one’s looking. Anything I’ve done well has taken many, many hours of preparation. And then the trick, of course, is making that work look invisible."

"There are plenty of things I’m deficient at. I’ve never been the fastest, never had the best arm, and never been very strong. I was never the best player on any team. That taught me how to work harder. A lot of times I find people who are blessed with the most talent don’t ever develop that attitude, and the ones who aren’t blessed in that way are the most competitive and have the biggest heart."

"I’ve never really viewed myself as particularly talented but where I excel is ridiculous, sickening work ethic. While the other guy is sleeping, I’m working. While the other guy is eating, I’m working."

Let’s “Chat”

What do you think would be most surprising for kids if you replicated this activity with them? Why?

Strategy #4: Goal-Setting

- Start with the students’ “North Star” (or future self)
- Break that down into a manageable SMART goal
  - Start with one written goal
  - S.M.A.R.T.
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Attainable
    - Relevant
    - Time-Bound
S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- **Specific**
  - What is it that you want to accomplish?
  - Should be well defined

- Poor example: I will lose some weight.
- Better example: I will lose 5 lbs. by June 1st.

- **Measurable**
  - How will you know when it has been achieved?
  - Results should be observable and quantifiable

- Poor example: I will be more motivated in school.
- Better example: I will complete all of my homework as soon as I get home from school.

- **Attainable**
  - Can the goal be reached with the available resources?
  - Should require you to stretch beyond normal abilities and routine but allow for likely success.
S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- Relevant
  - Should take you one step closer to your wish.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- Time-bound
  - Should state the time in which the goal will be accomplished.

SMART Goals

- Not Specific: I want to make good grades.
  - Grades: I want to have a 93 average in science by May 22, 2017.

- Not Measurable: I want to make a lot of free throws.
  - Current: I want to make 9 out of 10 free throws in tonight's game.

- Not Achievable: I will make 100 free throws in tonight's game.

- Reasonable: I want to learn 50 new vocabulary words in the 1st quarter.

- Time-bound: I will dance around for 20 minutes to be a better reader.
  - Timeline: I will read for 20 minutes per night for 1 week to build my reading time.

- Not Time-bound: I want to learn to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" by June 30th.
1. To study harder
2. To get a 4.0 fall semester GPA
3. To become a better student
4. To maximize my study time each day before social activities
5. To improve my next test grade in Biology by one letter grade
6. To join a club
7. To locate and research at least five possible summer jobs by the end of April

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Activity

Turn each of the following non-S.M.A.R.T. goals into S.M.A.R.T. goals

Goal: I'll bring my math grade up this year.

New Goal: ____________________________

Get S.M.A.R.T.
Get S.M.A.R.T

- Goal: I’ll show up to school on time.
- New Goal: ____________________

Get S.M.A.R.T

- Goal: I’ll get involved in more extracurricular activities.
- New Goal: ____________________

Strategy #5: Goal Planning

- Mental Contrasting with Implementation Intentions (MCII)
  - Thinking about the goals AND the obstacles that could stand in the way (MC)
  - Developing a plan that details when, where and how the individual will take action (II)
  - People with plans are more likely to get started and stay on track
  - Combined strategy improves ability to attain goals

(A. L. Duckworth et al., 2009)
(A. Gollwitzer et al., 2011)
(C. Gawrilow et al., 2011)
(Angela L. Duckworth, Kirby, Gollwitzer, & Dettlinger, 2013)
Goal Planning Steps

- Start with a wish
- Visualize best outcome
- Write one SMART goal that can be started in the next week
- Develop a plan of action
  - “When......, then......”

Examples of Implementation Intentions (II)

- My Wish: To be thinner
  - Best outcome: I would feel more confident.
  - SMART goal: I will lose 5 lbs. by June 1st.
  - Action plan:
    - **When** I get home from work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, **then** I will put on my sneakers right away and get on the treadmill for twenty minutes.

Examples of Implementation Intentions (II)

- My Wish: To go to college
  - Best outcome: I would get a college degree and a good job doing something I like.
  - SMART goal: I will raise my GPA from a 3.0 to a 3.2 by the end of the year.
  - Action plan:
    - **When** I am done with dinner each night, **then** I will complete my homework at my desk in my bedroom.
Goal Planning Steps

- Start with a wish
- Visualize best outcome
- Write one SMART goal that can be started in the next week
- Develop a plan of action
  - “When….., then…..”
- Think about the biggest obstacle
- Develop a plan to deal with the obstacle
  - “If (obstacle)….., then (action)…..”

Examples of Mental Contrasting (MC)

- My Wish: To be thinner
- Best outcome: I would feel more confident.
- SMART goal: I will lose 5 lbs. by June 1st.
- Action plan:
  - When I get home from work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, then I will put on my sneakers right away and get on the treadmill for twenty minutes.
  - Contingency Plan:
    - If I feel unmotivated to exercise, then I will put on some music to get me going.

- My Wish: To go to college
- Best outcome: I would get a college degree and a good job doing something I like.
- SMART goal: I will raise my GPA from a 3.0 to a 3.2 by the end of the year.
- Action plan:
  - When I am done with dinner each night, then I will complete my homework at my desk in my bedroom.
  - Contingency plan:
    - If I get distracted by my phone, then I will turn it off until my homework is done.
Goal Planning Activity

Goal Planning

- My Wish: To become a doctor
- Best outcome: I would be able to help people and make a lot of money.
- SMART goal: I will raise my math grade from a B to an A by the end of the marking period.
- Action plan:
  - When ___________________, then ___________________.

Obstacles

- What might be some common obstacles that a student will encounter when working on this goal?
- What strategies could they use to overcome this obstacle?
- Contingency plan:
  - If ___________________, then ___________________.

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Goal Planning Tips for Kids

- Focus on one goal at a time
- Check your progress weekly
  - Is my plan working?
  - Do I need to make adjustments?
  - Do I need help? From whom?
- Adjust the goal, the strategy or the “if-then” statement if necessary
- Stay focused – avoid distractions
- When the goal has been reached and practiced consistently, set a new one
- Keep the goal worksheet in a visible location

Grit Summary

- Encourage students to dream big
- Help students make connections between academics and their long-term goals
- Teach students how to write goals
- Talk about deliberate practice with students
- Help students make plans to achieve their goals
  - Ensure that their plans incorporate deliberate practice
- Make time each week to check on goal progress
Issues to Consider

- What happens when you can't find your passion (or you have too many)?
- Multipotentialites
- Consider the tasks of adolescence

- Let’s “Chat”
  - Does our culture value breadth or depth of knowledge?

Let’s “Chat”

In what ways can we promote a balance of grit and creativity?

Planning Ahead

- What is one thing you learned today that you can incorporate immediately with your students?

- What is one thing you will work on implementing in the near future with your students?
Resources

- https://characterlab.org/resources/grit


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