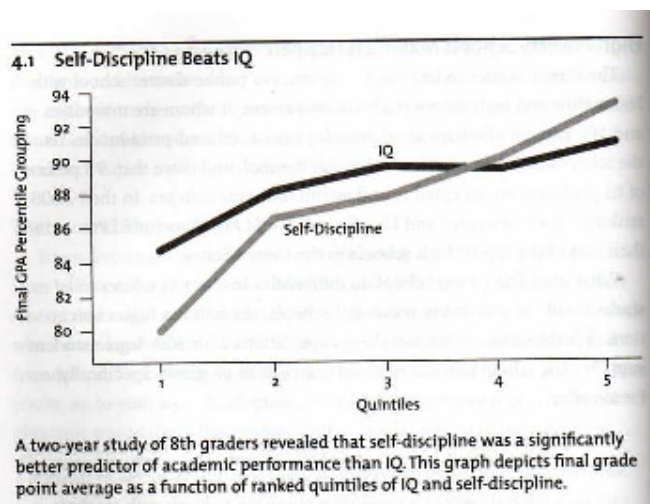


Ms. THROWER'S "CHAMPS" MINDSET

Often in school, students ask “why do we have to learn this?” or “is this important?”. In a Civics and Economics class, the answer to these questions is an obvious...YES! Economics is the basic psychology behind how individuals make choices and decisions (good or bad) and Civics is the understanding of how each of us can make ourselves better and smarter to function in this society and our communities. But most of this course and other classes in school go much deeper than just the “facts” you are learning on any given day. For most teenagers, all the skills they need to survive happily in life are taught in a combination of the home and their public school years. This means for many of you, you only have a couple more years to take in as many life skill building experiences as possible before you are out in the “real world” and expected to function as a healthy adult.

School isn't just “fact learning”. The more you learn about the skills school tries to teach, the better you will be at handling the complex and rigorous challenges that school and life will throw at you. This process can be thought of as “learning”, but I prefer “enrichment”. Keep in mind, HOW you enrich your brain depends on a lot more than just “smarts”. **Studies show that people who are the most successful in life are better at self discipline than those who may be considered just “smart”.** As you can see by the chart below, your level of self discipline is a better predictor of how well you will do in school than an IQ test!



What makes up “self discipline”? This quality can be broken down into 6 simple characteristics that all of us have on some level. The strength of these qualities in YOU depends on many factors. Many of these came from our upbringing. In your teenage years, these skills come more from what you learn in school, in the classroom and out. While all my students will have different levels of these skills, the work you do every day in this class will help increase these qualities in you, which in turn will help you achieve the self discipline you need to be successful in life! How can you increase these characteristics to ensure YOUR future success?

The six skills to enhance can be remembered with the acronym CHAMPS:

Champion's Mindset: Students with a “champion’s mindset” demonstrate an attitude of success and are confident that they can learn new information and behaviors. How to strengthen?...reading or watching biographies of successful people and observing optimism and drive in their actions. In school, constantly take note of students that you know are successful and watch what habits they exhibit.

Hopeful Effort: Students who demonstrate hopeful effort have the ability to delay gratification and have the emotional drive to achieve. How to strengthen?...goal setting (large and small) and using good study skills (like reviewing notes 2-4 times a week).

Attention skills: Students with attention skills possess the ability to stay focused, can see detail in what they are learning, and can resist making impulsive decisions. How to strengthen?...project based learning, asking questions, theater arts, reading, music training, limit multi-tasking (using that cell phone while trying to pay attention to learning literally “re-wires” your brain to decrease your attention span).

Memory: Students with good short term and working memory have high visual and verbal capacity. How to strengthen?...reading, music, drama, sports plays, mind puzzles (concentration!)

Processing Skills: Students with strong processing skills are able to manipulate and manage visual, auditory, and tactile sensory input. How to strengthen?...music, cooking, writing, visual arts, sports, and critical thinking and debate (you will get a lot of critical thinking opportunities in this class!)

Sequencing Skills: Students with strong sequencing skills are organized and able to prioritize tasks. How to build this skill?...cooking, sports, math, keeping an agenda/notebook, keeping a budget.

By taking advantage of all the ways you can increase your CHAMPS brain, you set yourself on a path for success in life! These qualities all make up part of what psychologists sometimes call the “emotional keyboard.” Many of these “keys” are hardwired from birth, but many more have to be taught. If you were at a disadvantage learning any of these skills in the home, it is especially important you make use of these opportunities NOW while you are in school. Ask yourself: “How have these been taught to me?” If yes, HOW were these taught to you?

