

The Importance of Time Management and Self-management Skills for Students

Agadzhanova Radmila Mykhailivna,
Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics/
Department of Pedagogy, Foreign Philology and Translation, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Abstract. The article is devoted to the importance of time management and self-management skills for students. It analyses the peculiarities and benefits of time management and self-management. It also considers different ways that help students gain control over time to maximize intellectual productivity. It is pointed out that time management and self-management skills ensure that students use their time effectively for successful study.

Key words: self-management, skills, study, time management.

Time management constitutes one of the most traditional topics in the field of learning and study strategies, occupying a central position in the courses and numerous handbooks on study skills. One of the most frequent complaints made by students about their teachers is that they do not have enough time to carry out all the tasks assigned to them in the different academic areas. The students usually point out that there are many classes, projects, reading assignments, exam preparations and etc. that require constant dedication over a long period of time. In trying to read all the books and chapter assigned, meet paper deadlines and participate in extracurricular activities students may become overwhelmed with feelings that there is not enough time to complete all their work adequately.

It is a matter of common knowledge that students' time is a limited resource. Like other limited resources, time can be more or less effectively managed. The aim of this article is the analysis of the importance of time management and self-management skills for students. To begin with, it is necessary to mention that time management is defined as "behaviours that aim at achieving an effective

use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities". Time management refers to activities that imply an effective use of time that is deemed to facilitate productivity. Conceptually, time management is a set of habits or learnable behaviours that may be acquired through increased knowledge, training or deliberate practice [5].

Time management has some benefits including:

1. Reduce procrastination. If you schedule specific periods of time to complete activities, you will be less likely to put tasks off until tomorrow.

2. Gain more control, less stress. Good time management means not waiting until the last minute and rushing to complete assignments.

3. Complete more tasks. Being a good time manager means that you can complete more tasks and be more successful in what you do. If you set priorities and reassess your progress, you can ensure that you spend sufficient time on your academic activities.

4. Enjoy your free time. Knowing that you have completed your assignments and met your deadlines can make you feel less guilty about taking off some time for yourself.

It should be noted that time management can be seen as "self-management", the skill of making smart decisions about how to allocate your time in order to accomplish set goals: it is about working "smart" and not just "hard"; strategically determining how you use your time in order to succeed [5].

Time management includes setting goals, meeting deadlines, using time management aids such as list making, coping with change, making plans, and effectively organizing one's time.

Britton and Glynn described a simple theoretical model of time-management practices intended to maximize intellectual productivity. The model specifies several time management

components: choosing goals and subgoals, prioritizing the goals, generating tasks and subtasks from the goals, prioritizing the tasks, listing the tasks on a "to-do" list, scheduling the tasks, and then carrying out the tasks [1].

In general, studies demonstrate that time management as well as self-management skills can be trained. Although there is enough time in the day to complete all the things you want to do, it requires making conscious choices and prioritizing tasks. Therefore, different universities inform their students about the importance of time management and self-management skills.

To begin with, let us consider ten time management tips for students proposed by Central Michigan University.

1. **"To-do" lists** are one of the most effective ways to stay on track. Record all the things you need to accomplish then focus on completing one task at a time. Don't forget to reward yourself for a job well done once tasks have been successfully completed.

2. **Prioritize tasks** on your "to-do" list to ensure the most critical and time-sensitive ones are completed first.

3. **Eliminate distractions** so your attention is devoted to the task at hand. You'll finish tasks and move on to the next ones more quickly while paying more attention to details. So clean off your desktop, close unneeded windows on your computer, put your phone on silent, and turn off the TV.

4. **Develop an anti-procrastination plan** that stops you from putting off until tomorrow what you can accomplish today. Create a calendar with all your deadlines and due dates so you can see the big picture. Then create your daily "to-do" list from this. Break down large, daunting tasks into smaller ones that can quickly be achieved – before you know it, the larger task will be done.

5. **Set a study schedule**, and stick to it. Set aside time each day for your studies and let your friends, family, and colleagues know when this is, so it goes uninterrupted. More or less study time may be needed depending on your familiarity with the subject matter and your own unique learning style.

6. **Time wasters.** It is vital to be aware of time wasters or they will consume your valuable time. Surfing the internet, watching TV, gaming, and browsing social media sites are all notorious time wasters. Use these as rewards once your "to-do" list

has been completed. Keep your "to-do" list close by to help you stay focused and on task.

7. **Organization is a great time saver.** Create a filing system, with clear, logical categories, that allows you to quickly find a needed document. The less time you spend hunting something down, the more time you have for completing important tasks.

8. **Use downtime to your advantage** by always having something on hand to do. Access your eBook and read a chapter during your lunch break, study your notes while waiting at the doctor's office, or review your "to-do" list from your mobile device.

9. **Find your "productive time zone"** by identifying the time of day you feel your best. Take advantage of this energy and schedule your "class time" as close to it as possible. Be sure to keep your productivity levels up by taking regularly scheduled breaks.

10. **Create a time budget** by determining how much time you spend on activities, whether they are for your job, family commitments, household chores, or school work. Determining the amount of time you spend in these areas will ensure enough time is allocated for these items and, in turn, help you decide if free time is available for any additional commitments [4].

Using time effectively is important for successful study but it is equally important professionally and socially. Thus, it is necessary to use the time available in the most appropriate way for you. In University of Greenwich they recommend students should think about the four different kinds of time that influence our lives. They believe it is a good way to gain control over time. In this way it becomes easier to see exactly just how much disposable time we have to spend on study, for example.

1. **Inflexible time.** What immovable events take place in a week/month/term? When are the times in a week/term that cannot be negotiated or avoided and when study simply cannot be done?

2. **Appropriate time.** When do you have time to work effectively? Are there specific days/evenings when it is possible to spend a decent amount of time on a task? When do you have the largest blocks of free time to spend on study? It often takes us a while to get ready to work. Once we do get started it is important to keep going rather than waste this preparation time by finishing too soon.

3. **Personal time.** When do you actually work best at specific tasks? Can you identify your best time for serious academic work? Some people work better in the morning or afternoon. We are all very different and

to work effectively we need to optimise our time. Some parts of the day may only be suitable to fairly mechanical tasks such as bibliographical work, writing up notes, searching the net and the library. Other parts of the day are when we are more alert and better able to think, structure and argue. Try to use the time available in the most appropriate way for you.

4. Negotiated time. When we live with others or have a social life it is important to negotiate with these friends and family members. Studying within a family context, for example, involves an implicit contract that those others in the house will support you in a variety of ways [2].

Considering the peculiarities of self-management, The University of Kansas focuses on **self-management plans which are used to teach students to independently complete tasks and take an active role in monitoring and reinforcing their own behaviour.**

An important goal in education is to foster self-reliance and independence. In fact, self-management strategies can be implemented before any problem behaviours occur. Research studies show that self-management strategies can be used to improve academic performance, productivity, time on-task, and to decrease problem behavior. The ability to use self-management strategies effectively is a skill that becomes very important for success. The critical elements of self-management include setting goals, monitoring behaviour, and evaluating progress. Examples of self-management include self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. When a student engages in self-monitoring, he observes his own behaviour, records its occurrence on a data collection form, and graphs the data to evaluate progress. Self-evaluation strategies encourage students to set their own goals and compare their current

performance as they work towards those goals. Both self-monitoring and self-evaluation are often used with self-reinforcement strategies. A student takes an active role in self-reinforcement strategies by determining how he will evaluate progress towards a goal and delivering a reinforcer to himself when he achieves the goal [3].

It is clear that time management and self-management strategies focus on fostering students' independence and the ability to engage in self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. In addition, the power of time management and self-management is their emphasis on building a feeling of control over one's own time and behaviour.

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Author

Agadzhanova Radmila Mykhailivna, Senior Lecturer, Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics (radmila132@gmail.com).

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