A WEB-BASED ACT PROGRAM TO REDUCE PROCRASTINATION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: RESULTS FROM A PILOT STUDY

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WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION?

- The voluntary delay of important activity, despite expecting potential negative consequences that outweigh the positive consequences of the delay.

Klingsieck (2013) ; Steel (2007)

A COMMON PROBLEM

- **80% to 95%** of university students engage in procrastinatory behaviors.

- **50%** of university students consider their tendency to postpone academic tasks to be problematic.

- For **20%** of students, this problem is chronic.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROCRASTINATION

- Procrastination is linked to many problems:

  – Lower grades (Kim & Seo, 2015).

  – Anxiety (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000).

  – Psychological health problems (Ferrari & Díaz-Morales, 2014).

AVOIDING DISCOMFORT?

Ciarrochi & Mercer (2006)

ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- Past studies have found support for the use of ACT processes in the prediction of academic procrastination:

  – Committed action (Gagnon, Dionne, Pychyl, 2016).

  – Psychological inflexibility (Glick et al., 2014).

ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- ACT-based interventions in the treatment of academic procrastination have shown promising results:

  – In reducing procrastination (Dionne et al., 2016; Scent & Boes, 2014; Wang et al., 2015).

  – In increasing mindfulness (Dionne et al., 2016).

  – In increasing psychological flexibility (Scent & Boes, 2014).

ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- Compared to a CBT intervention, an ACT intervention produced a greater reduction of procrastination at three months follow-up (Wang et al., 2015).

- ACT intervention was found to be as effective as a Time management program (Glick & Orsillo, 2015).

LIMITATIONS

- Few group workshops or online documentation available at some universities

- Short term

- Few studies

- No ACT online program for procrastination

- Despite the magnitude of the problem, few students reach out to professionals to solve their procrastination problem (Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013)

BETTER ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- Are there better ways to reach students and improve treatment?
  – Duration of treatment

  – Targeting key variables

  – Online Interventions:
    - Reach students where they are (on the Web...)

    - Countering stigma associated with group workshops

    - Low cost, low resources

THE PROGRAM: 8 MODULES

- Module 1: Be aware of ineffective behaviors
- Module 2: Choosing a direction according to your values
- Module 3: Identify your excuses
- Module 4: Take ACTions
- Module 5: Be willing to face discomforts
- Module 6: Act on your environment
- Module 7: Defuse from thoughts
- Module 8: Be perseverant

Devenir de meilleurs observateurs
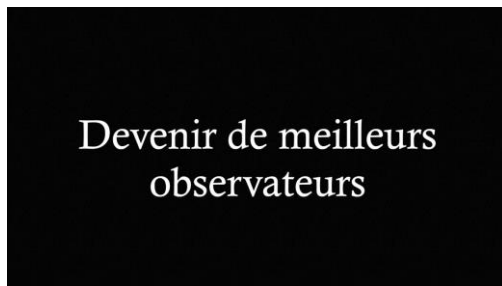
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FORUM

Bonjour!

J'ai remarqué chez moi quelques comportements de procrastination. Avant, j'étais vraiment dans le déni. Je me disais qu'il était impossible que je procrastine, car j'arrivais toujours à rendre tout ce qu'il fallait pour mes cours. Maintenant, je me dis que j'ai peut-être un petit problème, car maintenant je trouve ça plus difficile à gérer.

1. Parfois pour mes travaux d'Université, je remets à plus tard la tâche . Ce n'est pas toujours très bon. Souvent, je travaille mieux sous la pression du temps, car je sais que je n'ai pas le choix de faire le travail, mais il peut arriver des imprévus.

2. Je me dis toujours que j'ai autres choses de mieux à faire. Sinon, ce qu'il y a autour de moi me distrait.

3. Je me fais souvent un horaire de travail où je planifie le temps que je prends pour travailler sur mes cours. Il est rare que je respecte cet horaire, car rendue à cette période de temps, je n'ai aucune motivation à faire ce que je dois faire.

4. J'aime beaucoup m'amuser et sortir à l'extérieur. Je n'aime pas vraiment être toujours devant un ordinateur. Alors, je mets tout de côté pour aller me divertir. Plus la tâche qu'on me demande est longue et plate à faire, je n'ai pas de motivation.

Niveau supérieur | Modifier | Supprimer | Répondre

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AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

Aim
– Evaluate the effectiveness of the program on primary (procrastination) and secondary outcomes (ACT processes)
– Investigate the feasibility and acceptability of the program

Hypotheses
- **It was hypothesized that the intervention would be associated with:**
  – **H1:** a reduction in the score of self-reported procrastination (P)
  – **H2:** a reduction in the score of psychological inflexibility (S)
  – **H3:** a reduction in cognitive fusion (S)
  – **H4:** an increase in the score of committed action (S)
  – **H5:** the program will be acceptable and feasible

PARTICIPANTS

- **Eligibility criteria:**
  – 18 + years old.
  – Studying at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

- **Recruitment:**
  – Student Help Services of UQTR.
  – Facebook, emails, messages in classrooms.

PARTICIPANTS FLOWCHART
FALL 2016 / WINTER 2017

Total inscriptions

Participants who completed pre-treatment assessment

Participants who completed post-treatment assessment

229 ➡ 133 ➡ 40

PARTICIPANTS

- Age: 19 to 64 years old (M = 27.67, SD = 9.32).

- 81.8% of the sample was female.

- 81.5% of the sample was studying full-time.

- The sample was comprised of 70.2% undergraduate students and 25.7% graduate students.

- Literature (7,5%), **psychology (35%)**, management (12,5%), health sciences (15%), education sciences (17,5%), engineering (7,5%), social sciences (2,5%).

INSTRUMENTS

Pure procrastination scale (PPS; Rebetez et al., 2014; Steel, 2010).

- 11 items.
- Sample items:
  - *"I am continually saying I'll do it tomorrow."*
  - *"I delay making decisions until it's too late."*

- Good internal consistency (α = .89).
- Good test-retest stability (.87, *p* < .001).

INSTRUMENTS

Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ-II; Bond et al., 2011; Monestès et al., 2009)

- 7 items:
  - *"I am afraid of my feelings."*
  - *"Emotions cause problems in my life."*

- Good internal consistency (α > .75).
- Good test-retest stability (.80, *p* < .01).

INSTRUMENTS

Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire (CFQ-7; Dionne et al., 2016; Gillanders et al., 2014)

- We modified this measure to be specific to the academic domain.
- 7 items:
  - *"I tend to be very entangled in thoughts related to my studies."*
  - *"I get upset with myself for having certain thoughts about my studies."*
- Good internal consistency (α > .75).
- Good test-retest stability (0.80, *p* < .01).

INSTRUMENTS

Committed Action Questionnaire (CAQ-8; McCracken et al., 2016)

- 8 items:
  - *"I can remain committed to my goals even when there are times that I fail to reach them."*
  - *"If I feel distressed or discouraged, I let my commitments slide."*

- Good internal consistency (α > .80).

INSTRUMENTS

Satisfaction and Acceptability Questionnaire

- 28 items
- Sample of items:
  - *"Participating in this program can help manage the difficulties associated with academic procrastination."*
  - *"I appreciated that the program was given via a website."*

PRELIMINARY RESULTS: WITHIN-GROUP ANALYSES

	t-test	effect size (*d*)
1. Procrastination	*t* = 4.52**	.65
2. Psychological inflexibility	*t* = 2.41*	.38
3. Cognitive fusion	*t* = .19	-
4. Committed Action	*t* = -2.83*	-.53

*** p* < .01
* *p* < .05

FEASIBILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY

- **83%** of the participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the question: "*Globally, I am satisfied with the program.*"

- **89.5%** of the participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the question: "*The exercises appear to me useful to improve my studies.*"

FEASIBILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY

- **87%** of the participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the question: "*I appreciated that the program was given via a website.*"

- **94%** des participants would recommend this program to other students struggling with academic procrastination.

DISCUSSION

- The programme might have an impact on procrastination and ACT processes
- ACT is a promising model for procrastination (see Wang et al., 2015).
- Web-based intervention for procrastination (Glick et al., 2014; Rozental et al., 2015).

DISCUSSION

- Limitations
  - High attrition
  - No control group
  - Self-report questionnaires
  - No way of tracking participation

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DISCUSSION

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