I’LL DO IT LATER...
OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION AMONG STUDENTS WITH ACT

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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.

PROCRASITNATION OR STRATEGIC DELAY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Procrastination</th>
<th>Strategic delay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An overt or covert act is delayed</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The start or completion of this act is intended</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The act is necessary or of personal importance</td>
<td>☑</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The delay is voluntary and not imposed on oneself by external matters</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The delay is unnecessary or irrational</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The delay is achieved despite being aware of its potential negative consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td>The delay is accompanied by subjective discomfort or other negative consequences</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Klingsieck (2013) ; Steel (2007)
A FREQUENT 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 (and population), this problem is chronic.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROCRASTINATION

• Procrastination is linked to many problems:
  – Lower grades (Kim & Seo, 2015)
  – Stress and Anxiety (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000)
  – Psychological health problems (Ferrari & Diaz-Morales, 2014)

“Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging on of an uncompleted task.”

William James

WHY?

VARIOUS EXPLANATION

• Task characteristics
• Defense mechanism
  – protects the ego, self-handicapping
• Personnality traits
  – nevrotism, low conscientiousness, perfectionism
• Cognitive distorsion
• Failure in self-regulation

(Desoue, Bayemond, Armand, 2018; Klingsieck, 2013)
AVOIDING DISCOMFORT?

Ciarrochi & Mercer (2006)

A TENACIOUS HABIT

- Procrastination allows:
  - Relief from unpleasant activity (e.g., stress or boredom)
  - Access a fun activity (e.g., Facebook, emails, NetFlix).

- Short term > Long term.
EMPIRICAL SUPPORT: INFLEXIBILITY MODEL

- 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 (Eisenbeck et al., 2019; Glick et al., 2014)
  - Mindfulness (Sirois & Tosti, 2012)

EMPIRICAL SUPPORT: ACT TREATMENT

- Compared to a CBT intervention, an ACT intervention produced a greater reduction of procrastination at three months follow-up (Wang et al., 2017)
- ACT intervention was found to be as effective as a Time management program (Glick & Orsillo, 2015)
- See also Dionne et al. (2016), Gagnon et al. (2018), and Scent and Boes (2014)

BUILDING SKILLS TO ENGAGE FULLY IN STUDIES
1. NOTICING PROCRASTINATING BEHAVIORS

Dewitte & Schuwerk (2002)

BREAKOUT GROUPS: TASK 1

• 1. List as many procrastination (overt) behaviors as possible:
   – ____________________________
   – ____________________________
   – ____________________________
   – ____________________________
   – …

DIFFERENT BEHAVIORS, SAME FUNCTION

- Browsing social networks (Facebook)
- Posting photos on Instagram
- Testing new Snapchat filters
- Answering your text messages
- Watching TV series, movies, listening to music
- Playing video games
- Watching pornographic videos
- Accepting all outings with friends
- Starting a low priority assignment
- Doing housework
- Shopping
- Drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Eating
- Napping
- Playing sports
- Other
2. CHOOSE A DIRECTION

2. CLARIFYING VALUES

- Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?
2. CLARIFYING VALUES

- Write about what’s important for you in studies
  - I study __________________, because

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Les études

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VALUES
LEARNING
TEACHING
CONTRIBUTING
ACHIEVING
HELPING
OTHERS

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Les études
3. COMMIT TO ACTION

SET GOALS TOWARD VALUES

TIME MANAGEMENT

• 1. List all tasks and levels of priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>PRIORITY (1, 2 ou 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for oral presentation</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read chapter 4 (geography)</td>
<td>P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return books to the Library</td>
<td>P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write email to Emily</td>
<td>P3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLANNING
• 2. Choose a task
  – ______________________________

PLANNING
• 3. Divide into smaller parts
  ______________________________
  ______________________________
  ______________________________
  ______________________________

PLANNING
• 4. Which task will you begin with?
  – ______________________________

• 5. When, where and with whom?
  – ______________________________
SMART METHOD

• Specific □
• Measurable □
• Attainable □
• Realistic □
• Timely □

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

• 6. What distraction will occur?

• 7. What will you do to remove distractions?
  – ____________________________
  – ____________________________

4. BUILDING WILLINGNESS

• What’s going on in your body (sensations, emotions) just before you start a task?
SITTING WITH DISCOMFORT

Boredom
Fear
Frustration

THE CHOICE POINT

Procrastination
Moving away from what is important to you, behaving differently from what you would like

Committed actions
Act toward what is important to you, be faithful to your goals and values

Difficult emotions (anxiety, boredom, guilt)

Values you pursue in your academic life

Study for the exam

Adapted from Ciarrochi, Bailey, & Harris, 2013

CAN WE AVOID PAINFUL EMOTIONS?

• Do not think of....
WILLINGNESS CONTRACT

I am willing to feel This week...
(vos inconforts : anxiety, boredom...)

In order to
(task planned).

And get closer to :
(values)
5. DEFUSING FROM THOUGHTS

Fusion

Defusion

Tiré de Ciarrochi et Bailey, 2008

THE CHOICE POINT

Procrastination
Moving away from what is important to you, behaving differently from what you would like

Committed actions
Act toward what is important to you, be faithful to your goals and values

Difficult thoughts and emotions
Excuses

Values you pursue in your academic life

Study for the exam

Adapted from Ciarrochi, Bailey, & Harris, 2013

BREAKOUT GROUPS: TASK 2

• 2. List as many reasons to procrastinate as possible
  – ____________________________
  – ____________________________
  – ____________________________
  – ____________________________
  – ____________________________
  – ...

DISTORSIONS IN PROCRASTINATION

1. Overestimate time left to complete task
2. Underestimate time to do the task
3. Overestimate upcoming motivation
4. Believing we need to be « in the mood »
5. Believing that if we are not « in the mood », it won’t be productive

Ferrari et al., (1995)
MAKING EXCUSES

• Reason-giving
  – « I’m too tired »
  – « I don’t feel like studying »
  – « I have plenty of time left »
  – « I’m too stressed »
  – « This is too difficult »

5 USEFUL DEFUSION TECHNIQUES

• Don’t do what your mind tell you
• Kick your butts!
• I am having the thought that...
• Thank your mind for that thought
• Is this thought helpful?

6. PRESENT-MOMENT AWARENESS

• Multitasking?
• Informal Mindfulness
  – Raisin exercise
  – Walking, listening
• Formal mindfulness
  – Breathing exercise
  – Body exercise
7. MOVING FORWARD...

Q & A