

Helping Students Overcome Academic Procrastination

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Academic procrastination: Why it matters.

Academic procrastination refers to students' tendency to delay or postpone academic tasks, such as homework, assignments, or exam preparation, despite their awareness of the importance and necessity of these tasks. Contrary to popular belief, students do *not* procrastinate because they do not care about the learning tasks. Yet, they often struggle to translate the intentions to complete those tasks into actions.

Academic procrastination may negatively affect students' academic performance, as well as their physical and mental well-being. Students who consistently put off studying until the last minute typically receive lower grades. Even worse, they may experience anxiety, stress, depression, and fatigue as a result of this delaying.



Why do students procrastinate?

There are different reasons for students' procrastination tendencies, from both personal and contextual grounds. Below is a summary of those reasons:

Personal Factors

Personality: low self-esteem, irrational beliefs about self-worth, perfectionism, indecision, poor self-control, etc.

Motivation: low self-efficacy, task aversiveness, low study motivation, etc.

Affective/Emotional: poor emotional regulation, anxiety, fear of failure, academic stress, etc.

Others: inefficient study habits, poor organizational skills, lack of energy, etc.

Contextual Factors

Family: insufficient family involvement, supervision, and support, parental criticism, parental expectation, etc.

Teachers: insufficient support, guidance, etc.

Others: demanding academic requirements, digital distractors (e.g., cellphones, social media), etc.

How can teachers support students in overcoming academic procrastination?

Teacher Support	Strategies
Fostering positive academic emotions & motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide regular positive feedback and recognize students' academic and character strengths• Emphasize effort and progress over unrealistic goals to mitigate perfectionism
Cultivating effective study habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach students how to prioritize tasks, set goals, create schedules, and manage their time• Provide additional resources and study guides to help students understand the subject matter better
Making learning engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make assignments and projects relevant to pique student interest• Provide students with well-organized and structured activities• Allow students the opportunity to make choices regarding learning activities
Encouraging social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate frequently with parents, keeping them informed about students' progress and concerns related to academic procrastination• Promote peer mentoring and study groups to offer students emotional support and practical tips for overcoming procrastination

Resources

- González-Brignardello, M. P., Sánchez-Elvira Paniagua, A., & López-González, M. N. (2023). Academic procrastination in children and adolescents: A scoping review. *Children*, 10(6), 1016. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10061016>
- Visser, L., Korthagen, F.A.J., & Schoonenboom, J. (2018). Differences in learning characteristics between students with high, average, and low levels of academic procrastination: Students' view on factors influencing their learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00808>