

Procrastination

There are **multiple** reasons why students procrastinate. Below is a list of perceived benefits from procrastination, along with the drawbacks and consequences.

Perceived Benefits/Thoughts

“I work better under a time pressure.”

“I need to spend a lot of time prepping before I can start my work.”

“I am afraid to start because I do not understand my assignment. If I wait, I might do better on it later.”

“I know this material so I can wait to do it.”

Reality: Drawbacks and Consequences

A task that you believe may only take you 4 hours or less could in fact take you 6-8 hours to complete. If you feel that you work better under a time pressure create an earlier due date for yourself to complete your paper or project and then use that as a deadline. Then, if you do go beyond your time expectations you will have a cushion of time left to finish your assignment.

It is good to be prepared before you begin your task, but be wary of wasting too much time preparing. For example, if you have rearranged your desk more than once, you might be procrastinating from doing your work.

Do not fear your work. The only way to learn it is to actually do it. If you do not understand your assignment do not wait longer to start. This way you will have enough time to ask for help if you need clarification. If you are having a hard time getting started due to fear, try to spend just five minutes working on a problem. Once you get through those initial five minutes you are likely to see that it is not as bad as you thought. Likewise, at this point you will also know if you need to ask your professor, a tutor, or one of your classmates for assistance.

If you understand your material it is best to finish it right away so you can spend more time completing work that you do not understand or assignments that will take more time. Also, if you put things off until a later time, additional work can pile up. Even if an assignment is projected to take a short amount of time to complete, in reality, if multiple assignments are piled up, it will take you much longer to get through all of them versus if you can complete an assignment as soon as you get it.

Perceived Benefits/Thoughts

“I hate this class and I do not want to do the paper. I am not in the mood.”

“I need a larger amount of time to complete this assignment. I cannot do it now.”

Reality: Drawbacks and Consequences

Even if you don't enjoy your class or if you don't like the professor, your work still needs to be completed. Your future depends on the degree you are working towards and just because you do not enjoy a class does not mean that you have to get a bad grade. Your feelings towards a subject can control how motivated you are to complete a task. Therefore, do not lose your motivation and put off your work just because you find it boring. Control your reaction towards an assignment - start it, finish it, and move onto your next task.

Oftentimes, we put off assignments because we do not believe that we have enough time to complete them. Instead of putting off a project until a day when you think there is more time (usually on the weekend), break the project up into smaller pieces. This way if something unexpected happens, and you cannot work on your project during the weekend, you will not be so far. Also, by breaking your project into smaller parts, it will not seem as overwhelming when you have to work on it.

How to Overcome Procrastination:

- Recognize that you are delaying starting your paper, doing your homework or starting studying for your exam and what is making you procrastinate.
- Think about why you are delaying doing what you need to do. Are your reasons valid? No matter what the reasons are for your delay, ask yourself how you can get past them and create a plan to start doing your work. Remember your overall priorities and that you are in the process of working towards your degree. What you do now reflects on your overall future.
- Start your paper, your homework assignment or start studying for your exam! Only you control your actions and your future. No matter what the task is that you are procrastinating about, once you start it you are one step closer to completing it.

Sources:

<http://alac.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=15>

<http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/stressprocrast.shtml>

<http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/procrastination.html>