

Planning Curricular and Extra-Curricular Responsibilities from a Time Management Perspective: A Case Study

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Abstract

There are lots of literature, analysis and advices about use of time and planning it, especially at the business and individual levels (Seiwert, LJ, & McGee-Cooper, A., 2009; Raspor, A., & Macuh, B., 2016, Templar, R., 2010). However, we did not find studies on the effective organization of time at the family level in relation to the use of time within the child's daily life, covering school and after-school responsibilities, homework, leisure and sleeping habits. This aspect has been explored in our study, especially for the purpose of formulating advices, as the disorganization and time distress of both children and parents increases the stress of the whole family.

The research was designed as a case study of a suburban elementary school in the Celje region. The data were obtained through a survey among three stakeholders: teachers, children and parents of grades 5 and 8. Within the qualitative part of the research, two focus groups (teachers, parents) and an interview with the headmaster were conducted. The study includes also an analysis of the systematic monitoring, how one student planned his time over a 12-month period, which was the reason for this research.

The results of the survey show that students and their parents approach time planning systematically, since most of the children surveyed (ie. 96%) have beside the day-to-day commitments for school also after-school activities. About 43% of students do more than five hours per week for after-school activities. We assume that extracurricular loads are the reason for students to indicate that they are continuously learning. In terms of spending time for learning at home, including homework, most parents and students think that working at home requires one hour a day, while half of the teachers think that students spend at home approx. one to two hours a day.

There are some interesting things about the free time: about one-third of students watch television 1 hour a day; one-third spend 1 hour a day on computer games, social networks and telephone conversations; one-third read less than 15 minutes a day. We find out that

children who are not enrolled in any extracurricular activities (4% of children) spend more time watching television or on computer games.

Survey results show that 60% of students go to bed mostly at the same hour, and 52% of students say that they seldom sleep less than 8 hours. The healthy sleep habits of the students are confirmed also by the result of the survey by teachers, as 59% of them think that students come to school well-rested. Consequently, it could be concluded that lack of sleep should not be a reason for being un-concentrated during classes. However, it is surprising that 57% of students stated that their fatigue was the biggest reason for not being concentrated in class.

Within the focus group, we were interested what the students were doing before bed. We found that both groups of students (grades 5 and 8) mostly talk to their parents before going to bed, and watch TV together. We also asked about identifying the causes of perceived fatigue during classes. We learned that the fatigue of children during classes manifests as lack of attention, chatting. Teachers and students, however, said that interactive learning, relaxation exercises and repeated ventilation of the space had a positive effect on their well-being and increased concentration.

Our research coincides with the coronavirus pandemic, which resulted, among other things, in school closures, and students (and parents) had to establish learning from home. In this situation, the importance of organization and good use of time proved even more important. Also, the results of systematic monitoring of one student during this period are reflected in his self-discipline, self-initiative responsible behaviour, and planning.

***Tips for successful work from home, prepared for children, adolescents and parents,** have been designed into a poster and video in Slovene and English language, as well as interpreted video in Slovenian sign language for the deaf; and the website ForYou.si has been set up. Today's tips are translated into 28 languages. As children learn differently, **we interpreted the tips musically** in the form of the song *Good Feeling*. The poster was published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport on its Facebook site and can be found on the websites of many of our schools, as well as on the Ombudsman's website. RTV Slovenia produced a video contribution for programme *Infodrom / Izodrom*, where the student Svit practically showed the tips.*

Keywords: Time management, organizing the learning environment, learning plan, COVID 19, successful student, elementary school

RESOURCES

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