Managing Procrastination in Grad School

with Emily Zepick and Palash Roy
Grad help peer mentors
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TRANSITION TO GRAD STUDIES WORKSHOP

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Stop and Think

Write down a few tasks that you have procrastinated completing in school or life. Why you put these tasks off? How did procrastinating make you feel?



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Outcomes

Emily

1. Recognize common causes of procrastination in graduate school

1. Understand how procrastination shows up in academic life

1. Describe the procrastination cycle and locate your behavior inside it

1. Use practical strategies to manage procrastination and stay productive

2.

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Poll

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Answer true/ false:

1. I work better under pressure
2. I will start once I feel motivated
3. I cannot start until I have all my materials ready
4. Better time management would solve my tendency to procrastinate



Let’s discuss!

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Emily

What is Procrastination?

Stanford University defines procrastination as:

- An attempt to escape feelings of concern regarding a task.
- It often occurs when students want to do well at a task (not when they are lazy).



Any student may encounter procrastination.

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When Does Procrastination Happen?

According to Stanford University, procrastination happens:

- When work becomes difficult
- When you have difficulty starting a task
- When you lack interest in a task
- When you face perfectionism
- When you lack a clear endpoint
- etc.



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The Procrastination Cycle



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Image from The University of Texas

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Five Causes, Five Matched Moves

1. Task aversion.
2. Low confidence.
3. Fear of failure.
4. Perfectionism.
5. Academic interactions.

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Simple Strategies

You can manage procrastination by:

1. Schedule a task around a deadline
2. Reach out for support
3. Make a backup plan
4. Chunking the assignment
5. Creating low-risk tasks



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Researched Strategies

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1. Shitty First Drafts
2. Atomic Habits
3. Pychyl's Procrastination Puzzle



Discussion: How could you see yourself using these strategies? Then we'll do a worksheet.

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Extension Activity

Let’s try out the shitty first draft activity!

Choose a topic below (or create your own) and make a draft. Your goal is to write without stopping or overthinking:

1. What was the last book you read about?
2. What is your current research about?
3. What is one thing you did yesterday?

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Check-In Discussion

Reflect on this workshop.
What is one takeaway?
What is one strategy you could possibly use in the upcoming school year?



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Review

- Procrastination is common

- Strategies and the cycle can help you move past feelings of procrastination



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Questions/Comments

Thank you!

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