Ability to Manage Own Learning Time among Student-Teachers

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ABILITY TO MANAGE OWN LEARNING TIME AMONG STUDENT-TEACHERS

Education is an advisable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing worth knowing can be taught.

—Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist

Becoming aware of how one use time as a resource in organizing, prioritizing, and succeeding in studies in the context of competing activities is an important goal as well as means of self-development and education. Competing demands influence time management. Work commitments and social events make students feel exhausted. Many students might discover the need to develop their time management skills when they arrive at college. Unlike high school, in college, students have less in-class time, more outside of class work, and a great deal of freedom and flexibility**.** Students who deliberately undertake to schedule their time are not ones who have decided to spend all their time studying and doing nothing else. They usually have decided to use efficiently the time they have to spend studying anyway, and to "de-sensitize" themselves to the many distractions that are commonly occurring. If the students do not have any idea about budgeting time and keeping a schedule one can easily spin out of control, get stressed out and fall into bad practices such as cramming or doing 'all nighters'. This gives rise to the importance of time management for students.

Teacher educators frequently refer to teaching as an art, and move on to help their student teachers to acquire the skills, techniques that help them in mastering the art. But it is as valuable as this to underscore the "art to be a student. ... Learning is such a very painful business. It requires humility from people at an age where the natural habitat is arrogance (Sarton, 1961, p. 110)." Maxine Greene (1995) suggests that "In many respects, teaching and learning are matters of breaking through barriers—of expectation, of boredom, of predefinition. To teach, at least in one dimension, is to provide persons with the knacks and know-how they need in order to teach themselves" (p. 14). The willingness continually to revise one's own location in order to place oneself in the path of beauty is the basic impulse underlying education. One submits oneself to other minds (teachers) in order to increase the chance that one will be looking in the right direction (Scarry, 1999, p. 7). Teacher education should "focus attention on clarifying for student teachers what education is and how they might further it" (Egan (2000, p. 75).

Traditionally, teachers have enjoyed a place of great respect in our country. Because of the knowledge, wisdom, firm conviction and dedication towards teaching, teachers in general

were considered as path breakers, role models and highly respected community in the society. But now-a-days people, whatever profession be they in, are becoming commercial and forgetting their social and moral responsibilities. The prospective teachers see a Bachelor's Degree in Education as something which can be easily accessed within a short duration of time. They did not appear to be particularly enthused by the training goal of teaching as they indicated that the teaching profession was really not an attractive profession to them. At this level also, they can't utilize their time for learning in the way which they desired. Even they do not know at what extent the teachers, institution and themselves can be helpful for managing their time effectively. The most satisfactory type of learning and motivation is a desire to learn on the part of the learner.

Objectives

The objective of the study is to know the level of motivation of B.Ed students in terms of the time spent on learning and to identify the factors that distract the student- teachers from spending time on education in order to help them to be better learners and teachers. Specifically, this study intends:

1. To find out the extent of desire to learn among student teachers
2. To find out the disparity between the intensity of desire to learn and the intensity of effort to meet the desire
3. To find out whether student teachers are able to spend adequate time on their learning
4. To find out extend of disparity between the time desired to be spend and the time actually spend on academic work
5. To find out the major factors which distract student –teachers from learning efforts
6. To make suggestions to improve the time spend on learning by student teachers .

Methodology

Sample

The data for this study was collected from a sample of 150 B.Ed students studying in a teacher education college affiliated to University of Calicut, Kerala. sample has student-teachers who are specializing in social studies (37), English (36) mathematics (310, Malayalam (30) and commerce (16). Around 10 percent (16) of the sample is males and the rest are females. At the time of data collection the sampled students have just enrolled for the teacher education course.

Data collection

An open-ended questionnaire consisting five questions was administered to the sample. Specifically the questions asked were the following. Were you able to spend time and effort on learning as you desired during and after the high school? Are you able to spend time and effort on learning as you desired at present? Whether you can able to spend the expected time for real learning at present? How many hours do you desire to spend on study? Mark the extent of a) desire to learn , and b) actually learning, at present (on a given 5 point likert scale) . And, how many hours do you a) desire to learn per day and b) actually spend on study per day? List the various factors which distract your expected time for learning. What can be done by yourselves, your teachers and the institution for removing these barriers?

Good rapport was established with the sample before data collection, student teachers were permitted not to write their name or their optional subjects or any other information that may reveal their identity, if the desire so.

Results

1. Desire to learn (aspiration) among student teachers

The percentage of students who reported very high, high, intermediate, low and very low aspiration to spend time and effort on learning are given in table 1.

Table1

Percentage of student-teachers with differing academic aspiration level

	Level of aspiration for learning				
	Very high	High	Intermediate	A little	Very little
% of student-teachers	20	60	19	1.3	0

Table 1 show that 80 percent of student teachers report aspiration to spend high to very high amount of time and effort on learning.

2. Disparity between aspiration and commitment to learn

The percentage of students who reported very high, high, intermediate, low and very low aspiration (in terms of time and effort desired to be spend) and commitment (in terms of time and effort actually being spend) to learning are given in table 2.

Table 2

Disparity in percentage of student teachers reporting aspiration and commitment to learn

	% of student teachers				
Levels of aspiration and commitment to learning					
	Very high	High	Intermediate	A little	Very little
Aspiration	20	60	19	1.3	0
Commitment	1.3	6.7	70	18	4

Table 2 show that while only 1 percent of student teachers aspire to spend a little or very little time and effort on learning , 22 percent of teachers actually commit only this much time and effort on learning. 80 percent of student teachers report aspiration to spend high to very high amount of time and effort on learning, but only one tenth of them (8%) can actually commit time and effort on it.

3. Extent of time desired to be spent on learning by student teachers

The percentage of student-teachers who desire to spent time (in hours) on learning are given in table 3.

Table3

Percentage of student-teachers who desire to spent time on learning

	Time in hours/day desired to be spend on learning					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
% of student teachers	20	60	19	1.3	0	0

Table 3 shows that 80 percent of student teachers desire to spend 5 or more hours per day on academic learning. 20 percent of student teachers wants to spend 4-3 hours per day on learning. No student teacher wants to spend less than two hours per day on learning.

4. Disparity between time desired to be spent and actually on learning by student teachers

The percentage of students who wanted to spend various duration of time on learning and that of who are actually spending various duration of time on learning are given in table 4.

Table 4

Disparity between percentage of students who wanted to spend various duration of and that of who are actually spending various duration of time on learning

	Time in hours/day					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
Desire to spend	20	60	19	1.3	0	0
Actually Spending	0	0	11	17	37	35

Table 4 shows that while 80 percent of student teachers desire to spend 5 or more hours per day on academic learning, none of them are able to match the desire. While no student teacher wants to spend less than two hours per day on learning, 72 percent of student teachers are actually spending only that much time on academic tasks.

5. Factors that hinder student-teachers from spending time on learning

The reason attributed by student teachers for failing to actually spend the time they desire to spend on learning tasks are listed in table 5.

Table 5

Factors that hinder student-teachers from spending time on learning

Factors that hinder learning time	% of student teachers mentioning the reason
TV	56
Laziness	53
Sleep	41
Daily chores	29
Friendship	29
Family	14
Reading	12
Music	7
play	
Jobs	5 each
Health reasons	
Day dreaming	

Table 5 shows that more than half the student-teachers feel that both Television viewing and laziness stole their time which they desire to spend on learning.

Findings of the study

6. Three in four student teachers feel that they failed to utilize the opportunities for learning during their high school and college years.

7. More than half the student teachers enrolled for B.Ed course feel that they are still failing to utilize the opportunities for learning.

8. Eight in ten student teachers report very high or high level of aspiration to benefit from teacher education and the rest have only "intermediate" level of aspiration to benefit from teacher education. 80 percent of student- teachers wants to spend five or more hours per day on the academic tasks (after formal hours) but none can spend this much time on learning.

9. Only 20 percent of student teachers feel that they are able to spend time and effort at a high level on learning of the course. 80 percent of student teachers feel that they are able to spend time and effort only at "intermedaite" level and the rest (10 percent) are spending "a little" time and effort only.

10. None of the student teachers plan to spend two hours or less on tasks related to learning, but actually fourfold of it spends two hours or less on learning after the college time. One third of student-teachers spend one hour or less on learning tasks.

11. Student teachers attribute TV , laziness , drifting, friends, as stealing their time. For married women student-teachers house-hold chores and travelling are the reasons for not getting adequate time.

12. Student teachers believe that for getting adequate time in learning they have to schedule and plan time better, but none put down concrete plan for this. Only less than five percent felt that teachers could not help them in spending more academic time after formal hours. Those who said teachers and the institution can help them could not specifically suggest what the teacher can do in this regard , other than "teaching well", "making teaching interesting" and "providing facilities".

Conclusion

Student teachers have aspiration to be better learners but have no knowledge about how this could be attained. Those who are prospective teachers have not been able to spend the required time neither during the school nor during the higher education periods. A significant proportion of student teachers have only low level of academic aspiration and they want less than or equal to one hour per day on learning after the formal hours. Teaching time management to student teachers will be in the interest of developing better teachers and helping the future school students whom the prospective teachers will be serving in future.
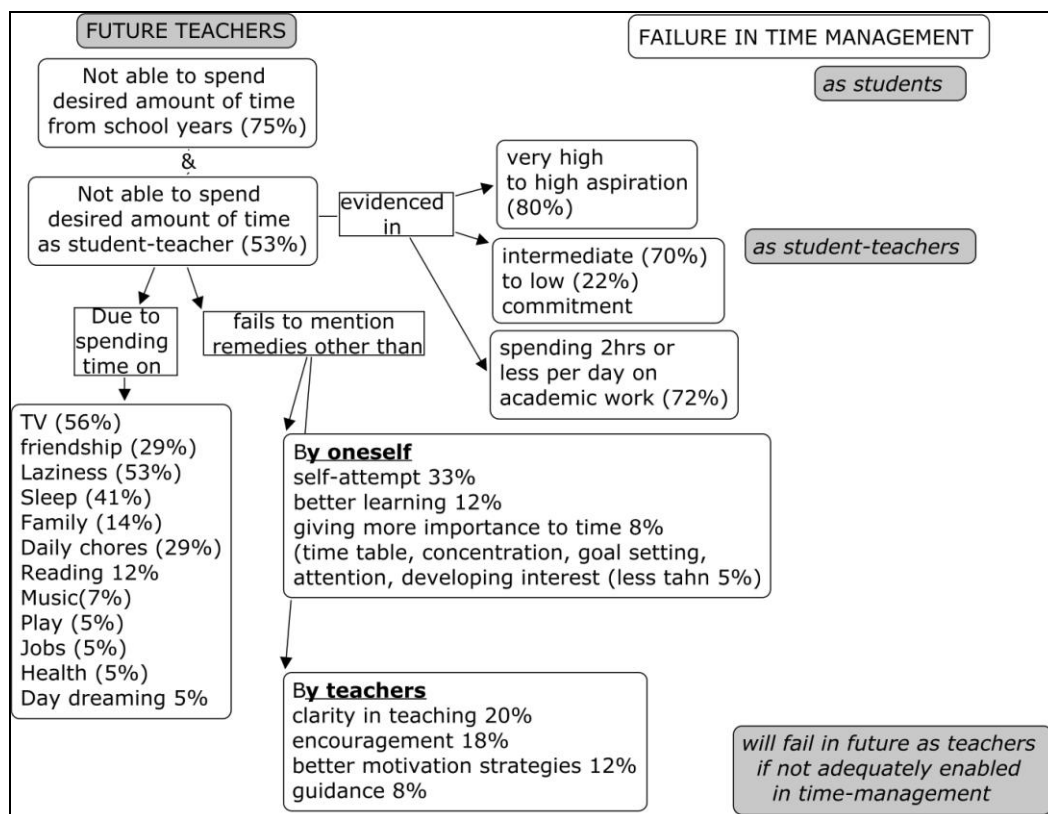
Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the findings which demonstrates the need for enabling student teachers by imparting time management principles

Suggestion for helping student teachers to spend more time on learning

1. *Model learning behavior of student teachers:* Teacher educators can draw on their own experiences and put oneself on the line. Share your own experiences of what it is like to go through some of the same struggles and successes the students experience. Using oneself as a resource is helpful getting to talk to student teachers in the voice of a learner (Hindley, 1996).

2. *Scaffold instruction***:** Scaffolding in an educational context is a process by which a teacher provides students with a temporary framework for learning. Done correctly, such structuring encourages a student to develop his or her own initiative, motivation and resourcefulness. break instruction down into steps or short-term learning goals and provide clear directions and adequate support to complete each step. Reaching smaller goal feels easier for students. Reviewing pre-requisite concepts at the beginning of a new lesson also helps all students to be more interested on the task.

3. *Create self-awareness and Focus on strengths:* Students may feel self-doubt. Identifying and reinforcing their strengths can help to build confidence important to persisting through challenges.

4. *Communicate the goals and expectations*: At the very start of the B.Ed course goals, expectation from student teachers, the important milestones, the criteria of evaluation should be communicated. These should be displayed in each classroom in a visible way

5. *Plan long range, mid-range and short term*: The course objectives, objectives to be achieved by each paper, important activities in each term, month and week should be communicated orally as well as visually

6. *Help student teachers to organize their study*: Help them to analyze the time utilization and set a workable time table.

7. *Organize the student-teachers into groups*: Organize student-teachers into groups from which they can benefit by sharing the tasks, using strengths of everyone to the benefit of all. Collaborative groups needs to be set up to encourage sharing the workload and to give students the opportunity to teach one another

8. *Set a reminder system in the institution*: Keep the goals in front of student teachers, in classroom bulletin boards, or institution bulletin boards

9. *Insulate the essential course- requirements*: Plan essential requirements and their timing first and isolate the most important requirements of the course from possible distracters. Stick to the time table of the institution and ensure that all teachers follow a no-nonsense approach with regard to attendance, coverage of topics and completion of weekly assignments.

10. *Establish workable feedback system*: Assign weekly to do lists and establish peer evaluation of whether the tasks have been accomplished

Postscript

Research alters perspective and view of practice and is presented as a means of generating insight for colleagues in the wider field of teacher education (Garbett, 2004). A common aspect of researching teaching about teaching is that new findings and teachings become interwoven…. In teaching there is a sense of the need to act immediately on new possibilities and to adjust one's teaching in accord with these possibilities (Loughran2002).

Student motivation to learn often appeared to be extrinsic, to pass the assessment rather than a desire to understand the content as evidenced by their desire to know what was going to be assessed, when the assignments were due and how many tasks there were (Garbett, 2004).The chief impediments to learning are not cognitive. It is not that the students cannot learn; it is that they do not wish to. If educators invested a fraction of the energy they now spend trying to transmit information in trying to stimulate the students' enjoyment of learning, we could achieve much better results (Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p 15).

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