

Eight “Maladaptive Homework Practices” Identified by Dr. Bembenutty

- 1. Self-handicapping:** Students purposefully sabotage their own efforts by partying the night before a test, or accepting a work schedule that takes time away from study, for example. They deflect from the shame of their own perceived lack of talent.
- 2. Procrastination:** Students put off studying and leave themselves insufficient time to complete tasks that would result in successful learning.
- 3. Defensive Pessimism:** These students tend to set low expectations on future outcomes (“I’m no good at math anyway”), and use this as an excuse so that their self-esteem is protected.
- 4. Defective Academic Delay of Gratification:** A lack of self-discipline gets in the way of students performing to the best of their abilities and often stems from low motivation and impulsivity.
- 5. Misregulation:** Characterized by good-intentioned learning methods with poor learning outcomes. Examples include working in distracting locations, indiscriminate over-highlighting of texts, or help-seeking from math-solver software that provides instantaneous work and answers without student thought.

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Part 2 of a three-part series on the benefits of independent assignments for students

The Principles of Homework: Counterproductive Homework Behaviors

As educators, we have all witnessed students using methods of completing homework that may be expedient for completing the assignment, but do not result in the intended learning benefits for the student. In other words, students are using methods that bypass the meaningful experiences intended to develop understanding and knowledge. Some students do not complete assignments at all.

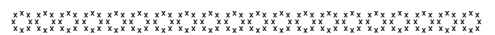
The idea of ‘meaningful homework’ has long been a topic of discussion around the halls of academia. With the best intentions, we create what we believe to be meaningful and engaging assignments. However, in the real world, students will often find ways to avoid means of completion that require the hard work of thinking and learning, for the more expedient goal of just checking off the assignment as “done.”

Dr. Héfer Bembenutty (2011) studied this phenomenon, and promoted the idea that the correct use of homework assignments is extremely beneficial to students, but documented “maladaptive homework practices” interfere with student learning.

Dr. Bembenutty has identified eight major forms of “maladaptive homework practices” listed to the left. Perhaps you will recognize these in your students, especially those who are struggling.

This generation of students would benefit from an awareness of these pitfalls of homework completion. When these are explained to students, they can begin to understand the importance of life skills, such as delay of gratification, self-regulation, time management, and goal-setting and how these behaviors contribute to success. Whether this is a topic of discussion in your class or whether this process is a formal process, the importance of developing these skills is life-changing. Awareness is the first step in that process.

Bembenutty, H. (2011). Meaningful and Maladaptive Homework Practices: The Role of Self-Efficacy and self-Regulation. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 22(3), 448–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X1102200304>



In Part 3 in this series, we will examine how to make sure your students get the most out of your independent assignments. What are the key ideas for making homework a true learning experience for your students?



Maladaptive Homework Practices, Cont...

6. Underregulation:

Students fail to set sufficient homework and class attendance standards because they cannot accurately evaluate the importance and time required for academic pursuits.

7. iConnected Parents: Also known as helicopter parents, moms and dads who hover over decisions of their college student, create less confident, less independent, and less mature learners. These students who overly depend on others for day-to-day decisions, time-management, and enterprise, miss out on developing the adult-like characteristics that would help them to be successful in school, at work, and in life.

8. Maladaptive Echo

Generation: Pervasive phones, computers, video games and other technogadgets attract the attention of even the best-intentioned student. These students have a difficult time resisting texting in class, and allow interruptions of social media during study times.



Many college students come from the high school experience without the stepped-up organizational skills necessary for college studies. Without an organizational system in place, students can quickly become overwhelmed and anxious about the possibility of failure or underperforming in one area or another.

How can we help our students to become better organized with their approach to learning at the college level? Organization encompasses two major areas: Time management and managing of space. College success classes typically devote a lot of effort training students to manage their time well, and rightly so. In the midst of an ordinary semester, students can expect to juggle assignments, readings, tests, and papers for as many as five different classes, as well as the personal responsibilities of an outside job, friendships, and family.

Effective time management is essential to be able to balance responsibilities.

But what about management of space? Students who have difficulty in this area struggle to keep class materials orderly and cannot find needed papers and notes. These students spend a lot of time trying to locate papers, pencils, textbooks, calculators, and such. In the pursuit of these items, distractions pop up, detours to study follow, making the work of studying more of a fight for control over things. This leads to even more cluttered and haphazard study spaces and avoidance of quality study.

What are some solutions for these students? As professors, how can we help students to maximize their spatial organization to help get through their classes? Check out the side panel to the right for some ideas.

Primarily, we should allow students to develop the skills to handle their own workspace, which is necessary for most jobs in the real world. We cannot, nor should not do it for them.

However, with just a little support, students can learn to be better organized, which will help them all through their college years. Moreover, this skill will serve them well in the workplace as they will be expected to keep control of their workspaces on the job.

Organizing Your Workspace

The Downsides of Disorganization

Here are a few thoughts to share with your students:

1. Systemize. For online classes or face-to-face classes, suggest your students keep a color-coded system of folders and notebooks by course that allows the student to easily keep papers for each class together. Encourage your students to bring them to every class and have them in front of them when working online or at their desks so important papers get filed immediately. They will be able to find important papers later because they will know where to look. Ask them to be strict with themselves about using this system.

2. Inspire your students to start the week with a clean desk. Throw away trash and file important papers in your color-coded folders. Shelf notebooks and file folders away. Suggest they select one day a week to keep up the routine of cleaning off desk areas.

3. Suggest your students put away things when you are done with them. When switching to a new subject or ending a study session, make sure all papers for the previous subject are where they should be.

4. Recommend. One solution for the die-hard disorganized students is to bring work (and color-coded notebooks) to the library or other study location. They will be forced to clean up and organize things before leaving their area.

Way to Succeed Can Help!

We designed Way to Succeed to accompany first-year math and other STEM classes. Our goal is to help your students become aware of and develop academic skills and strategies in a personal way while freeing you to focus on your math or other STEM content. The online program works outside of class, providing personal learning profiles and targeted actions for improvement, short, thought-provoking readings, videos, and short quizzes that highlight the skills, attitudes, cognitions, and learning strategies in which successful students engage so they can quickly make changes to become better learners.

Typing notes or word-processing to learn is ineffective, according to researchers that studied the learning outcomes of those who wrote, drew, or typed notes. Those who typed learned the least. The authors suggested that through writing and drawing, learning pathways were activated, making recall easier. While this study was conducted using 7th graders, the results should apply to all learners.

Askvik, E. O., van der Reel, F. R., & van der Meer, A.L. H., (2020). The importance of cursive handwriting over typewriting for learning in the classroom. *Frontiers in Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01910>.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You can’t expect to grow stronger when you avoid hard stuff. I have never met someone who’s said, “I am so thankful I took all those short cuts in my life. Best move ever.”

Jason Vallotton

Encouraging Intentionality of Learning

When kindergarteners arrive in school, few of them understand or are even aware of the idea that people can intentionally learn academic things by thought, repetition, and practice. After all, these young students have just spent half a decade involved in experiential hands-on play and absorbing the world around them through the natural process of physical encounters. Traditionally, elementary students begin to see a different path for learning as they begin to work with more abstract ideas. Their teachers construct high-interest and tactile experiences that naturally increase familiarity with concepts while developing foundational academic learning.

As children move through the K-12 continuum, they typically experience a gradual shift of learning modes, from experiential to the more abstract methods. Through cognitive reasoning, maturing students increasingly are able to grasp concepts without as many of the hands-on experiences needed by less mature learners. The tactile learning supports of the elementary student are gradually removed a little at a time, producing students who can think more abstractly and proactively manage the effort required to make learning happen for themselves, which is a hallmark of a mature learner. As learners progress through a formal education, they begin to

recognize that they have a responsibility to intentionally learn, work through processes, and practice skills in order to learn advancing content. Therefore, by the time students have graduated from high school, they ideally will have developed active, independent, self-regulating, and volitional learning behaviors

The passive student who has not developed into an intentional, self-directed learner will struggle to make the adaptations necessary for success in college. Students are better able to make the adjustments to college learning when they can intentionally take ownership of their learning and regulate their own academic effort and behaviors.

Q&A About *Way to Succeed*

Q: Our students are not pro-actively managing their classes. How does *Way to Succeed* help with that?

A: We understand that many of today’s students have been given multiple supports in their high school experiences that helped them to pass classes, but perhaps did not help them to develop into self-directed, mature learners. You are probably seeing students who are passive, unaware of how to learn, and may exhibit counterproductive learning behaviors (See p. 1 for examples).



That’s why we designed *Way to Succeed!*

Four major areas we emphasize are

1. **Goal-setting** (Short- and Long-term),
2. **Awareness of Metacognition and Self,**
3. **Practice** (Effort and Self-regulation, Strategies, and Obtaining Help),
4. **Planning** (Time and Space).

Students take diagnostic assessments, reflect on their personal results, and make small changes that correct ineffective academic learning behaviors.





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We offer a unique research-supported approach to helping students become more independent and successful in your classes.

Visit [Way to Succeed](#) for more information about our product, pricing calculator, and how to order.

Be ready for Fall Semester 2021 classes! There's still time!

First-year, at-risk, and probationary students typically need more support than most other returning students, especially when these students enroll in online classes. [Way to Succeed](#) can help you to assist these students with a personalized, stand-alone success program that works well with mathematics and other STEM courses. [Way to Succeed](#) helps them develop their own self-regulating and metacognitive skills so they can become more independent and effective learners.

- No grading required
- Personalized for each student
- Accompanying eBook for better student accountability
- Focused on improving self-regulation, time-management skills, metacognition, and accessing on-campus resources
- Research-based process
- Low, department/per-student costs
- Compatible with any STEM text or curriculum, online or face-to-face
- Easy-to-access instructor report
- Quick student set-up for your school or by class

Upcoming Articles in the next issue of *Learning Insights*

1. The Principles of Homework, Part 3
2. Organizing your Time
3. Interventions that Enhance Metacognition

....and more!

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Way to Succeed

Mindful Insights for Learning

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