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Self-management as a key tool for efficient training of a contemporary specialist

Introduction

Modern educational system is characterized by a significant emphasis on the development of students' self-suffiency and autonomy that have become the important constituents of a professional competency of a contemporary specialist in any field. According to Soboleva A.V & Obdalova O.A., the individualization and differentiation is one of the most prominent features of educational training nowadays [5, p. 110].

Self-management skills are those abilities that allow an employee to feel more productive when doing daily routine regardless of the working environment. Well-developed self-management skills help employees efficiently communicate with co-workers, managers and customers, make right decisions, plan their working time, and keep their body healthy. Therefore nowadays more than 50 % of the academic workload is devoted to self-study that aims to contribute to the development of students' personalities and to complete their professional competency. The article aims to describe the notion of self-management, give an overview to its components and suggest some steps to help students work on the development of all the necessary abilities for self-organisation.

What is a self-management?

In general self-management deals with self-organization and self-governing of an individual. In terms of educational process self-management plans are used to teach students to independently complete tasks and take an active role in monitoring and reinforcing their own behavior. An important goal in education is to foster self-reliance and independence. In fact, self-management strategies can be implemented before any problem behaviors occur. Research studies show that self-management strategies can be used to improve academic performance, productivity, time on-task, and to decrease problem behavior. It has been proved that the ability to use self management strategies effectively is a skill that becomes very important for success as children grow into adulthood.

The analysis of contemporary works on self-management let us conclude that there are three critical elements of self-management, namely setting goals, monitoring behavior, and evaluating progress. Hence three major components of self-management are self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement (fig. 1).
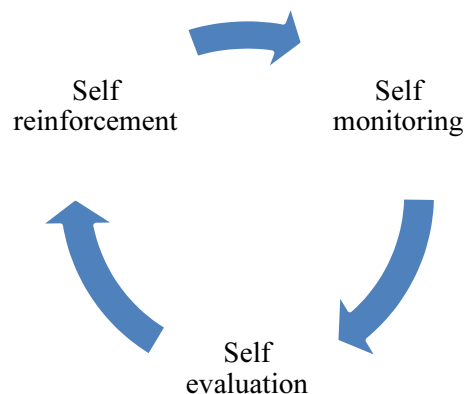

Fig. 1. The components of self-management

When a student engages in self-monitoring, she/he observes her/his own behavior, records its occurrence on a data collection form, and graphs the data to evaluate progress. Self-evaluation strategies encourage students to set their own goals and compare their current performance as they work towards those goals. Both self-monitoring and self-evaluation are often used with self-reinforcement strategies. A student takes an active role in self-reinforcement strategies by determining how he will evaluate progress towards a goal and delivering a reinforcer to himself when he achieves the goal.

According to Koegel, R.L., Koegel, L.K., & Parks, D.R. [2] to acquire self-management skills means to be able to operationally define the target behavior; identify functional reinforcers; design or choose a self-management method or device; use the self-management device and have self-management independence.

Self-management is closely connected with personal control which is one of the most important ways in which people differ from each other [4]. It resides in the transaction between the person and the world; it is neither just a disposition nor just a characteristic of the environment. Personal control is a belief about how one can interact with the world; it may take the form of believing that one can effect actual outcomes, choose among them, cope with their consequences, and/or understand them. In a responsive environment, personal control is desirable; it encourages intellectual, emotional, behavioral, and physiological vigor in the face of challenge. It is considered to be catalyzed by novel and challenging events; similarly, lack of personal control becomes salient in the face of overwhelming aversive events. Personal control can be thwarted by failure and encouraged by success, although it does not bear a one-to-one relationship to past patterns of success and failure.

What are self-management skills?

As far as educational process is concerned, there are a lot of pieces of advice in the Internet that intend to help students manage their studying process. For example Brian Cain suggests the following [1]:

1. Touch it once: One of the best ways to break the habit of procrastination is the concept of 'touch it once.'
2. Lose the deadlines
3. Get an accountability partner

According to Daniel Linman [3] the key self-management skills required for a student to be more productive include stress-resistance, problem solving, communication, time management, memory, physical activity.

Stress-Resistance. The first and foremost skill of self-management refers to a personal ability to resist any stressful situations. When you develop this self management skill, you can avoid many mistakes that people usually make when being stressed out.

Because a stressful situation usually blocks our ability to think and make rational decisions, we can't cope even with the simplest tasks at the workplace, so our productivity goes down and we get frustrated. That's why you need to develop this ability in order to be a productive employee able to offer resistance to a stressful situation.

Problem Solving. The second self-management skill requires you to use your brain as a mechanism for making right decisions. Even the hardest tasks and challenges can be efficiently handled if the mental process in your head is always in progress. Problem solving requires you to operate facts and make right assumptions to analyze the situation, review problems, and find effective solutions. Keeping your mind sober allows you to take right decisions even in the toughest situations.

Communication. The way how you can communicate information to others will determine your success. Communication is one of the key self-management skills required for both personal development and career advancement.

Being able to efficient communicate any information to other people means that you can share information with the minimized possible distortion and in the fastest possible way. Productive

employees always can efficiently communicate with their colleagues and management because they comprehensively understand the value of clearly and timely delivered information. So be sure you work on developing this skill for self-management.

Time Management. Producing expected results in a timely manner determines the success of our effort. Time management is an extremely important self-management skill that makes an employee be more productive. There's a great variety of time management techniques that show you how to develop this skill for self-management. Just use the web search to find plenty of them.

Memory. An ability to memorize events, names, facts, etc., allows an employee to remember about everything he/she needs to do daily tasks and duties. Among other self-management skills examples, committing to memory requires your personal effort for developing your mind abilities. There's a lot of techniques for improving memory, so use the web search to find them.

Physical Activity. Keeping your body in good shape is a critical self-management skill example. When you feel healthy and have a robust nervous system, you can do more things and cope with many challenges. Physical activity (like jogging, fitness, different sorts of sports, etc.) allows you to strengthen your body, keep your muscles up, and be more productive.

Implications to academic process

The critical analysis of self-management constituents described above let us suggest some procedures that can help students develop their self-management skills and abilities:

1. Make a to-do list. You can't efficiently plan for anything having no to-do list. First you need to make a task list and specify the key tasks for developing self-management skills examples. Use task management software to create and manage your tasks.

2. Prioritize tasks. Your to-do list may have a lot of tasks. But which tasks to complete first? To answer this question you need to consider all the tasks in your to do list and then set right priorities. By prioritizing the tasks you can decide what examples of self-management skills you'll need to develop first (according to your current needs and employment requirements).

3. Schedule tasks. Scheduling allows you to set deadlines and timeframes for your tasks. Use task management software to develop schedules and set task due dates relating to developing the self-management skills.

4. Be flexible. Regardless of your intentions and wishes, there will be days (caused by illness, vacation, holidays etc.) when the external world won't let you develop your self management skills. That's why you need to be flexible to get everything done through putting your tasks on hold and then returning back to the prioritized items on your to-do list. You shouldn't be frustrated and stressed out when you can't do a task because of some external factor (e.g. illness) – just put everything on hold and get back to your tasks as soon as you get an occasion for developing self-management skills.

Conclusion

Self-management strategies are intended to build a student's independence and ability to engage in self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. The power of self-management is its emphasis on building a feeling of control over one's own behavior. Nowadays the application receives a large e-learning, which improves student learning. The student appears flexible learner who is able to learn according to an individual plan that aims to meet his own needs. He is independent from the teacher and has the skills to investigate, perceive, process and evaluate information.

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