

ABSTRACT

Time Allocation: Student Profiles and the Consequences of Time Use

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It is widely understood that students are supposed to study two hours outside of class for every hour they are in class. Though this guideline is not enforced, we find that students spend about one hour for every hour they are taking classes and spend on average, over 30 hours a week on non-academic activities. Specifically, students are spending about 21-25 hours a week with friends and using the computer for fun. What are students doing with their time if they are not studying?

In this paper, we discuss the time use patterns of students with certain background characteristics. The way students spend their time impacts the various outcomes associated with one's schooling. Here, we discuss the relationship between the way students spend their time and academic engagement and GPA. Models control for socio-demographic characteristics, past academic performance and ability, and perceived obstacles to success. The analysis indicates that students spending more time on academics, working a job related to their major, seeing entertainment, exercising, spending time with friends and participating in extracurricular activities are more engaged while students spending more time commuting, on the computer for fun, and watching TV are less engaged. We also find that students spending more time on academic work, working on campus, working related to their major, spending more time with their family, and those that get more sleep have higher GPAs. Students that spend more time at religious services, with their friends, using the computer for fun and working for pay have lower GPAs. These findings suggest that even though students recognize the obstacles that hinder and contribute to their degree of academic success, the way students spend their time influences their degree of engagement and GPA even more.