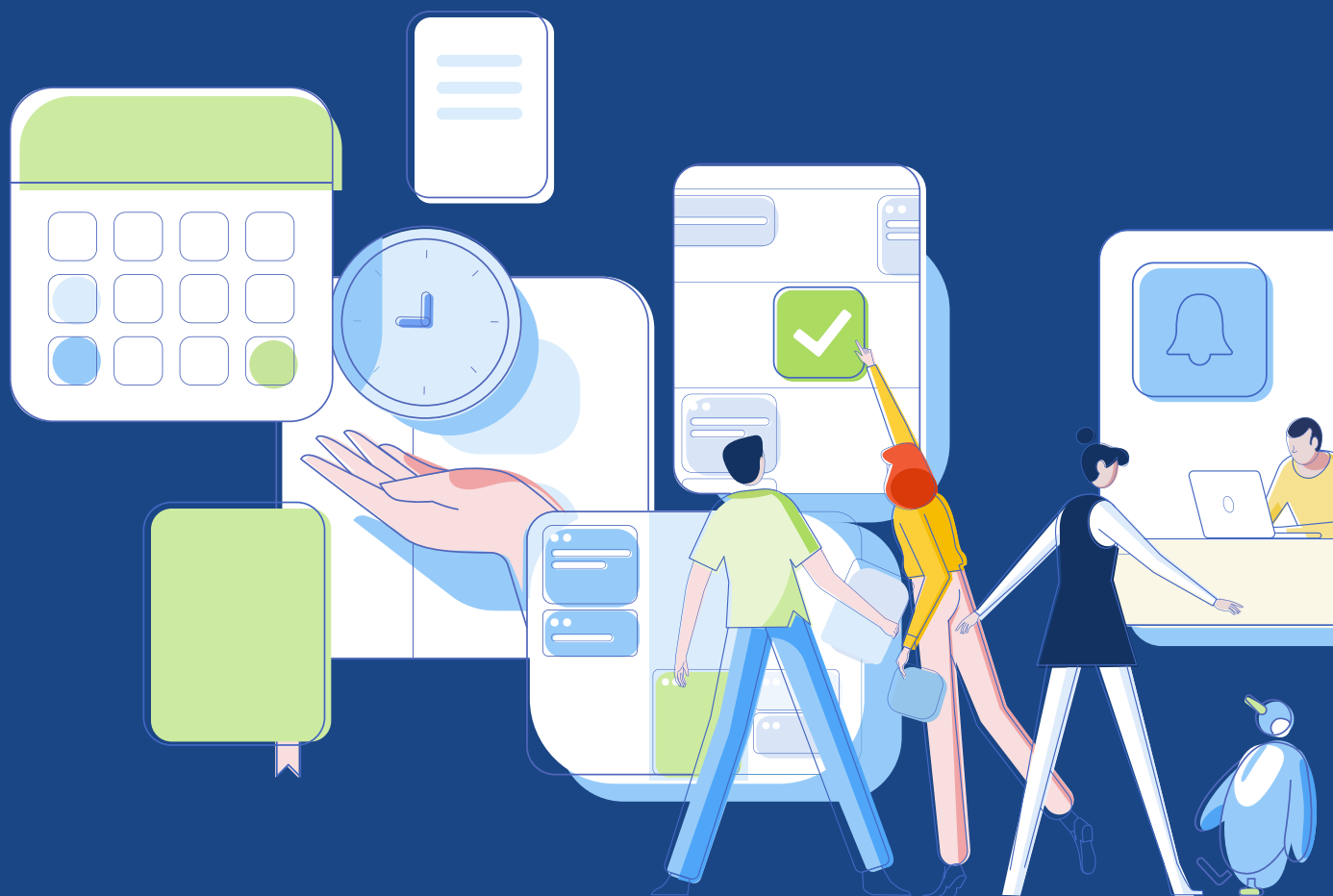


Doodle

TIME MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION



RESEARCH STUDY
OCTOBER 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Getting accepted into a college or university is an exciting moment in a student's life. Nerves are high and there's this constant anticipation of the big envelope in the mail. But it isn't until the first semester that students realize how tough and hectic college can actually be.

Time management is usually one of the biggest challenges for students. Their workload has tripled from what it used to be in high school. And distractions are everywhere. In an effort to make new friends, students attend social events and parties every week. With so many student clubs, associations and activities to choose from, getting involved seems inevitable. And then, of course, there's the age-old time management foe: procrastination. The mere thought of buckling down, working on assignments and studying for exams can just feel like too much. In many instances, it's a matter of simply thinking there will be enough time later to get it done. But then it's a last-minute scramble to cram as much information into their heads as possible or cobble together a 10-page paper overnight.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY & OBJECTIVES

We surveyed 1,019 students who are enrolled in colleges and universities across the United States. Our goal was to gauge their time management challenges, techniques and priorities. Additionally, we wanted to understand the role and value of technology and specific digital tools/apps in helping them achieve their academic goals. The survey was fielded in September 2020.

These problems aren't solely reserved for students. As faculty and administrators, you face your fair share of time management issues too. More often than not, you're sinking in a sea of lectures, groups, office hours, administrative meetings, paperwork, curriculum preparation, grading papers, publishing research and attending professional events. Your list of responsibilities and tasks seems to be growing longer and longer everyday.

On top of all of your responsibilities, you also face the added challenge of supporting, guiding and empowering students to excel in their classes, get good grades, cope with the adjustment to both college life (and now a remote learning experience) and, ultimately, reach their full potential. But how can you focus your full attention on your students when you have so many administrative tasks that can't be ignored? In this report, we'll examine the role of time management in students' academic success and how your faculty and administrators can tap into the benefits of technology to make students your top priority.



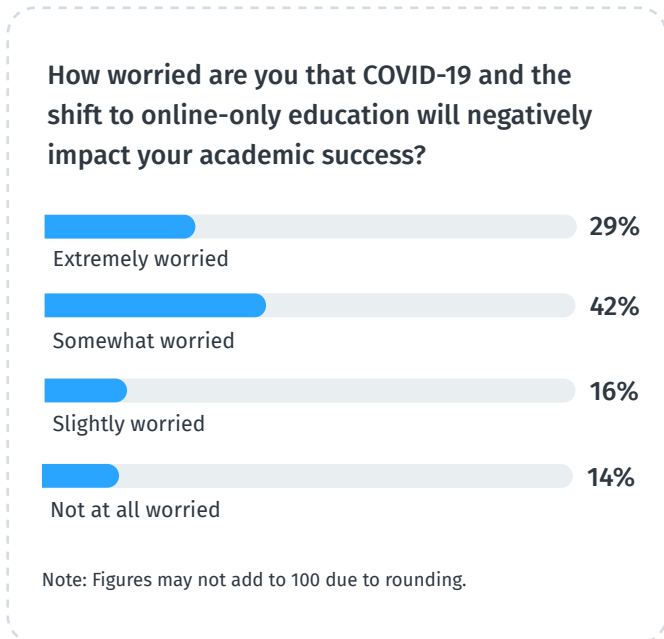
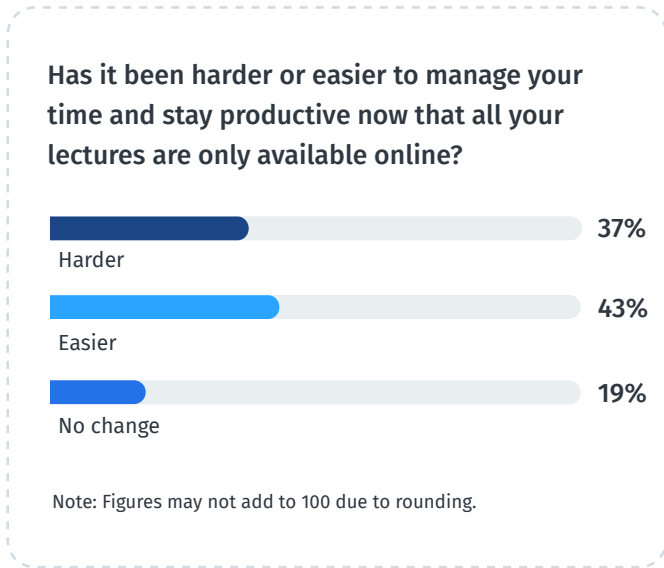
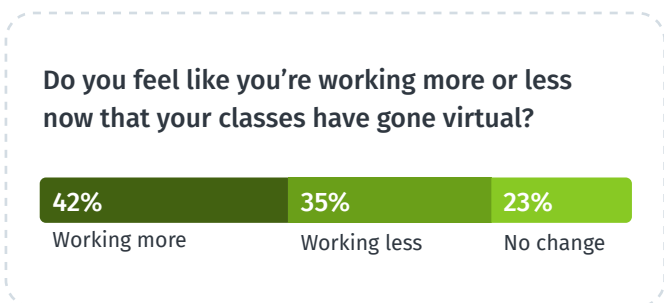
KEY FINDINGS & TRENDS

Remote Learning: Doomed for Failure, a Good Thing, or Somewhere in Between?

The educational system has taken a massive hit from the coronavirus pandemic. According to the [United Nations](#), the pandemic has affected nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. To that effect, school closures have impacted 94 percent of the world's student population. More recently, [some schools reopened only to shut down again](#) due to coronavirus outbreaks and subsequent health concerns.

Regardless of whether school campuses stay closed, reopen or shift everything online, education can't stop altogether. Students still need to learn and work towards their academic goals. Teachers still need to educate students, help them stay on top of their schoolwork and provide one-to-one guidance. And administrators still need to keep schools running from an operational and financial perspective.

According to our study, the shift to virtual learning has added more pressure on students, with 42 percent saying they feel like they're working more since their classes have gone virtual. On top of this, 37 percent of students have found it harder to manage their time and stay productive. Worse yet, 87 percent of students are worried to some degree that the shift to online-only education will negatively impact their academic success.



These findings prove just how scary uncertainty and change can be. That's exactly what students, faculty members and administrators are facing right now. But instead of letting the fear engulf your students, look at it as an opportunity. As the stewards of the educational experience for your students, you can help students cope with the adjustment to remote learning and all the confusion, fears and panic that comes with it.

How Faculty and Administrative Staff Can Ease Adjustment to Remote Learning

- Be available and listen actively to your students. This means giving your complete, intentional focus to what they're saying, rather than what their words literally mean.
- Provide students, faculty members and administrative staff with the necessary resources and digital tools to make better use of their time, be more productive and excel in their work. The more they can cut out admin work that's eating into their time and impeding their ability to perform, the more productive they will be and the more they will excel. It's a win-win.
- **Schedule one-to-ones** with individual students whom you teach or advise. Use this time to gauge how they're feeling. Don't talk about the class curriculum, their grades or academic performance. Focus on their emotional wellbeing.
- **Set up group meetings** with your department heads and administrative staff to understand how their workload is being affected with everything being shifted online. Do they have concerns? Are their needs being met? Do they have the necessary resources and tools to be effective educators? Asking these questions is critical to empowering your faculty and staff to do their jobs well and support your students.

The Juggling Act: Managing Time and Student-Life Balance

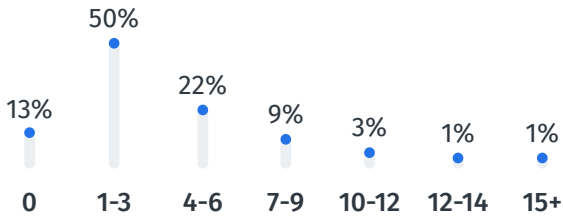
Just like work-life balance is a problem for employees, school-life balance has become a persistent problem for students. This is particularly true right now, as **COVID-19** has disrupted the **educational system** and forced students, teachers and staff to adjust to an online-only environment.

Here's the reality students are living in right now. School isn't the only thing on their plates. Most students are also juggling extracurricular activities, non-school commitments and personal priorities at home. We're not just talking about one or two activities in a month. According to our study, 50 percent of students participate in one to three extracurricular activities and non-school commitments on a weekly basis. School-life balance is likely to be even harder for 22 percent of students, who juggle four to six activities each week.

That's a lot on students' plates. Undoubtedly, their schedules are being packed full with classes, study sessions, sports team practice/workouts, student organization gatherings, club events, family commitments and so much more. And there's only so much time in the day to get everything done, while also doing what's needed to achieve their academic goals.

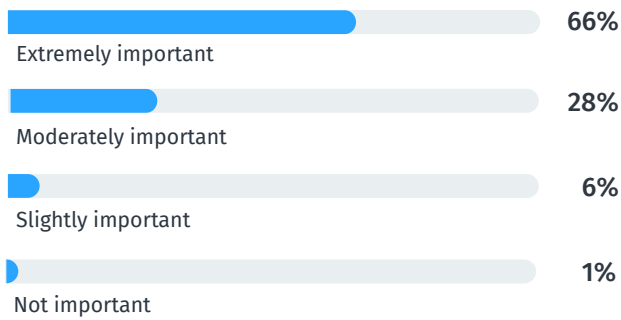
When you combine these factors together, you have a powder keg of a situation. On one hand, time management is a top priority and vital to academic success. On the other hand, time management is also one of the biggest challenges that impedes students' productivity, focus and academic performance. This is what our study found, with 94 percent of students saying time management is extremely important or moderately important in their ability to meet their academic goals. Meanwhile, time management (34 percent) and balancing other commitments (25 percent) are cited as the two biggest challenges students face in achieving their academic goals.

How many extra-curricular activities and non-school commitments do you participate in each week?



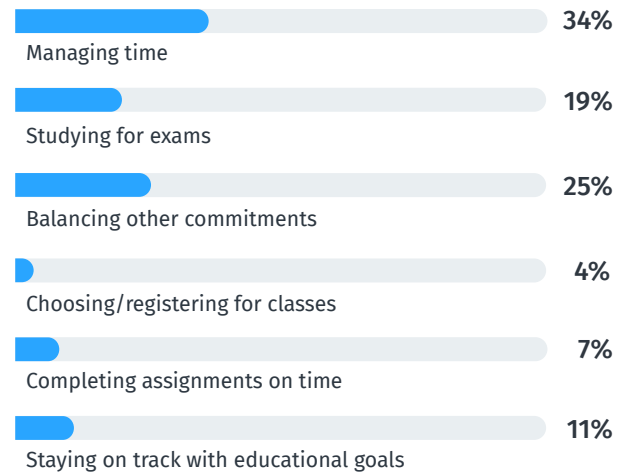
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How important is time management in your ability to meet your academic goals?



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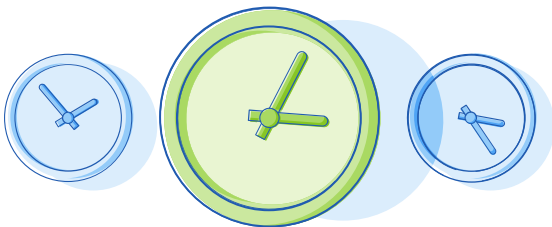
What's the biggest challenge you face in reaching your academic goals?



Students Are Torn Between Digital & Analog Processes

No college student will graduate without seeing or using digital tools. This is no exaggeration. As our study found, 93 percent of students use anywhere from one to 15 apps in a single day. When it comes to the types of apps students are using, email management (59 percent), communication and collaboration (56 percent), document management (56 percent), video conferencing (48 percent) and scheduling/calendar management (47 percent) were at the top of the list.

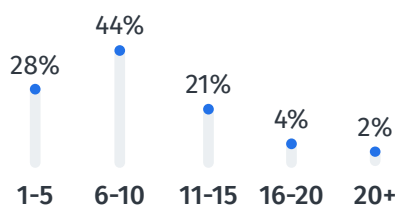
Despite the fact that students use upwards of 15+ apps daily, we were surprised to see that 35 percent of students still use old-school methods to organize study sessions (i.e. calling or emailing for availability). On the other hand, almost half (46 percent) of the respondents send group messages via social media and/or text apps. This isn't so surprising considering the fact that 44 percent of Gen Z (students) check in on social media at least hourly, with 7 percent checking in more often than every 15 minutes.



Our findings indicate that students are torn between digital and analog. Although digital tools bring order, convenience and efficiency to the learning experience, 35 percent of students can't completely let go of some of the more analog communication methods, like emailing and calling classmates for their availability to study together. Part of this inability to let go of these methods could be down to the fact that they're familiar and have become so much of a habit that they don't even realize they're doing it.

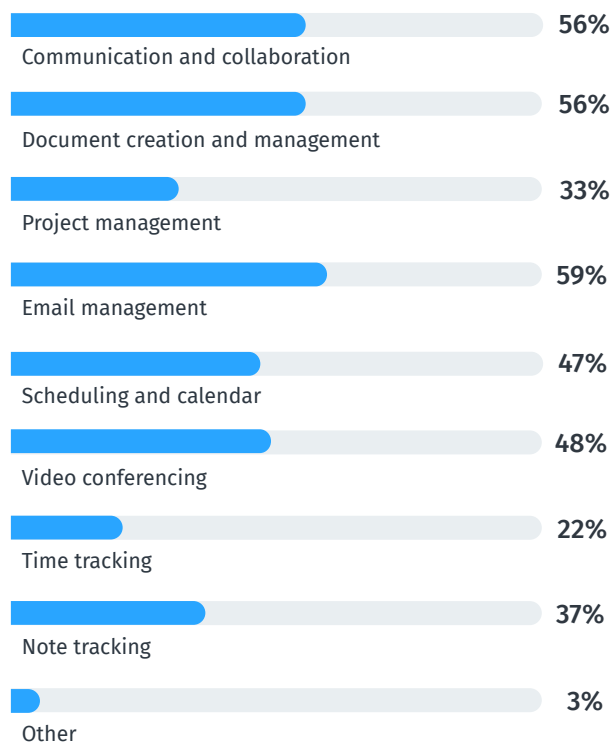
But as with the introduction of any new technology (internet, smartphones), it takes time to adjust to a new way of doing things. Eventually, you get the hang of it, become a power user and ditch the previous analog methods. So if you want to help your students get better control of their time so they can focus on their schoolwork, then make sure you equip them with the digital tools they need to be as productive as possible. Not only will they thank you for it, but you'll likely also see an improvement in their motivation, dedication and overall academic performance.

How many apps do you use in a single day?



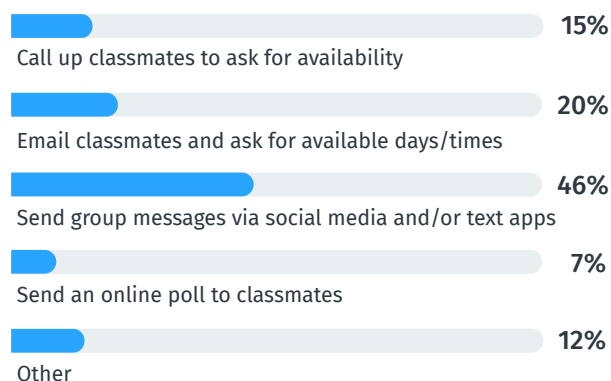
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What types of software/apps do you use to stay organized and productive at school?



Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

How do you typically organize study sessions for exams?



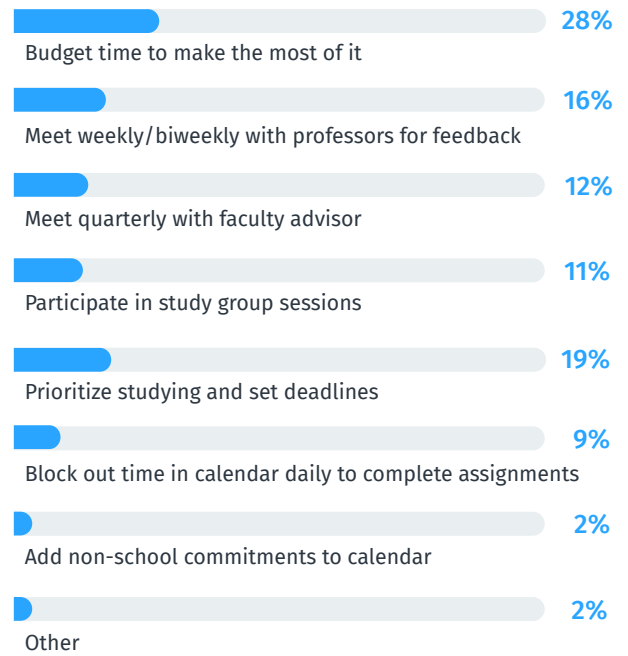
Time Management and Student-Faculty Interaction Outside Classroom Unlock Academic Success

While you might think prioritizing studying (19 percent) and participating in study group sessions (11 percent) would be the top strategies for improving academic performance, that isn't the case. What students find to be more useful is budgeting their time (28 percent) and meeting weekly/biweekly with their professors for feedback (16 percent).

As we mentioned earlier, time management plays a critical role in students' academic success. But as our study finds, 28 percent of students see real value in meeting regularly with their professors and faculty advisors - and even credit these meetings as being instrumental in excelling at school. So, students are prioritizing time in their schedules to meet with their professors, with 26 percent meeting with their professors several times a week and another 26 percent doing so at least once weekly.

Remember how we previously discussed that students are torn between digital and analog processes? That sense of inner conflict also carries over to how they ask for feedback from their professors. Despite the fact that office hours are a critical means of providing personalized attention and feedback to individual students, 34 percent of the surveyed students admitted they email their professors on an ad hoc basis. This is compared to 26 percent who ask for feedback during class and 20 percent who sign up for and attend office hours. Together, these findings suggest that students are more inclined to ask for feedback outside the classroom than during class itself, as office hours are more private and there is less chance of judgment from fellow students.

What method do you find most useful to improve your academic performance?

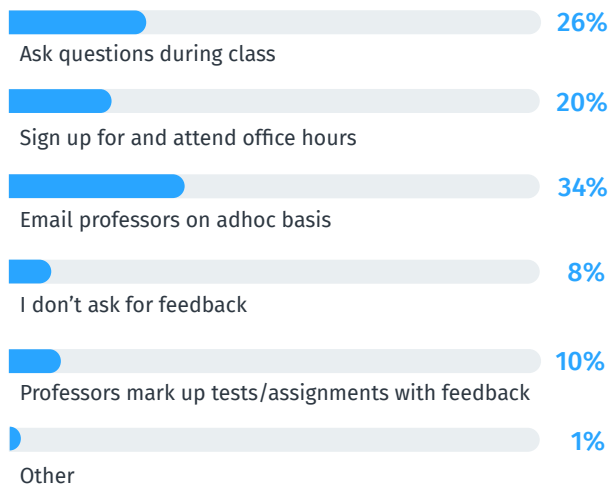


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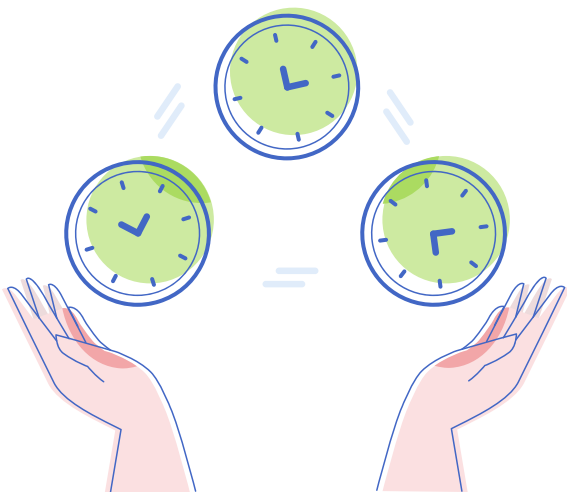
How often do you meet with your professors?



How do you typically get feedback and guidance from your professors?



According to [research from FileMaker Inc.](#), 87 percent of students say better time management and organization skills would help them get better grades. Time management is clearly vital to academic success. To help students manage their time better and reach their academic goals, we compiled a list of time management strategies.



10 Time Management Strategies Students Should Keep in Their Back Pockets

1. Slice and dice projects into smaller, manageable chunks.
2. Focus on one task at a time. Don't switch back and forth between assignments. Only move to a new task once a single task has been completed.
3. Prioritize tasks/activities by their level of importance - and tackle accordingly.
4. Follow the 80/20 rule: 20 percent of effort leads to 80 percent progress. 20 percent of effort would come from attending classes, engaging in class, asking for feedback from professors, taking good notes and turning in assignments on time.
5. Study in shorter bursts.
6. [Automate administrative tasks, like scheduling study sessions and office hours with professors](#), so time can be better spent on engaging in class, studying and getting feedback from professors.
7. Pay attention to your productivity flows and energy levels. When your productivity is highest, use that time to focus on a larger, high-priority assignment.
8. Use time blocking to make yourself unavailable for meetings, activities or anything else and dedicate that time to important tasks/projects. So if anyone tries to book time in the calendar, it will appear as unavailable.
9. Don't procrastinate. It ends up being more stressful and chaotic in the long run.
10. Set up assignment/project deadlines in your calendar so your grades don't suffer simply because you forgot a deadline.

Traditional Office Hours Setup Is Antiquated and In Dire Need of Automation

Office hours are a staple of the college and university experience. Professors are encouraged to hold in-person (and now virtual) office hours as a way of connecting with students outside of the classroom, forging closer relationships and being more accessible for questions, feedback and guidance.

We spoke to Simon Tarr, Professor of Media Arts and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the [University of South Carolina](#). As both a professor and an administrator, Professor Tarr has to juggle a range of roles and responsibilities. In addition to his teaching schedule and office hours, he has to balance administrative duties, manage extra-curricular initiatives like his student-staffed 'maker space' and find time for his own research. His colleagues' calendars are equally finely-calibrated.

If you're a hands-on academic like Professor Tarr, a few hours a week isn't always enough time to offer your students the support they need. Whether you're scheduling workshops, feedback sessions or group critiques, scheduling office hours with students can end up being a long, inefficient process. According to Professor Tarr, "Academics are really like the poster children of the type of person who Doodle is perfect for because if everybody has the same 9 to 5, then all you have to do is just mesh Excel or mesh Exchange calendars."

Oftentimes, office hours are under-utilized, leaving professors sitting alone in their office (or their virtual home office these days) preparing their curriculum or grading papers. It's important to ask why this might be happening. Our study might have some answers.

For one, it could have to do with how professors are announcing and coordinating their office hours. While students are heavy app users and digitally inclined, professors still have some catching up to do. For the most part, they stick to their tried-and-true office hours setup methods, with 34 percent of the surveyed

students saying their professors use email and 32 percent saying their professors simply list their office hours in the school syllabus.

At the same time, 64 percent of the surveyed students believe sign-up sheets are the easiest and most effective way for professors to coordinate office hours. When you think of a sign-up sheet, the first thing that probably comes to mind is a physical sheet of paper being tacked onto an office door where students can manually write down their names next to time slots. That may have worked before COVID-19, but it certainly won't cut it now.

Now consider this: There are [3.5 billion smartphone users worldwide](#) and the average US adult spent [3 hours and 43 minutes](#) a day on mobile devices in 2019. These stats illustrate just how antiquated the traditional office hours setup is and how much it's in need of automation to be up to par with the digital behaviors of students.

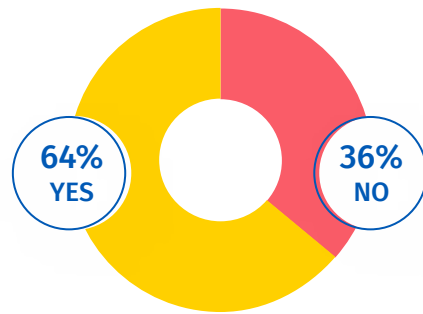
Here's what we know. Students are digitally savvy and use multiple tools and apps in a single day. Faculty-student interaction outside of the classroom is also essential to academic success. And sign-up sheets are considered ideal for setting up office hours.

Now here's where things get really interesting. Our study found that 32 percent of students prefer to use an online scheduling/appointment tool to book office hours with professors. That's a healthy percentage of students with the desire to automate the office hours process. But it's not what's currently available to them, with only 17 percent of students saying their professors use these tools. That's a large discrepancy between students' needs and how those needs are actually being met. More importantly, it's an opportunity for you as educators to take the necessary steps to modernize the traditional office hours setup. That leaves us with a clear solution: it's time to transition the manual sign-up sheet to an online sign-up tool.

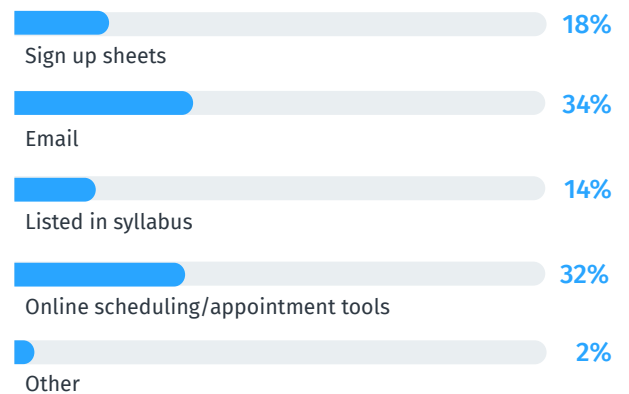
There are several types of online signup tools that can work in this context, including:

- Doodle:** Our scheduling tool makes it easy and intuitive to set up calendar slots for office hours so you can quickly schedule meetings with students, faculty and administrators. [This article in StreamingProfessor](#) walks you through a handy process for office hour signups, step-by-step.
- OpenScholar:** Office hour signups are referred to as Events.
- Canvas:** Use the Calendar Scheduler tool within Canvas to enable online signups for students enrolled in courses.
- Office 365:** If you're still not ready to fully digitize the office hours setup, you can create a web accessible form using Microsoft Excel. This isn't the most effective process, but it certainly beats posting a physical sign-up sheet to the office door.

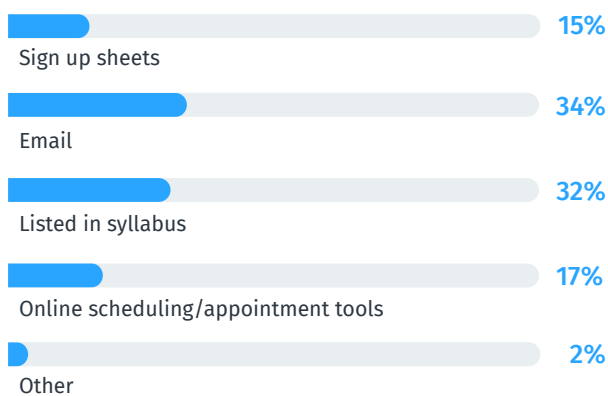
Do you think sign-up sheets are the easiest and most effective way for your professors to coordinate their office hours?



Which method would you prefer to use to book time with your professors during their office hours?



How do your professors typically announce and coordinate their office hours?



Office Hours with Prof Rafter

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
9:00 AM	9:00 AM				
10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM			10:00 AM
11:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM			11:00 AM
			1:00 PM		1:00 PM
			3:00 PM	2:00 PM	
			4:00 PM	3:00 PM	
4:00 PM	4:00 PM		4:00 PM	4:00 PM	
5:00 PM	5:00 PM			5:00 PM	

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Technology: A Savior for Higher Education

As many students head back to school for the fall semester (either physically back on campus or by way of virtual classes), faculty and staff are facing a number of hurdles. How can you keep students motivated to learn in an online environment? How can you keep class absences to a minimum? How can you stay on top of administrative tasks and processes so as not to disrupt the learning experience? How can you get one-to-one time booked in with your students in a quick and efficient manner? How can you guide your students toward academic excellence and prepare for the future?

Our study indicates that technology can have tremendous value and improve the learning experience. In fact, 55 percent of students say technology makes learning more flexible and convenient. Meanwhile, 16 percent of students value how technology makes it easier to collaborate with classmates and 13 percent see it as being useful in increasing access to their professors and faculty members. Technology poses a huge opportunity to not only empower [remote learning](#), but also to enable students to get better control of their time (and calendars) so they can focus on excelling in their classes and reaching their academic goals.

If students are so digitally inclined, then your faculty and administrative staff should be embracing technology in their day-to-day work. Right? Not necessarily. Although a [previous Gallup study](#) found that 41 percent of teachers see digital devices as being helpful to students' education, most students still don't see their professors as being so accepting of technology. For example, 83 percent of the surveyed students in our study feel their professors should use technology more in their day-to-day work.

As we explained earlier, a good portion of professors are still using antiquated methods (i.e. emailing or syllabus listing) to announce and coordinate office hours. In contrast, online scheduling tools are used far less often. Why is this the case, we asked ourselves? Perhaps it's because the school's board of directors or

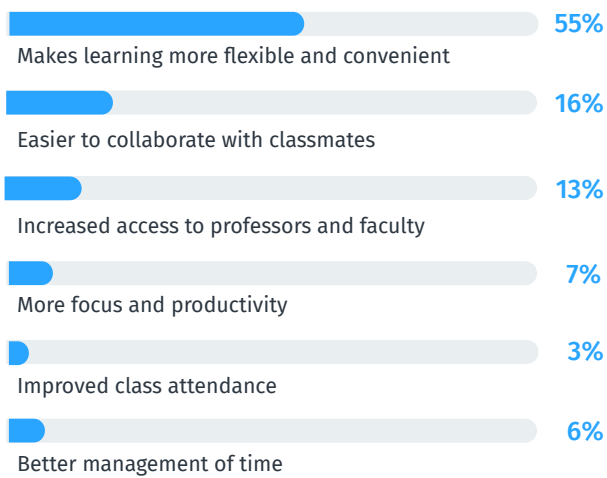
administration don't really understand the full scope of capabilities of online scheduling tools. Could it be because no one has quantified the amount of time and costs associated with using analog methods, like email or office hours signup sheets?

It could also have to do with the fact that scheduling tools aren't deemed to be vital to the day-to-day running of the school. We expect that this might have something to do with the perceived costs of such tools. Because of a misconception that online scheduling tools are too expensive, many administrators might worry that they won't be able to get budget approval from the higher ups. And so, your staff may not bother with implementing online scheduling tools.

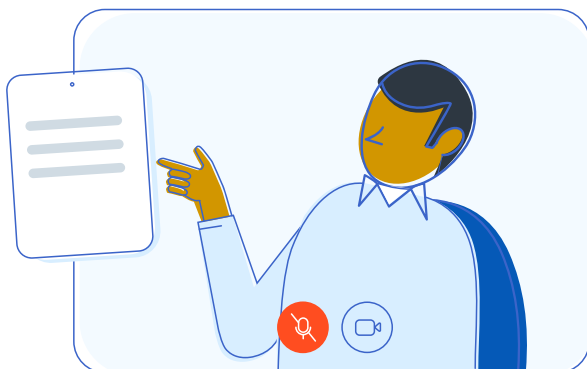
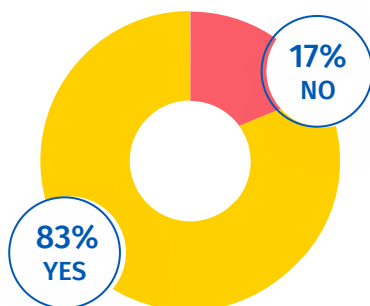
[Online scheduling tools](#) can automate so many aspects of the process, allowing everyone involved to focus on their work (be it completing assignments, studying for exams, class curriculums, administrative paperwork or department budgets). And as our study reveals, students are already believers in the power of technology to make learning more flexible, improve collaboration with fellow students, increase access to professors and faculty as well as boost their overall productivity. Plus, students won't have to wait for days to get quality one-to-one time with their professors for feedback on assignments, academic guidance and career advice. As our study found, 28 percent of students would like their schools to provide them with appointment scheduling software for free so they can better manage their time and minimize the typical delays involved with coordinating study sessions, office hours and extracurricular activities.

Faculty members who embrace technology will also see their time stretch farther. It can be so easy to get lost in a sea of lectures, groups, office hours, administrative meetings, class preparation, marking papers and attending school events. That's just the life of a faculty member. [Scheduling](#) and blocking out time slots in your calendars will help protect your time from other demands. This will also reduce the [decision fatigue](#) that's such a common result of adjusting to new, unexpected tasks.

What role does technology play in your academic life?



Do you think your professors should use technology more in their day-to-day work?



5 Ways for Faculty to Lean Into Technology

1. Use [scheduling software](#) for the simple set-and-forget of one-to-one and group meetings with students. This will cut out a large number of hours from the usual email ping-pong that it takes to organize even the most straightforward meeting.
2. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, [virtual meetings](#) have come to the fore and now play a significant role in academic life. Use [Doodle and Zoom together](#) to schedule large faculty meetings in a virtual environment. By using both together, these meetings can be booked quickly and a Zoom link is automatically added into the calendar invite. No toggling back and forth between Doodle and Zoom is required.
3. Use a communication platform, like Slack, to interact and pass essential messages on to students, fellow professors, faculty members and administrative staff. Answering questions in a way that all can see means you won't be asked the deadline for that paper 40 times. Having an open, real-time communication link between students and professors means more questions are likely to be answered online, rather than during lengthy one-to-one meetings, while students get answers when they need them.
4. If your school doesn't use Slack, but you still want to ask important questions before your meetings with students, you can do that directly from Doodle's scheduling tool. You can [type in custom questions](#) into a Bookable Calendar for invitees to answer (optional or mandatory) before they book in time with you. This will bring you one step closer to having more focused, effective meetings with your students.
5. Record key sessions so students can revisit them when studying for exams, catch up on them if they missed a lecture and even use the recordings for future study groups.

Don't Underestimate the Importance of a Strong Support System

No student can get through their college experience all on their own. Cultivating and maintaining a strong support system will benefit students in a multitude of ways. A support system is vital to help them cope during stressful times, foster a sense of community, be there to listen when students are struggling and offer advice that will help them excel in their studies.

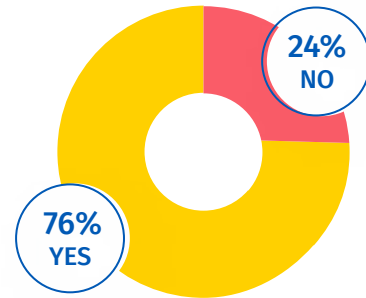
As faculty and administrators, this is an important part of your job. The good news is that 76 percent of the surveyed students feel they're getting the necessary support to manage their time and balance other commitments. This indicates schools are investing the time, resources and budgets to deliver wide-ranging support to students.

However, that still leaves 24 percent of students who don't feel supported by their faculty and administrators. When we asked students what type of support they'd like their school to provide to help manage their time, the number one response was 'provide appointment scheduling software for free to all 'student' (28 percent). Given how digitally savvy and inclined students are, we aren't so surprised to see that students want this type of support.

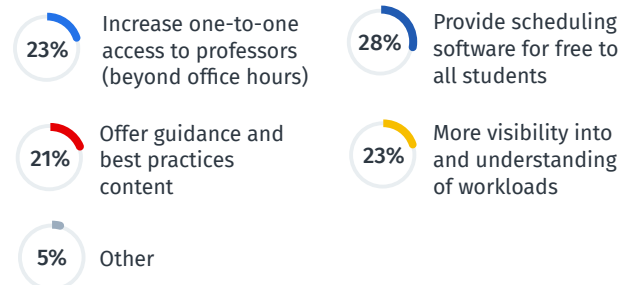
What concerned us is that 23 percent of students said they'd like their schools to have more visibility into and understanding of their workloads. This suggests that students may be feeling overwhelmed by their workloads and don't necessarily feel that their

professors and advisors acknowledge the sheer extent of their workloads. More importantly, they would find comfort in having their professors, faculty and advisors take that into account.

Do you feel that the professors and faculty provide the necessary support to help you manage your time and balance other commitments?



How would you like your school to support you in managing your time?



CONCLUSION

The learning experience will never be the same following COVID-19. But one thing is for certain: students, faculty and administrators are all struggling to cope with the transition to remote education. Anxiety, communication challenges and technical woes are some of the hurdles schools are facing.

Whether you're a student, professor, head of department, dean or administrator, improving your time management skills can be vital to unlocking your academic success. But doing so can be incredibly hard, especially with so much to get done in a day and so much administrative work clogging up your day. This is where technology has the power to shape the future of learning.

For your students, technology can make the learning experience more flexible and convenient. It can also increase access to guidance and feedback from their

professors and advisors. On top of that, it can help them be more selective about their schedules, manage their time better and avoid procrastinating so that they can excel in their classes and reach their academic goals.

As faculty and administrators, technology can be extremely useful in eliminating administrative work that eats into your productivity and takes your focus away from your students. That's the most important thing to you and so it should be. Given how digitally savvy and inclined students are, it will only benefit you to automate and streamline how you set up meetings, office hours and coordinate group critiques. That will mean less time spent on tiresome and tedious tasks - and more time to devote to your school and students.

ABOUT DOODLE

Doodle is the leading enterprise scheduling technology helping the world's largest brands instantly set meetings with clients, colleagues and teams. Tapping into the unique nature of smart scheduling with AI and chatbots, Doodle simplifies the planning of 1:1 and group meetings for professionals.

As the world's most trusted online scheduling platform, Doodle has more than 30 million monthly active users. Part of the Swiss media group TX Group, Doodle AG is headquartered in Zurich, with offices in Berlin, Atlanta, New York City and Belgrade.

CONTACT US

To learn how Doodle can help you get meetings scheduled quickly and effortlessly, [contact our sales team for a product demonstration](#).

If you would like to test out Doodle before committing long-term, you can [get started with a free 14-day trial](#).

If you're a journalist or analyst and would like to request more information about this report or speak with Doodle CEO Renato Profico, please contact our corporate communications/PR team at press@doodle.com.