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## Procrastination – from causes and effects to intervention

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**Abstract** *In search of scientific aspects about procrastination (causes, manifestation, effects), our efforts are directed towards identifying the intervention means in view of minimizing/ eliminating a maladaptive behavior that is visible in the delay of beginning or ending tasks, useless, unproductive and delayed behaviour. Even if not all delays are problematic, what turns such delays into issues is the manner in which they affect our lives and the intensity of negative feelings that are related to procrastination. Effective time management can lead to the diminishing or eradication of procrastination. At the same time, the phenomenon of procrastination generated by the promotion of irrational cognitions may be controlled through correct training, a fair capitalisation of opportunities, and a systematic, rigorous emotional control/ adjustment in task completion. Therefore, self-discipline that is necessary to successfully complete an initiated task represents an accurate means of avoiding procrastination.*

**Keywords:** qualitative education, procrastination, self-discipline.

### Prezentarea problemei

Procrastination represents a harmful behaviour, characterised by constant delay of tasks, despite the consequent negative effects that the individual is fully aware of. Etymologically, the term is of Latin origin, hesitation (vb. (to) hesitate)- to postpone something, respectively the Latin „procrastinatus”, „pro” meaning „forward” and „crastinus” being the day/days to follow. Even though the term has been only recently borrowed into Romanian, it is a term used more and more frequently. It can be considered a neologism taken from English, „procrastination” meaning the delay or postponing of commencing a task. Since ancient times, philosophers such Socrates or Aristotle created a word for procrastination, akrasia, which is synonymous with the lack of self-control or lack of taking action against a reasonable cognition. Xenophon, a friend and scholar of Socrates, presented several socratic dialogues<sup>1</sup> indicting the opposite of akrasia, represented by enkrateia, not simply a virtue, but the *foundation of all virtues*. In other words, the opposite of procrastination is to maintain self-control, and procrastination means the *postponing of the good*.

Psychology researchers make use of three criteria in order to create categories for procrastination. For a behaviour to be considered a form of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xenophon>, accessed 23.05.2022

procrastination, it needs to be at the same time unproductive, useless and delayed. Different explanations of the trend to postpone are provided, a recurrent reference being that procrastination is a mechanism of fighting the anxiety associated with the beginning or completion of a task or decision<sup>2</sup>. It is estimated that procrastination is a form of inappropriate delay, so that deliberate and important tasks are voluntarily and uselessly delayed, affecting performance, and developing a high level of stress and/or diminishing wellbeing<sup>3</sup>. This concept is shortly defined as a failure in self-regulation<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, it must be stated that the mere delay of unimportant tasks does not necessarily mean procrastination, but it can be an example of prioritising, of correct identification of priorities. The change of behaviour through qualitative education, the use of new strategies that are desirable for education and their systematic use can lead to satisfactions in the sense intended by both the instructor and the learner<sup>5</sup>. The identification of procrastination is a process of self-analysis, understanding and awareness of our behaviour with regards to grasping the priority tasks and avoiding, at the same time, through various methods, the beginning of task solving or the lack of management of important tasks that have been started, because of different delays (for example: the need to relax, passive rest, email writing, discussions, telephone conversations etc.)

Even from its occurrence in English, in the 18th century, procrastination was identified not only by postponing, but also with an irrational act of delaying, with voluntary delaying of certain tasks, despite our being aware of the mistake that is made when procrastinating, knowing that we are doing ourselves a disservice.<sup>6</sup> For some people, delaying important tasks is a strategy to adapt. In other cases, it may be the question of academic postponing- the student syndrome-specific to those who consider they have much better results when working under pressure. Studies indicate that procrastination occurs in over 50% of students<sup>7</sup>. But the tendency to postpone can also be chronic, as

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy A. Pynchyl, Fuschia M. Sirois, „Procrastination, Health, and Well-Being”, Chapter 8 - Procrastination, *Emotion Regulation, and Well-Being*, 2016, pp. 163-188, DOI:10.1016/B978-0-12-802862-9.00008-6

<sup>3</sup> Idem

<sup>4</sup> Steel, Piers. „The nature of procrastination: a meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure! in *Psychological Bulletin*, 133 (2007), no.1, pp. 65-94, DOI:10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65; Steel, Piers, Cornelius J. Konig. „Integrating Theories of Motivation”, in *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (2006), no.4, pp.889–913.

<sup>5</sup> Manea, Adriana-Denisa; Albulescu Ion, Stan Cristian, „Student learning”, in *The European Proceedings of Social Behavioural Sciences. Conference: ERD 2020- Education, Reflection, Development*, 104(2021), pp.1-9, DOI: 10.15405/epsbs.2021.03.02.1

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/286646720/Procrastinarea>, accessed 3.04.2020

<sup>7</sup> Sowon Kim, Sébastien Fernandez, Lohyd Terrier, „Procrastination, personality traits, and academic performance: When active and passive procrastination tell a different story”, in *Personality and Individual Differences* 108(2017), DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.12.021

sign of a personality trait. In a multi-polar, multi-competitive and digitalised society, the tendency to postpone important tasks is found more and more in our behaviour, and we may say that procrastination is the disease of modern civilisation. Explanations of this phenomenon are decoded in relation to the natural means in which the individual finds self-motivation ( we focus on the the tasks that generate pleasure and immediate benefits, by systematically avoiding the monotonous, uninteresting contexts, or those contexts that will only bring future benefits), but also as a result of the lack of time, of the individual's overstimulation in the context of modern life.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, procrastination is a major disfunction of human abilities, with a negative influence on the capacity to establish priorities when facing the numerous tasks that need to be completed on a daily basis.<sup>9</sup>

Whether it is called delay, giving up on completing a started task, avoidance or ignoring of household chores, procrastination can have a major impact upon the quality of life. Even if the negative effects are clearly felt by each of use, procrastination is a frequently encountered behaviour<sup>10</sup>.

### **Causes and effects of procrastination**

Procrastination is a much more complex phenomenon that involves, beyond the psychological factors, a strong sociocultural and technological influence. The amount of data, the variety of options, the diversity of tasks and opportunities, as well as the difficulty in making decisions all favour procrastination.

Among the psychological mechanisms that are found at the basis of procrastination, according to specialised literature<sup>11</sup> we may refer to fear of failure, fear of success, getting out of the comfort zone, fight for autonomy, perfectionism. Procrastination can also be caused by psychological problems, as well as attention deficit disorder, bipolar disorder, depression. At the same time, the reasons that generate procrastinating behaviours are related to the type of tasks that we are about to do, in the sense that the task may be either unpleasant (each task has sequences/ stages/ aspects that are less pleasant), or overwhelming ( regardless the training and experience/expertise in a certain area, there are sometimes things that go beyond the real capacities/skills).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://expertizapsihologicajudiciara.ro/procrastinarea-boala-civilizatiei-moderne-psihologii-explica-de-unde-vine-tendinta-de-a-amana-lucrurile-importante/> accessed 26.02.2021

<sup>9</sup> Andrei Vlăducu, Perspective\_politice\_2015\_decembrie.qxd 12/13/2015, p 91, <http://perspective.politice.ro/index.php/ppol/article/view/74/67>, accessed 28.05.2022

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.clinicaonanicolau.ro/procrastinarea/>, accessed 21.03.2022

<sup>11</sup> <http://carmenileapsiholog.ro/cauzele-procrastinarii>, accessed 28.05.2022

Therefore, procrastination is associated to the adversity towards tasks and this varies according to the stage in the activity.<sup>12</sup>

Postponement is a frequent form of and prone to self-regulation failure, which includes an insufficiently researched/ investigated issue, hence the complete lack of understanding of this behaviour. Strong and recurrent indicators of postponement are the adversity towards the task, delay of the task, self-efficacy and impulsiveness, as well as consciousness with its self-control, distractibility, management and accomplishment motivation facets. These effects prove to be in accordance with the theory of temporal motivation, an integrating hybrid of the queuing theory and the hyperbolic reduction.<sup>13</sup> It is easy to fall prey to postponement, given that some people tend to delay tasks either because of the fear of success or failure, of concerns regarding their skills, of the excessive pressure at work when several tasks are assigned without accurate reward<sup>14</sup> or perfectionism that leads to postponement.<sup>15</sup> Procrastination caused by fear of failure occurs when it is easier to tolerate the guilt of not being organised or motivated enough in carrying out a task, than tolerating failure in the accomplishment of the task, which would favour a negative overall evaluation. In other words, the fear of lack of success is greater than the fear of procrastination consequences. In this case, the product/result is a direct reflection of skills, the level of skills indicating the worthiness of the individual; the higher the level, the higher the feeling of personal worthiness<sup>16</sup>. Procrastination is the one that intervenes between equalising, allowing the establishment of direct proportionality between the level of skills and the reached level of performance. Performance can no longer be equated with skillfulness, because there was not enough effort. Regardless of the performance, the relation between personal worthiness and skills can be maintained. The category also includes those individuals that fear mediocrity so much that they delay task completion and cannot account for their weak/ mediocre result, which at the same time remaining under a form of protection

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<sup>12</sup> Pychyl, T. A., Sirois, F. M., „Procrastination, emotion regulation, and well-being”, in F. M. Sirois & T. A. Pychyl (Eds.), *Procrastination, health, and well-being*, 2016, pp. 163–188). Elsevier Academic Press, DOI:/10.1016/B978-0-12-802862-9.00008-6

<sup>13</sup> Piers Steel, „The nature of procrastination: a meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure”, in *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(2007), no.1, pp. 65-94, 2007, DOI:10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65

<sup>14</sup> Tucker-Ladd, C. (2006). „Psychological self-help”, Chapter 4: Behaviour motivation and self-control. [https://www.psychologicalselfhelp.org/Chapter4/chap4\\_151.html](https://www.psychologicalselfhelp.org/Chapter4/chap4_151.html), accessed 3.05.2022

<sup>15</sup> Seo, E. H., „Self-efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and academic procrastination”, in *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 36(2008), no.6, pp. 753-764.

<sup>16</sup> Jane Burka, Lenora M. Yuen, *Procrastination: Why You Do It, What to Do About It*, Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2008

(„ I didn't have enough time, but if I did, something extraordinary would have resulted!”)<sup>17</sup>.

For others, procrastination represents a confirmation mechanism for the negative beliefs one holds of oneself, some which are not always realised. These beliefs, namely cognitive schemas, function as a filtre that allows the extraction of the data that validates and nourishes the negative self-thought and simultaneously creates experiences in accordance to this. Most of the time, the origin of these schemas can be found in childhood and adolescence, and they are continuously developed in one's lifetime. This is why most procrastinators maintain this fundamental belief through postponement, avoiding the situations in which they could prove their worthiness or remaining in environments that don't grant them the chance to grow<sup>18</sup>.

Fear of success is a solid reason why people procrastinate. Accompanied by a varied array of rigid fears and beliefs, this microphobia represents the fear of the consequences triggered by a potential success: whether it is the coming out of anonymity and attention seeking, of envy, or the pressure of being just a performer in the future, the fear of losing control over one's life. At the same time, leaving the comfort zone stands as another reason for procrastination, be it a physical or emotional one. This is associated with the belief of those who expect things to happen naturally, without much effort or planned interventions. Because of a low capacity of emotional self-regulation, these individuals have the tendency of avoiding strong feeling and therefore challenges as well. Moreover, they face challenges with fear or anger, which reduces/hinders their capacity of perceiving these challenges as real opportunities to grow/develop. The fight for autonomy, occurred out of the fear of being controlled may lead to procrastination; being particularly manifested in those who have issues with authority ( some tend to procrastinate as a means of protest( not necessarily intentional) towards the power that superiors have, other delay to take on or complete tasks, thus fighting the pressure they feel as a control and attack upon their autonomy<sup>19</sup>.

According to Burka<sup>20</sup>, perfectionism is a trait that can favour/lead to procrastination. One of the creeds that a perfectionist has in delaying a task is the existence of a perfect solution that is yet to come, thus modifying and repeatedly verifying until the deadlines has passed. Dryden<sup>21</sup> indicates the fact that many individuals procrastinate because of their rigid , irrational beliefs

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<sup>17</sup><http://carmenileapsiholog.ro/cauzele-procrastinarii/> accessed 28.05.2022

<sup>18</sup> Idem

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem

<sup>20</sup> Jane B. Burka, Lenora M. Yuen, *Procrastination: Why You Do It, What to Do About It*, 2008

<sup>21</sup> Dryden, W.” Dealing with procrastination: The REBT approach and a demonstration session”, in *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 30(2012), no.4, pp. 264-281, DOI: 10.1007/s10942-012-0152-x

regarding the task they avoid and the consequence that requires less delay or avoidance. This rigid belief leads to an absolute necessity, and extreme convictions that the shape of horrendous beliefs (exaggerated thoughts about how horrible a task might be), beliefs regarding the lack of tolerance to discomfort and beliefs of depreciation related to oneself, to others or the living conditions<sup>22</sup>. Of all the irrational beliefs of procrastinators the following are noteworthy: *I need to be perfect; Everything I do needs to come naturally and effortlessly; It's safer not to do anything than risk and lose; If I don't do something perfectly, it's not worth doing it; I must avoid challenges; If I can make it now, I will have to make it everytime; Following someone's rules means giving up and not being in control anymore; There is a correct answer, decision and I am going to wait until I find it.*

Under the circumstances in which procrastination is used as a mechanism of fighting anxiety related to the beginning or ending of a task/ decision, and the delay functions as a mechanism of regulating feelings, this mood control is only a short-term accomplishment. The relation between feelings regulation and postponement is emphasised in more general research on self-regulation, which proves the way in which mood control can lead to a failure in self-control.<sup>23</sup>

In tackling the compulsory or optional tasks, a common phenomenon that students encounter is adjournment. Adjournment not only leads to a result that is below the quality standard, but it also generates fatigue, high levels of stress, both being unfavourable to mental wellbeing. Clearly, not all adjournments are problematic. The extent to which adjournment becomes a problem is determined by the manner in which an individual's life is affected, by the intensity of negative feelings that are associated. Adjournment can be modeled through a correct understanding of the mechanisms that are at its basis, the dynamics of the cognitive system.<sup>24</sup>

The effects of procrastination can be decoded at the level of multiple domains such as performance, wellness and health<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, regarding productivity and performance, a meta-analysis focusing on procrastination<sup>26</sup> indicates a negative and low association between procrastination and academic performance, the conclusion being that procrastination is sometimes harmful, other times harmless, but certainly useless. Another meta-analysis carried out on

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<sup>22</sup> Dryden, W., "Rational emotive behaviour therapy: Distinctive features", Routledge, 2009

<sup>23</sup> Timothy A. Pynchyl, Fuschia M. Sirois, „Procrastination, Health, and Well-Being”, Chapter 8 - Procrastination, in *Emotion Regulation, and Well-Being*, 2016, pp. 163-188, DOI:10.1016/B978-0-12-802862-9.00008-6

<sup>24</sup> Zhao, Wang, Gaafar, Khaled. "Procrastination Dynamics: A Study of Delay Tactics and Their Implications", in *Conference: 36th International Conference of the System Dynamics Society At: Reykjavik, Iceland*, 2018, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336410037>

<sup>25</sup> <https://laboratorstiintecognitiveclinice.ro/677-2/> accessed 23.05.2022

<sup>26</sup> Steel, P., "The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure", in *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(2007), no.1., pp. 65-94.

38.000 individuals confirms the negative relation between procrastination and academic performance<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, with regards to online procrastination, research shows that people reckon that 50% of the time spent online ( social media, online shopping) represents a form of procrastination, with implications and costs regarding productivity in all domains<sup>28</sup>. Regarding psychological wellbeing, procrastination is related to certain negative moods, such as anxiety and depression, shame, guilt, distress, diminished mental health.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, procrastination is linked to a variety of risky behaviours for health, such as unhealthy food and decreased physical activity.<sup>30</sup> Even though some research studies indicate that procrastination precedes certain negative moods, other studies show that the relation between delay and mood is bidirectional because the negative effect can predict procrastination in its turn.<sup>31</sup>

Even if currently the procrastination concept is presented as having mainly dysfunctional connotations, there are some studies that emphasize the presence of active procrastination which assumes a functional postponement by which the individual intentionally adjourns an action and benefits from this.<sup>32</sup> This category includes the students who, under time pressure, during exam sessions, have a better cognitive performance and score good results.

### **Intervention means**

Cognitive-behavioural therapy techniques are efficient in the case of procrastination, more specifically behavioural activation, exposure therapy,

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<sup>27</sup>Kim, K. R., & Seo, E. H. The relationship between procrastination and academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 82(2015). pp. 26-33. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2015.02.038

<sup>28</sup> LaVoie, J. A., Pychyl, T. A.,” Cyberslacking and the procrastination superhighway: A web-based survey of online procrastination, attitudes, and emotion!, in *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(2001), no.4. pp.431-444

<sup>29</sup> Sirois, F. M. , Pychyl, T. A., ” Procrastination. *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*”, 3 (2016), pp. 330-338. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-397045-9.00166-X

<sup>30</sup> Sirois, F. M., Giguère, B. ”When resistance isn’t futile: Task enjoyment as a protective factor against health procrastination, in the face of temptation”. In *8th Biennial Procrastination Research conference*, Sherbrooke, QC, 2013

<sup>31</sup> Ferrari, J. R.,” Procrastination and attention: Factor analysis of attention deficit, boredom, intelligence, self-esteem, and task delay frequencies”, In *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 16(2001), pp. 185-196; Ferrari, J. R.” Dysfunctional procrastination and its relationship with self-esteem, interpersonal dependency, and self-defeating behaviors”. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 17(1994), no.5, pp.673-679.; Tice, D. M., Bratslavsky, E., Baumeister, R. F.,” Emotional distress regulation takes precedence over impulse control”, in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(2001), no.1. pp. 53-67.

<sup>32</sup> Choi, J. N., & Moran, S. V.,” Why not procrastinate? Development and validation of a new active procrastination scale”, in *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 149(2009), pp.195–211., DOI: 10.3200/socp.149.2.195-212.

cognitive restructuring, stimuli control, assertiveness management<sup>33</sup> both online and as group therapy had a positive effect in reducing procrastination. Moreover, the level of procrastination can be reduced through an intervention included on a mobile app (MT-PRO), which promotes the functional approach and the avoidance of a dysfunctional behaviour by means of systematic use of the techniques derived from cognitive distortions modification techniques, gamification principles and operant conditioning<sup>34</sup>. Rational emotive and behavioural therapy(the ABC<sup>35</sup> model) with an emphasis on the triggering event, the individual's cognitions and the effects of these cognition are also successfully applied in the case of procrastination.

One of the most popular and frequently used strategies to diminish procrastination is related to an effective time management (adequate structuring of time by establishing short worktime intervals which will be further extended; defining a realistic objective), task identification and development of task focus; task prioritisation and elimination of distractions, development of rational cognitions, useful in discomfort situations, removal of excuses and increasing discomfort tolerance.

The actions meant to diminish procrastination can be learned, repeated until they become habits that can generate pleasure, joy and comfort, which is in accordance to the principles of a healthy, qualitative education<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, the environment where tasks are to be carried out can be reorganised ergonomically, efficiently and aesthetically. At the same time, the project we aim to complete will start with the most difficult tasks, with consequent rewards for each success.

A thorough program for the reduction/ elimination of procrastination involved two directions/ steps of successive actions. The first step aims at cognitions related to identification/awareness of the causes of procrastination, understanding/ comprehension of these causes, as well as the awareness that much effort is deemed necessary in order to change a procrastinating

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<sup>33</sup> Rozental, A., Forsström, D., Lindner, P., Nilsson, S., Mårtensson, L., Rizzo, A., Carlbring, P. Treating procrastination using cognitive behavior therapy: a pragmatic randomized controlled trial comparing treatment delivered via the Internet or in groups. *Behavior therapy*, 49(2018), no.2, pp.180-197. doi: 10.1016/j.beth.2017.08.002;

Rozental, A., Forsström, D., Tangen, J. A., Carlbring, P.” Experiences of undergoing Internet-based cognitive behavior therapy for procrastination: A qualitative study”, in *Internet Interventions*, 2(2015), no.3. 314-322. DOI: 10.1016/j.invent.2015.05.001

<sup>34</sup> Lukas, C. A., & Berking, M.” Reducing procrastination using a smartphone-based treatment program: A randomized controlled pilot study! in *Internet interventions*, 12 (2018), pp.83-90, DOI: 10.1016/j.invent.2017.07.002

<sup>35</sup> Ellis, A., *How to Maintain and Enhance Your Rational-Emotive Therapy Gains*. New York: The Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy, 2000

<sup>36</sup> Manea Adriana Denisa, „Features of Educational Activities in the Contemporary Society”, in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no12., pp. 255-260; Manea, Adriana Denisa. "Educational values within the scope of the technological revolution", *Astra Salvensis*, VII (2019), no.14, pp.31-37



behaviour. The second step is represented by the design and implementation of the actual plan. Organised in five sequences, the plan is structured in a finite timeline and requires self-control, self-management and self-assessment (specialised assistance is required only in special situations). The system of strategies and instruments is flexible, according to the context, personal needs and possibilities. The sequences of the action plan aim to:

- *Establish the objective and develop an obsessive attitude towards it*- Objectives are set according to personal vision and values. The ability to focus on these can be developed by using the 25/5 rule (a 25-objective listing is compelled, of which a top 5 is selected for intensive focus). The objectives will be turned into steps and actions that are tackled daily, weekly or monthly- according to the case/ target objective, thus building habits out of repetitive actions. A work instrument can be a flier, a photo displayed in the workspace, which allows the frequent visualisation of the objective
- *Cognitive reorganisation*- Design of scenarios meant to eliminate fears, irrational / self-sabotaging beliefs and replacing these with rational beliefs;
- *Improvement of physical and mental health*- Practicing a healthy lifestyle which consists of physical activity necessary to strengthening the body and development of the brains, healthy food, active rest and sleep. At the same time, attention needs to be centred on the efficient management of the energy that individuals have ( the Pomodoro technique- a run-pause-run model)
- *Eliminating distractors and organising workspace*- Identification of the main distractors ( physical- auditive, visual, olfactory; natural- different subjects- mobile phone, audio-video devices, food and beverages, furniture items, etc., pets and other people) will be followed by the elimination or minimising of such actions. At the same time, the organisation of the workspace ( distribution and display of necessary work instruments in our physical proximity) and the mental planning ( selection and filtering of data, friends, asking for help). „There is the aspect of frequent distractors and interruptions in the online space, which might decrease productivity. It takes motivation and discipline to focus on the tasks and interactions, ingredients that can unfortunately be easily forgotten while engaging in the online realm.”<sup>37</sup>;
- *Building beneficial habits/behaviours* (reflections at the end of the day regarding wellbeing, the completed tasks, tracked progress, self-control

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<sup>37</sup> Mudure-Iacob, I., *Enhancing Autonomous Language Learning in Digital Environments-Paving the Way for Self-Learning via Escape Rooms and Communities of Practice*, in *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 18., pp. 79-86;

and/or rescheduling of the task, immediate minor problem-solving, starting a new task only after a previously initiated task is completed, decisions based on just analysis, tracking/ writing of evolution ( progress/ setback/ stagnation) and data analysis in view of keeping control and a behaviour balance);

- *Lifelong learning* – Cognitive and practical training – applied in carrying out not only difficult, but also unpleasant tasks ( the 30-day diet-compelling a task that one did not like for a 30-day interval), focusing on objectives and the debut of the task, setting clear deadlines ( the Parkinson law- setting a self-imposed deadline weeks or days before the actual deadline and sticking to it) will generate the willingness/need to complete the action as soon as possible).

The attitude necessary to diminish procrastination is a balanced one, without unfounded self-blaming or unfair avoidances. Assertive communication leads to not accepting extra tasks as a result of the pressure of people around. At the same time, an assertive behaviour, communicating the aimed purpose facilitate the completion of personal or professional objectives<sup>38</sup>. Consistency, determination and elimination of temptations can lead to results and lack of procrastination. A good ally in this endeavour is represented by the affordances of the digital revolution<sup>39</sup>, for example: Google calendar for guiding the meditation program, Toggle time tracking - tracking the time spent to solve a task by using the Pomodoro timetracker, a mobile phone with notifications for reminders- an event., a deadline, etc.

## Conclusions

Procrastination or postponement is a way of accepting that waste of time, a pernicious habit that prevents us from completing something we want or plan to do. Postponement is a useless adjournment of a task, except for when it is a strategic delay, beneficial to the situations that we can rationally account for and control. Postponement is not synonymous with lack of involvement, lack of activity, indifference, laziness, even though these attitudes can sometimes be mistaken for procrastination. Unlike the indolent individuals, procrastinators want to do „ the right thing and they usually manage to do so, but not without effort”.<sup>40</sup>

Even though procrastination can be matched with a student syndrome (assimilated to strategic postponement), a disease of modern civilization, the self-motivating attitude can determine the surmount of this attitude. Acting

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<sup>38</sup>Manea Adriana-Denisa, ” Values and Perspectives in Adult Education”, in *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences. Conference: ERD 2019- Education, Reflection, Development*, Vol. LXXXV, 2020, pp.460-466, Doi: 10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.39; Manea Adriana-Denisa, ”Coordinates of Lifelong Education”, in *Astra Salvensis*, III (2015), no.5, pp. 168-171

<sup>39</sup> Manea Adriana Denisa, ”Educational communication under the influence of digital changes”, in *Educatia 21 Journal*, 18(2020), no.11, DOI:10.24193/ed21.2020.18.16

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/286646720/Procrastinarea>, accessed 22.02.2021

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only at a behavioural level, without identifying the causes of the problem will leave the individual with an increased vulnerability, favorable to another problematic manifestation, particularly since procrastination is „like a weed, you rip it and think you are done with it, but then you realise that the roots are too deep, so it grows back”<sup>41</sup>. Without intervention, procrastination can generate major dysfunctions stemming from stress, self-blaming feelings and a severe diminishing of personal productivity to social disapproval. Specialised literature highlights the impossibility to treat/eliminate procrastination without any effort and determination; but, through learning and systematic strategies, techniques and simple methods the results will not fail to show. At the same time, time management is a fundamental skill that helps, on the long term, to reach targets and control stress level. A program that reflects priorities allows the focus on truly important things and will growly diminish the distance towards reaching one’s goals. Self-discipline is also juxtaposed over these strategic elements meant to diminish procrastination, signifying that one gets trained into doing what must be done, when and in the proper manner, whether one likes it or not. This necessity derives from the daily reality and tracked experiences, which certifies the fact that it is not enough to have correctly designed programs (purpose, structural plans, resources), but self-discipline is also necessary in order to complete what was started.

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<sup>41</sup>Burka, J.,” Psychic Fallout from Breach of Confidentiality, Contemporary Psychoanalysis”, 2 (2008), no.44, pp. 177-198 | Published online: 2013, DOI: 10.1080/00107530.2008.10747146

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