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Lessons in time management critical

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By Makanga Sendegeya

A few weeks ago, I dropped a colleague at a top girls' boarding school, after 9 pm. It was quiet and dark; and behind the school gate only mosquitoes could be heard making their rounds. I noticed students were sitting out at verandahs of several school buildings (instead of classrooms) reading.

It seems too many young people have become used to 'firefighting' their way to success. Why do students always get into a reading frenzy only weeks to examinations? It can be explained by the failure to translate an objective meaning of time into adequate preparation for everyday school tasks and examinations.

I think a student who finds that they still have so many untouched reading tasks a month to final examinations may be found to have problems with using time well. At the beginning of the school

year, there is always plenty of leisure time because everybody looks at exams in the distant future.

Meaning of time

Elizabeth Taylor, in a 1989 Time Magazine article noted that a failure to understand the meaning of time is a handicap that may partly account for the poor academic performance of many inner-city children throughout their school careers. Most parents hardly ever provide instructions like 'finish lunch so you can see your favourite TV programme at 5:30,' or 'you can play for about half an hour.'

Daily routines, such as parents leaving home for work at a particular time and regular times for bed and meals, are usually nonexistent in many homes. Students from disorganised homes may be able to read a clock, but that does not mean they understand time.

These insights may challenge parents to provide support in developing students' capacity, not only for managing time well, but also managing their actions.

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