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## Improving Students Studying Skills for the Course Adult Learning and Audio-Visual Techniques for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year RDAE Students, University of Gondar

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### Abstract

Education is important means of achieving sustainable economic development as it plays a vital role in optimal utilization of resources through development of human capital and improve their quality of life. The general objective of study was improving the studying skill of 2<sup>nd</sup> year RDAE Department students at the college of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences of University of Gondar. For this action research training were given to one section and the other section were compared without training. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources and primary data were collected in two phases before and after the intervention and the collected data were both qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Having and using study schedule increased from 42 to 76 students and using the study techniques of SQ3R methods of studying were practiced by 76 students after intervention with no one practice before the intervention. The major factors influencing students' study skills were peer pressure, delay time needlessly, stress, shortage of time by other assignments and not studying at productive time. On average Training participants result of quiz out of 5% were increased by 0.29 but non participants were increased by 0.03 and the test result of participants (out of 15%) were increased by 2.1 but non participants were increased only by 0.49. Generally the result of this action research showed that there was good progress in all intervention variables identified and given action. Thus, it is recommended that training interventions and conducting other implementations mechanisms cyclically by planning and taking actions again and again for all university students focusing on first year students to be effective in their academics and build self-confidence.

### Article Info

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### Keywords

Study skills, Student, Test

### Introduction

Education is important means of achieving sustainable economic development as it plays a vital role in optimal utilization of resources through development of human capital and improve their quality of life. The quality of human resources is highly related to the quality of education (Battle and Lewis, 2002, Mersha *et al.*, 2013;

Pangeni, 2014). The issue of poor academic performance of students in developing countries has been much concern at all. In developing countries the problem of poor academic performance leads to the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education.

Ethiopia is currently engaged in highly ambitious effort to re-align its higher education system in more direct

support of its national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction. Poverty alleviation in Ethiopia requires sustained economic growth, good governance and political stability in order to be effective. Growth drives from skilled human resource and national productivity increases leading to greater country competitiveness in regional as well as global economy. Productivity gains are generated by national innovation system in which tertiary education institutions play fundamental role. This institution determines levels of capability with in the country's pool of higher level of managerial, scientific and technological experts. The effectiveness with which global knowledge is accessed and applied in the solution of local development problems and the standard of quality with in lower level of education. The quality of secondary school teachers has a direct relation of the quality of training they receive in universities. Therefore if poverty is to be reduced Ethiopia's tertiary institutions will have to improve their performance and expand their service delivery (Moges Endalamaw, 2017, David Bloom *et al.*, 2006).

Time management is a skill that every student should not only know, but also apply. A lot of university students complain about running out of time when asked to do a certain task, they get frustrated because they are not able to make it before the deadline. Time management is extremely important, especially when it comes to university students because it will boost their grades and enhance their productivity. However, most of the time students face problems like task aversion and uncertainty, so they start to procrastinate because they lack organizational skills. As a result, students will not be able to organize duties according to their priorities, so they get distracted easily, ending up procrastinating. Thus, time management is quite essential to any university student, and it is one of the keys to a higher GPA (Faisal Z. Miqdadi *et al.*, 2014)

Therefore, this action research was initiated to take an action how to improve study skills to be effective in higher education in the course adult learning and audiovisual course in the case of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in the department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture and Rural Transformation, University of Gondar.

### **Statement of the problem**

The question of equality in education should not be measured only by the number of enrollment and by the school inputs because some inputs may be of greater

importance to certain groups of students. Many universities currently employ a variety of programs designed to help students adjust to and succeed in higher learning settings. Academic support services offer students help in a number of formats, such as individual counseling, tutoring, study skills courses, and study skills workshops (Wernersbach *et al.*, n.d).

According to Faisal Z. Miqdadi (2014), time management is extremely important, especially when it comes to university students because it will boost their grades and enhance their productivity. However, most of the time students face problems like task aversion and uncertainty, so they start to procrastinate because they lack organizational skills. As a result, students will not be able to organize duties according to their priorities, so they get distracted easily, ending up procrastinating. As we can see, time management is quite essential to any university student, and it is one of the keys to a higher GPA.

Therefore, this action research discussed study skills and its relationship to a student's academic performance. In addition, it discusses ways to make students more organized and lead them to a better time management level.

### **Objective of the research**

#### **General objectives of the study**

The general objective of this action research was improving the academic skill of 2<sup>nd</sup> year RDAE students.

#### **Specific objectives**

- To assist students in improving their study skills to use SQ3R methods.
- To identify the factors affecting students study skills to be effective in their academics.
- To investigate students' study to improving their way of studying.
- Analysis of the effect of academic skill trainings on students' performances.

### **Literature review**

Education is widely accepted as a leading instrument for promoting economic growth. In Ethiopia, there is high ambitious effort to re-align its higher education system in more direct support of its national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction. Poverty alleviation in

Ethiopia requires sustained economic growth, good governance and political stability in order to be effective. Growth drives from skilled human resource and national productivity increases leading to greater country competitiveness in regional as well as global economy (Moges Endalamaw, 2017).

Academic achievement (i.e., GPA or grades) is one tool to measure students' academic performance. Based on the Center for Research and Development Academic Achievement (CRIRES) (2005) report, academic achievement is a construct to measure students' achievement, knowledge and skills. This measurement is holistically based on the students' age, the students' previous experience of studying, and the students' capacity related to social and education skills. To measure academic achievement, educators use different types of assessment. Assessment is a continuous process that brings some valuable information about the learning process (Linn and Gronlund, 1995). Hargis (2003) commented that the grading process is supposed to be motivating and provide goals. On the other hand, grades can provide incentives to the students to cheat. Grading has the additional benefit of provide records (data sets) of students' academic achievements (Haladyna,1999). Similarly Studying hour is significant positive impact on student's academic performance (CGPA).

Time management plays a vital role in improving student's academic performance and achievements. Each and every student should have time management ability which includes setting goals & priorities, using time management mechanism and being organized in using time. Here time management is only possible through self-motivation; performance, ability and motivation (Brigitt *et al.*, 2005). These are the few activities performed by today's university students, which act as a barrier between them and their academic performance. Due to miss management of time they gap behind. This study will help to analyze the positive or negative impact of time management on academic performance of students. It will also help to make some decision about changes we would like to make to use our time more effectively (Noftle *et al.*, 2007). There is no one right way to manage our time; however; it is important to get to know our self, so we can make good decisions about how to use our time. Likewise, in the process of providing educational services this issue has been a subject of interest discussed and emphasized in several platforms and an attempt has been initiated to assess and analyze time and the time management attitudes and behaviors of students in educational institutes

(Denlinger, 2009 as cited by Nasrullah and Saqib Khan, 2015).

Time management is a skill that every student should not only know, but also apply. A lot of university students complain about running out of time when asked to do a certain task, they get frustrated because they are not able to make it before the deadline. Time management is extremely important in university students because it will boost their grades and enhance their productivity (Laurie and Hellsten, 2002). However, most of the time students face problems like task aversion and uncertainty, so they start to procrastinate because they lack organizational skills. As a result, students will not be able to organize duties according to their priorities, so they get distracted easily, ending up procrastinating. As we can see, time management is quite essential to any university student, and it is one of the keys to higher academic achievements (Kelly, 2004).

Time management includes setting goals, meeting deadlines, using time management aids such as list making, coping with change, making plans, and effectively organizing one's time ( Roberts *et al.*, 2006). Studies demonstrate that time management skills can be trained (Carolyn *et al.*, 2012).This is in line with the call to include individual characteristics and others influence in time management research (Claessens *et al.*, 2007).

Procrastination, to put off doing something, especially out of habitual laziness, is a result of a cultivated habit, and it impacts everyone. A lot of students tend to procrastinate at college. According to Lisa, (2011), they tend to do so mainly because of task-aversion. Studying, generally, is the last thing that a student would think to do. Having all kinds of entertainment and distractions, such as video games, social networks, and heard media, would really not make students get into study. It is most likely the student's responsibility, in other words, his ability to control his passion that makes the student progress and complete his tasks. Most of the students who live in the dorms, generally, can get distracted easily (Lisa, 2011).

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Data collection process**

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from 78 students among 95 2<sup>nd</sup> year RDAE students with in two phases. In the first phase, baseline data were collected using both

qualitative and quantitative semi-structured questioners before intervention. In the second phase (after intervention), similar data were collected in order to compare and contrast the effect of the intervention were made. Secondary data were collected from secondary sources like published, unpublished and from the department. Quiz and test results before and after interventions were used as indicator the impact of intervention.

### **Data analysis**

The collected data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics like mean, percentages, tables and graphs. Qualitative data were discussed by narrations in order to support the quantitative analyses. The collected data before intervention and after intervention were interpreted using narration, graphs and supported with literatures.

### **Proposed actions / interventions**

The following interventions were proposed to take an action:

- I. Collection of base line data using semi-structured questioners, quiz result and test result.
- II. Academic skill training was given based on the gap found in the base line data.
- III. Follow up the students' implementation of the training in to action.
- IV. Collection of post intervention data
- V. Recording and evaluating the changes made by the student as a result of the actions taken.

### **Implementation of action/intervention**

The following actions were implemented in order to improve the students study skills:

1. Base line data were collected before intervention based on the prepared checklists in order to evaluate the changes as a result of the intervention.
2. Studying skills training were given to 78 2<sup>nd</sup> year students RDAE students. In the training, Goal setting skill, Study skill, Time management skill, Test taking skill and how to cope with Exam Anxiety, Note-taking skill, Internet browsing skill and Library use skill were conducted.

3. Follow up and monitor students' progress to practice the training given to them.
4. Data were also being collected after training in order to know the change as a result of the training.
5. Analysis of the collected data was done.

### **Discussion and evaluation of the action/intervention**

#### **Goal setting**

As indicated in Table 1 below, 78 students were asked whether they have goals or not. Before intervention, only 30 (38.4%) of them have goals while the rest 41 (52.6%) of them didn't have goals. This implies that majority of the students didn't have goals and from those who have goals, only 14 (17.9%) break down their goals in to different time periods. After actions were taken, 67 (85.9%) of them set their own goals even though 11 (14.1%) of them still don't have goals, and from those who have goals 51 (65.4%) of them break down their goals in to different time periods after intervention.

From those students who have goals, before intervention 11 (14.1%) and after intervention 49 (62.2 %) of have SMART goals. This indicates that after the training and interventions, students show good progress by setting their own goals, breaking down their goals in to different time periods and developing SMAR goals. In line with this, a study by Nasrullah and Muhamm S. Khan (2015) determine that, short range planning and long range planning significantly positively related to academic achievements except time attitude is negatively correlated. The most significantly correlated predictor with effective decisions is short range planning.

#### **Study schedule and using SQ3R methods of studying**

As indicated in Table 1 above, before the intervention of this action research, 42 (53.8%) of the respondents have study schedule but after intervention, while 76 (97.4%) of them have study schedule. This implies that after intervention, almost all students prepare study schedule by prioritizing their courses of study to use their time effectively.

Respondents were asked whether they use SQ3R method of studying, before intervention no student used the technique. After the training were conducted, 48 (61.5%) of them used SQ3R method of studying. By using these techniques of studying students were benefited to study their courses to digest the concepts and practical

explicitabilities of their study. During studying, before intervention 5 (6.4%) of them drink water before they start studying. However, after the intervention 61 (78.2%) of the respondent students drunk water before they studies. During studying, some students 35 (44.8%) study at their productive time and after the intervention most the students 68 (87.2%) study at their productive time so that increases their academic performances. The intervention increases the use of study schedule, to drink water before studying and to study at their productive time to be effective and benefiting students' academics as these increases students study hours.

Similarly a study by Moges Endalamaw (2017), Studying hour is significant positive impact on student's academic performance (CGPA). It entails that holding the effect of other things remain constant if a student

increased a studying hours by one hour a student being success or CGPA increased by 0.063.

**Time management**

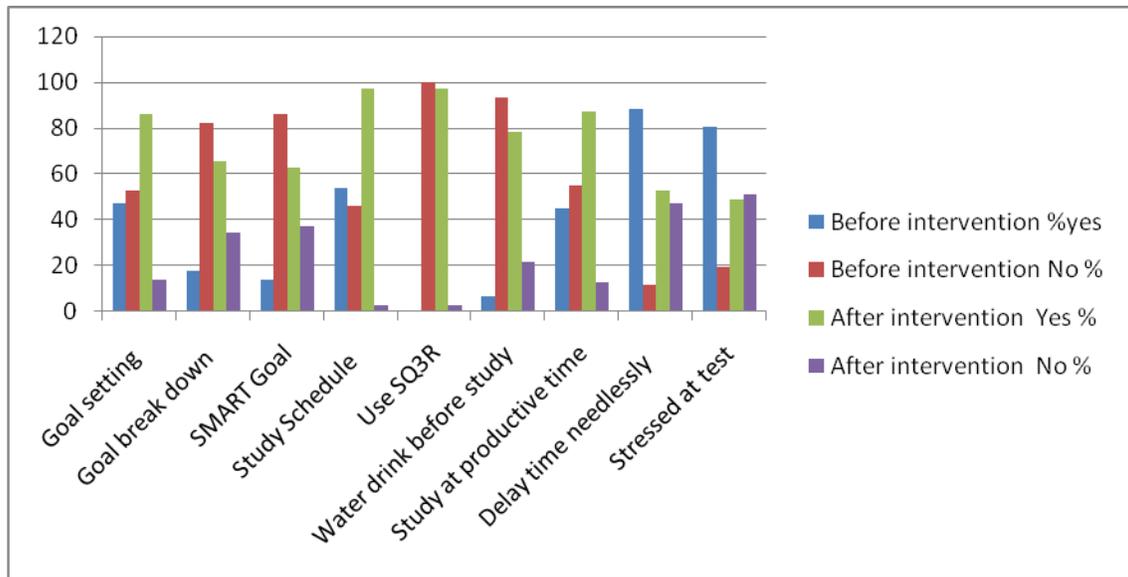
Time management practices have an impact on the results of students as empirical studies done by past researchers. In spite of knowing about the impact of time on academic achievement, this relationship is not given importance by the students (Sevari and Kandy, 2011). At higher education level the study schedule must properly planned, implemented and controlled for better results. Emphasizing time also helps to develop cost effective educational policies by the authorities especially at higher education level (Kaushar, 2013). Studies demonstrate that time management skills can be trained.

**Table.1** Progress of study skills before and after interventions

No	Variables	Before intervention				After intervention			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		Freq.	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
1.	Goal setting	37	47.44	41	52.56	67	85.90	11	14.10
2.	Goal break down	14	17.9	64	82.1	51	65.4	27	34.6
3.	SMART Goal	11	14.1	67	85.9	49	62.8	29	37.2
4.	Study Schedule	42	53.8	36	46.2	76	97.4	2	2.6
5.	Use SQ3R	0		78	100	76	97.4	2	2.6
6.	Water drink before study	5	6.4	73	93.6	61	78.2	17	21.8
7.	Study at productive time	35	44.8	43	55.2	68	87.2	10	12.8
8.	Delay time needlessly	69	88.4	9	11.6	41	52.6	37	47.4
9.	Stressed at test	63	80.8	15	19.2	38	48.7	40	51.3

Source: survey result, (2018)

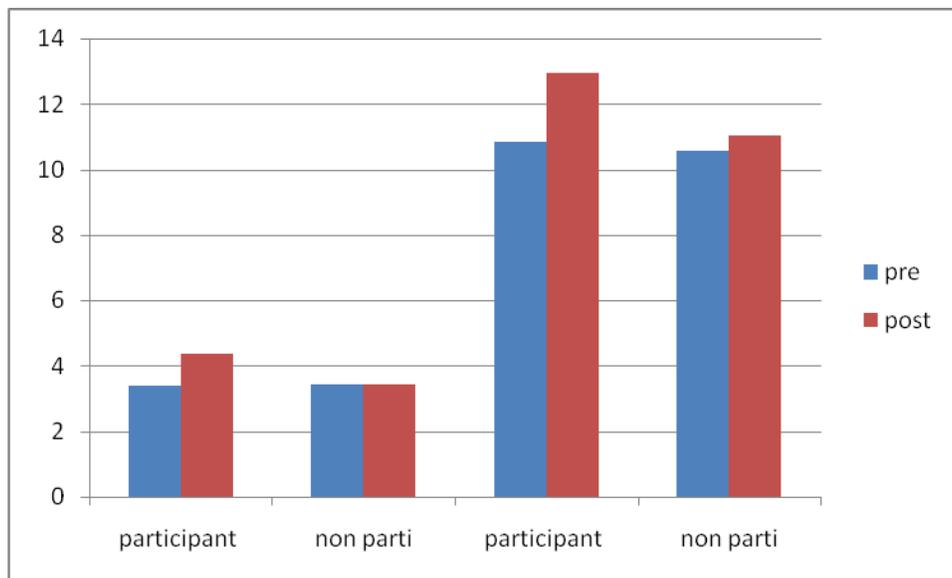
**Figure.1** The quantitative difference before and after intervention for academic skills



**Table.2** Implication of students exam result before and after intervention

No	Item	Before intervention		After intervention	
		Ave. quiz result	Ave. test result	Ave. quiz result	Ave. test result
1.	Participants	3.39	10.85	4.37	12.95
2.	Non-participants	3.42	10.56	3.45	11.05
3.	Difference	-0.03	+0.29	+0.92	1.90

**Figure.2** students quiz and test results before and after the intervention



\*participant = the students were taking academic skill training, non parti= those do not take the academic and pre= before the intervention, post = after the intervention has done

The above Table 1, reveals that before the training 69 (88.4%) of them delay time needlessly but after the intervention 41 (52.6%) of them are still delay their time needlessly even though they show good progress. studies report that time management exerts a positive influence on student learning outcomes (Claessens *et al.*, 2007). Similar studies by Nadinloyi *et al.*, 2013; assessed that the people that were in the experimental group and under intervention, their time management skills were improved than another group (control group).

### Test anxiety and stress

Respondent students were asked to they are stressed during test or not. Before intervention majority of the respondents 63 (80.8%) were stressed in become in test anxiety. However, after the training on how to cope test anxiety, only 38 (48.7%) of them still become stressed. This implies that most of the students were benefited from the training on how to cope from test anxiety even though further intervention should also be needed to build confidence in exams.

The quantitative difference before and after the training regarding to the semi-structured questionnaires summarized below in the graph

### Factors affecting students study skills

*The major factors influencing students' study skills were peer pressure, delay time needlessly, stress, shortage of time by other assignments and not studying at productive time.*

### Implication of students exam result before and after intervention

As indicated earlier, among 95 two section students only 78 of them was participated in the action research. While the 17 students were not participate in the intervention. The pre-intervention and post- intervention test and quiz results of adult learning and audiovisual course was analyzed separately to control the research data quality and to compare and contrast the effect of intervention.

Conclusion and Recommendation are as follows

From the above evaluation of the action research and its results and changes occurred as a result of the intervention, there is good progress to improve the studying skills of students. However, there is some gaps still to be most effective in their goal setting, study

schedule, time management and test anxiety to improve as desired. Therefore, further actions should also be needed by identifying and planning the gaps and giving training and other interventions. Thus, we highly recommended that to repeat all the interventions and conducting the training and other implementation interventions cyclically by planning taking actions again and again.

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