

MENAGEMENT WITH TIME, ACADEMIC OBLIGATION AND POSIBILITIES FOR ACTIVE BREAK FOR THE TEACHING STAFF AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AT GOCE DELCEV UNIVERSITY IN STIP-MACEDONIA

(Research note)

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Abstract

Changes in contemporary life, especially in technology, bring a lot of changes in humans. Sedentary life style and decreased level of physical activity are one of the changes of new time and negative effects as well. The list of problems reported after a prolonged time of sitting is very long and all they have effects on entire human health and wellbeing. University teachers with all their requirements and obligations have very few time for physical activity resulting many hours spent in sitting and without being physical active. In order to determine the real situation regarded time spent in sitting and measures that they take for overcoming this situation we realized a research on a sample of 15 university teachers at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Goce Delcev University in Stip, Republic of Macedonia. The research was conducted via open interview and the obtained results suggested a lot of time spent in sitting during the day, particularly from 6 to 7 hours a day of 42 – 43 hours a week. All of them reported problems such as headache, back pains, problems with legs and eyes etc and reported that they did not practice any form of physical activity and did not have a break. The questions also referred to active break or active rest by short video that have an effect to energize the body and refresh the mind. Therefore, we recommend brain breaks as a form of mental break and continuing with effective work. In this regard, the University should be posted in a position to create such videos for active break and make them available for all teachers to be used.

Keywords: *brain break, sedentary habits, interview, university teachers, physical activity, active break males, females, inactivity*

INTRODUCTION

Development of science, technology, globalization, migration processes as characteristics of 21st century has reflected in every aspect of human life. The fast changing information, fast development and increase of human knowledge leads to a need for changes in the sphere of education. Only acquisition of prepared facts and memorization of facts does not give any progress. Therefore, the new educational paradigms emphasize the need of development of key competences for life as a foundation for life in society of knowledge as a foundation for future education and life – long learning. All this requires changes in all segments of education including the higher education as well.

Changes in the segment of higher education are especially notable after the implementation of the Bologna Declaration that leads to the changes in the traditional paradigm of learning. With this changes in the higher education system, the focus is pointed on a student's in-

terests, with emphasis on the competences that he/she should have after finishing the studies or the quality of his/hers knowledges and abilities that could be a good fundament for the start at the market of labor. These competences are needed for organization of the process of learning, efficient organization of personal time, use of knowledge in new and different situations, development of critical thinking and self-confidence.

All mentioned before requires greater responsibility from the higher education institutions in a sense of creating conditions for higher quality in realization of educational process and practical preparation of the students. In this sense, the teaching staff that realize the teaching process in the higher education institutions have a great responsibility. They are the core stones of the educational, scientific, art and practical activities at the Faculties, art academies and institutions. According to the Law for Higher education, all the teaching staff is elected in scientific and scientific-educational titles

(assistant professors, full time professors, lecturers etc). They all have one very important obligation – to transfer knowledge by teaching students. This obligation means organization and realization of lectures and practical exercises and work from one or more subjects. In the same time, they have a role of mentors, consultants, pointers, role models for students. Beside these teaching activities, the university teaching staff should also follow the newest achievements in their area of research and interest, to follow up all new publications, scientific results and to follow up everything that's new and innovative in their area of interest and research in order to transmit it to the students. All these means working on practical and research projects, preparation of publications, presentation at congress and symposiums, debates, workshops, lecturers, mentoring bachelor and doctoral thesis, writing reports, scientific notes, research papers, critical opinions, books. University teachers also actively participate in the work of universities and faculty bodies, realize some administrative activities related with some part time functions at the faculty or university, such as dean, vice dean, head of the department etc.

Summarizing all this, it could be noted that university teachers have many functions and many obligations as well. All this means a very high mental effort and many hours of work, mostly working in front of a computer. The numerous obligations very often place the university teacher in the position not to answer on time at all requirements and aims and we often could hear them saying: "I miss time", "I have a lack of time to finish this all", "How to manage my time properly", "I could not finish these today", "What is the problem with me and my time". All these suggest on one problem – time management.

By the definition, time management means "setting goals and priorities between them, planning of tasks and following the progress" Peeters & Rutte, (2005: pp. 65). In fact, time management means ability to realize our goals and tasks, achieving the highest possible results for the shortest time as possible. It should be a creative process leaded by feeling that "time have not run out", and that planned activities are realized and the wanted effects are achieved.

When speaking about time management, in fact it is making a decision how to use the time in the best possible way or how to distribute the time properly so we could finish all obligations and tasks on time, to have enough time for rest and recreation as well, or how "to save ourselves from the time stealers" and to have the greatest results. The stealers of time are numerous. Mostly, as a reason we could note:

- Poor organization - which is mainly result of have no exact plan what should be done during the day, month or the year and often leads to lose the determined goal;
- Often delays of things-it could be a result of fear of failure, fear of success, losing interest for our goal, lack of deadlines, to many plans, too many obliga-

tions, perfection and status quo;

- Lack of ability to say NO – we do things that we don't really like, being on service on other people for whom sometimes we don't have either physical or personal resources;

- So called "visitors" – in time when we don't want to speak with others but we have to, while doing something that is really important for us;

- Phone calls – unnecessary phone calls, unneeded talks;

- Unneeded meetings, meetings without plan;

- Hours spend in sitting in front of the computer – social networks, looking for posts etc.

Lack of time management often leads to monotony, increased unnecessary mental effort, luck of satisfaction, frustrations, many times a physical pain as a result of doing mainly sedentary activities or so called "homo sedens", position characterized as prolonged static effort on muscles that support the sitting or standing position where the other muscle groups are inactive. Considering the fact that the human body works synergetic, it's normally that the misbalance between different muscle groups will reflect on the total status. The lack of physical activity and movement have their reflection on the functioning on other systems, mainly the cardiovascular, respiratory and nervous system, but others systems as well because of what other external manifestations also occurs, such as: lack of vision, tension, irritability, pain in certain body parts, sleepless, lack of energy. Reports from many studies integrated in the work of Owen, Healy, Matthews & Dunstan (2010) that refers to effects of prolonged sitting among adults, reports a high correlation between high number of sitting hours and conditions like cardiovascular diseases, hard stroke and diabetes type 2 and greater mortality risk. Therefore, there is a need of intervention in a sense of higher level of physical activity in a long term and frequent change of position of the body, activation of many muscle groups or in general, need of active break, or a number of physical exercises that leads to decrease of body and muscle tension and short refresh of the body in a form of short rest a break during the sitting and working period.

According to Findak (2003) active break, is realized at the working place or in the leisure time in order to neutralize the negative effects because of the use of technology and gadgets used in contemporary life. This author speaks about so called micropause and macro pauses. Micropauses or breaks during the educational work and during lectures, are form of active break and is a new refreshing form of work in the school in the time that we notice the first signs of mental fatigue at children. It means applying several simple physical exercises such as gymnastics exercises for stretching and calming down, applied in the classroom by simple standing up from the chairs. This form lasts between 3 to 5 minutes. The aim of micropauses is to high up the level of mental and physiological abilities at higher level during the period of active mental work (Findak, 2003). The macro

pauses or breaks between two phases of work is applied with aim to remove the fatigue that already exists. It's duration is from 10 to 15 minutes during the day. It is the best to be used after two long classes, 120 minutes. The refreshing breaks has a general impact on increasing the circulation of the body, fastened breathing, bringing this way and higher amount of oxygen in the body. Practicing different types of sport and physical activity is a key that opens the door to longevity, health and well-being of people of all ages (Gotova, 2015). Movement, exercise and sport maintain and restore physical and mental condition of the people (Vasileva, 2015).

Many researches indicated on positive effects of physical activity and active physical break on cognitive functions and brain health (Yaffe, Barnes, Nevitt, Lui & Covinsky, 2001; Voss, Nagamatsu, Liu – Ambrose & Kramer, 2011; Weslake & Christian, 2015). Active breaks or micropauses understood and applied in this way and successfully incorporated in the concept of time management could be very useful for students and teachers as well. Results from researches indicated that interruption prolonged sitting with light intensity walking breaks or similar short activities can be an effective fatigue countermeasure acutely (Wennberg et al, 2016). They will be also very useful for the university teachers as well, considering all the activities and obligations that they have and which are mainly in sedentary position. Considering all these aspects an interested about how does university teachers management their time in a sense of having a time for active break, we designed the idea of this paper as a foundation for further development of the idea for organized active break for university teachers and staff.

METHODS

Considering the need of effective time management for academic staff in order to ensure a time for active break as one of the ways for better health and efficient mental work, we started this research, which aim is to determine the needs of implementation of active break among the teaching staff at the Faculty of Educational science at Goce Delcev University in Stip, Republic of Macedonia in the study year 2015/2016. The research was realized on a sample 15 university teachers, in position assistant professors, associated professors and full time professors. The sample included 4 male and 11 female examinees at the age from 33 to 55. Regarding the methodology of the research, we used the descriptive method, from the technics we used interview using protocol for open interview as an instrument. The interviews consisted of 11 questions with several sub questions. The process of interview was based on previously prepared questions in previously arranged terms, in nice and comfortable atmosphere in teachers' offices. After the familiarization with the aim of the research, the interviewed persons were asked several questions that referred mainly to the need of practicing so-called active breaks. In short, the questions in the interview mainly referred to the number of hours a day spent in sitting at

work and sitting at home, number of hours spent in sitting in front of the computer, certain pains and symptoms after a long hours of sitting, measures for preventing such pains, use of active break during intellectual work, forms of active break if there is any, need of organized forms of active break etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering that we used an interview, based on the applied group of questions, the obtained answers could be systematized in three general categories: 1) inactivity or number of hours a day spent in passive position, without movement, mainly in sitting; 2) problems - noted symptoms after prolonged time without activity and 3) solution - application of active break as a for mental refreshment and recovery. Based on the answers obtained in the interview from all 15 examiners, we could have the following conclusions:

- 1) Inactivity - number of hours a day spent in passive position
 - During the week, almost all interviewed university teachers spend around 42 – 43 hours in sitting, or approximately 6 – 7 hours a day spent in sitting.
 - From the time at work during one day, almost all interviewed teachers spent around 5 hours a day in sitting and working on computer, except the period of lecturers during which period all of teachers declare that are spending in standing position. The rest two hour of working time is spent in sitting position as well, mainly in front of the computer writing reports, answering e – mails, using social media etc.
- 2) Problems - noted symptoms after prolonged time without activity.
 - All examiners consider that while working on computer have bad body posture and that has negative effects on their health after a prolonged time.
 - Lot of hours spend in front of the computer causes back pain and pain in the neck, headache, pains in the legs, swelling legs and foots, bad blood circulation, eyes pains.
 - They do almost nothing to decrease or cure the pains in certain body parts and all the other effects of long hours of sitting. They walk very rarely, and the walks mostly last for around 30 minutes after finishing the working time. Only one of the interviewees does sports in leisure time (one male teacher declared he was practicing cycling 2 – 3 hours after work).
 - So far, none of the interviewed teachers has used any form of active break during their work.
 - The interviewed teachers have no information and knowledges about the forms of short active breaks.
 - All interviewed teachers are interested for receiving additional information for practicing of any form of active break.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of regular physical activity for overall health and wellbeing as well as the all consequences as

a result of sedentary life style and lack of physical activity at all stages of development and life span are well known to everyone. Nor, the number of inactive people, especially at the elderly age is still increasing. The new technologies only make this situation worse, making people to spend more hours in front of TV and computers. The list of problems reported after a prolonged time of sitting is very long and all they effects on human total health and over – being. University teachers are not very different from this, furthermore, their everyday obligations and activities, working and scientific requirements, posed them in position to spend much more hours in sitting and without being physical active.

Active break during the working hours is effective way for active rest and for changing mental with physical fatigue, offering a possibility to be physically active but yet not leaving the working place. As effective an interesting form of movement, brain break is already teacher in school with children, but not yet applied with adults. Therefore, we recommend it as a form for mental break and continuing with effective work. Different forms of internet options, enable presentation of different forms of Brain Breaks for very short time using internet connections and links. Different forms of video and active break will ensure great variety of movements presented ready to be used during working hours and not leaving the working place. In this regard, the University should be posted in position to create such videos for active break and make them available for all teachers to be used, This will ensure increased level of physical activity and will also influence on positive mood, self-confidence, healthy lifestyle, active and healthy brain etc. Based on this, we recommend brain break videos as a form for brain development and maintaining the required level of physical activity.

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