

Building a Culture of Success at School and at Home through OTMP Instruction

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Instruction in organization, time management, and planning (OTMP) is valuable for the simple reason that these skills can be critically important throughout students' lives - helping them work effectively, meet deadlines, and manage responsibilities. In addition to being important goals in and of themselves, though, OTMP skills help drive success across the curriculum. Here are some ways OTMP instruction can bolster students' academic achievement:

OTMP skills facilitate learning in all areas. Teachers know when a student shows up to school prepared and with all homework complete, she is ready for learning. OTMP skills are an essential component to making this happen. When students forget to write down their assignments, leave books or other materials at school, or mismanage their after-school time, they can not complete their homework. When they leave their work at home or can not find it in a backpack of crumpled, disorganized papers, their grades suffer. Strong OTMP skills give students the tools they need to complete their work well and on time and show up the next day fully prepared. These students are not taking up class time making excuses or begging for extensions - they are ready to focus on the task at hand.

OTMP instruction is cross-curricular. OTMP skills, by their nature, offer excellent opportunities to integrate instruction across different subject areas. Learning to plan out one's afternoon, for example, involves math skills ranging from elementary time telling to more complex sequencing, prediction, and time estimation. Reflecting on the negative consequences of poor OTMP habits involves self-reflection, critical thinking, and consideration of cause and effect. Experimenting with more constructive OTMP strategies and evaluating their effectiveness offers a natural opportunity for teaching the scientific method. Sorting and organizing papers requires categorization, hierarchical thinking, and practice in creating structures. Opportunities abound for incorporating OTMP lessons into subjects across the curriculum.

OTMP programs bring students, families, and teachers on board. When a student struggles with OTMP, students, their families, and their teachers all feel the effects. Students are often disheartened - they know that they are failing to meet expectations

for organizing. Without adequate support to develop OTMP skills, they feel lost. Parents typically express any number of frustrations, ranging from annoyance at having to stay up late to help their child finish a last-minute project to concern over failing grades. Teachers have to use valuable class time to address requests for extensions, searches for missing papers, and excuses for missing assignments. When given a clear and thoughtful plan to help students improve their OTMP skills, parents, teachers, and the students themselves are typically eager to pull together as a team to help create an environment of success. Once this sense of teamwork is established, it can be leveraged to help students in all aspects of their school careers.

The InCommand program helps drive student success by offering an effective means of helping students master skills in organization, time management, and planning. By providing lessons that are aligned with core curriculum standards, InCommand allows for easy integration across subject areas. The InCommand resources directed at students, teachers, and parents help facilitate the team-building essential for students to excel in OTMP as well as in all of their academics. InCommand pulls all of the pieces together to add to school environments that offer students the support they need to realize their academic potential.