

the old man had told him, the thing he shared with Victor now.

“There is a reason God limits our days.”

“Why?”

“To make each one precious.”

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ORGANIZE LIKE A BOSS

The Learner Support Unit recently sent out a survey and more than half of the learners who responded indicated that **they struggled to manage their schoolwork, as well as organise and prioritise everything that had been expected of them in a day.**

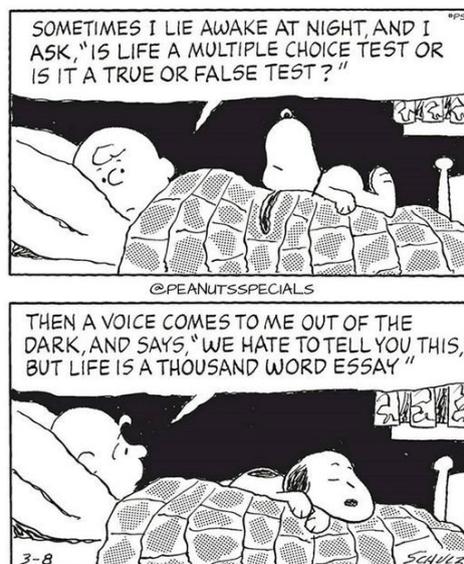
While each of you may have found a way to navigate this new way of working, some of you may still be struggling to break down your work into more manageable tasks, create and maintain a schedule or routine and measure your own progress in terms of learning and understanding your schoolwork.

For you learners out there, this is real BOSS work, guys. These skills are needed to execute or kill tasks...the stuff or tools you need to get your work done are called: **EXECUTIVE SKILLS.**

I hear you say that you thought you were born with it. Well, I admit you were a cute baby, but these skills can take 25 years to develop fully! And, 'they' seem to suffer and hide just like you when you are under stress or lockdown.

If you were back at school, you would probably rush to the homework centre to grab a term planner with neat blocks you can fill with dates and tasks in nice, colour-coded, curvy letters. While your teachers still stay in constant contact, the way in which you receive this information has changed.

Now you need to plan, organize and execute to be the best boss of your school life!



Let's first look at the executive skills you have mastered and those you are still striving to master:

| Foundational Exec Skills | Advanced Exec Skills |
|--|---|
| Response inhibition or impulse control (If you have problems with this one, try the candy challenge for toddlers that's trending on Facebook right now!) | Organization |
| Working memory | Planning |
| Emotional control | Prioritization |
| Flexibility | Time management |
| Sustained attention | Goal-directed persistence |
| Task Initiation | Metacognition (problem-solving, self-monitoring, self-evaluation) |

Here is some expert advice:

"When kids develop planning and time management, goal-directed persistence and metacognition—then they become masters of their own fate. More than that—they become skilled problem solvers, deep thinkers, and active pursuers of the skills and knowledge that matter to them. And those are the tools that will enable them to achieve their potential and follow their lofty dreams." - Peg Dawson

Feeling a bit overwhelmed with the above and hearing your parents (and this teacher) say that they still struggle with some of these skills?

Here are some ideas of how you can use this school-at-home situation to develop your executive skills:

For Planning and Prioritizing: When your seven periods are done, make your own plans of what you want to do in the time you would've had sports or choir practice.

For Time-management: Estimate how long a certain project will take you by making a list of every detail that you have to accomplish for the project and estimating how long each section will take to accomplish.

For Organizing: Re-design your own work-space in your room or landscape a corner in the garden.

For Goal-directed persistence: Help a younger sibling to set two or three goals for the week and keep them accountable. Now let your parents check your goal-achievement.

For Meta-cognition: Think about your own thinking or learning. The best way to do that is to reflect on how you are doing. Keep a diary and plot your progress.



Can one be a guru in organizational skills, productivity and note-taking?

Absolutely! Meet Thomas Frank aka College Info Geek, who wrote a book called *10 Steps to Earning Awesome Grades (While Studying Less)* which you can obtain for free! (Find the PDF version in the ****Weekly Content**** folder in the Learner Support Google Drive Folder).

Learn the lingo!

| <i>Key guru phrases</i> | <i>Explanation</i> | <i>How helpful? And I quote...</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Optimum effectiveness | <i>To find the cleverest way to work. Take into account your strengths and weaknesses, your best time of the day and your unique circumstances.</i> | Don't sit for hours, make your minutes count. |
| Planning Mode vs Robot Mode | <i>Planning mode is when you are busy with low-intensity tasks like planning your schedule, making lists and outlines for your essays. Robot mode is when you become a machine and your work is the high thought-intensity variety like solving problems in Maths, writing the essay and researching. You need both of these and you need to know which mode to use for which task.</i> | MODE HELPS YOU GET YOUR MOJO  |
| Fudge ratio | <i>Although real fudge is always finished in a shorter time than you expect, someone who has done the research found that work almost always takes longer than you expect. If you know your fudge ratio, you will be able to set more realistic goals for yourself and not set yourself up for failure. Your time will be better managed and you will be able to tick things off.</i> | Real fudge: 1 tin condensed milk; 2 cups sugar; 250 g marg. Melt the marg, stir in the sugar until dissolved. Add condensed milk and stir until it starts boiling. Lower heat and stir for another 20 min. Pour into baking tray and allow to set. |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>The Captain America way</p> | <p><i>Captain America was able to break a large-scale alien invasion down into components and direct his resources (the Avengers) to each portion; similarly, you should be able to break up your tasks and devote your resources (blocks of time) to each step.</i></p> | <p>If you can learn how to do this, the badge is yours!</p> |
| <p>The Kanban method</p> | <p><i>Taken from a Japanese method used for project management where you make lists of the stages of the work that needs to be done and cards with individual tasks and move it across the lists until the project is finished.</i></p> | |

Let's work out our how to realistically plan our time using Pavlina's Fudge Ratio Formula (Frank, 2014) :

1. Write down a list of tasks you need to do.
2. Put an "off-the-cuff" time estimate on each one.
3. As you finish tasks, write down the actual amount of time they took.
4. Divide the actual task time by your estimate to get your Fudge Ratio.

So, for example, say you estimated that it would take you 45 minutes to finish a study guide for your history class. In reality, it takes you 1 hour and 15 minutes. Using math that I learned in 3rd grade when I wasn't thinking about Batman, I can calculate the ratio: 75 minutes/45 minutes = 1.67

Now you know your Fudge Ratio is 1.67 - which means that the next time you need to predict how long it'll take you to finish a similar task, you should multiply your initial prediction by 1.67.

Now that we have done the Maths...



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Let's turn our hearts towards home...

Ms Aimee Groenewald (ex-Rhenisher, teacher and facilitator) Follow the school timetable now. Do not spend too much time on the same subject or concept, but move to the next class according to the timetable. Make notes while the teacher is speaking during your Google Meets.

Mrs Rika Kroon (Vice Principal, Academics) We are a Google school. Use the tools that you have such as your Rhenish Email, Classroom, Google Calendar, Drive and Google Keep. Play around and see which apps you have available to get better at executive skills.

Mrs Jess Osato (Life Skills expert) Hello Everyone! I have posted a simple, but effective tool made to help you organize your weeks using Google Sheets. Make sure that you give yourself more than enough time for each task so that you are not overwhelmed and feel pressurised. Organisation requires flexibility- It is OK if tasks need to shift around as your week unfolds. It's in your LO Classroom. Check it out. And use it! You can find it [here](#).

Micha & Thalia (two fabulous Grade 8s) Sometimes it's hard to upload your work on Classroom, just try whatsapp. That works better. I firmly believe in quotes. I choose one for my day or week and that is what inspires me. At the moment my favourite one is: "What if I fall? Oh but my darling, What if you fly?" (Erin Hanson)

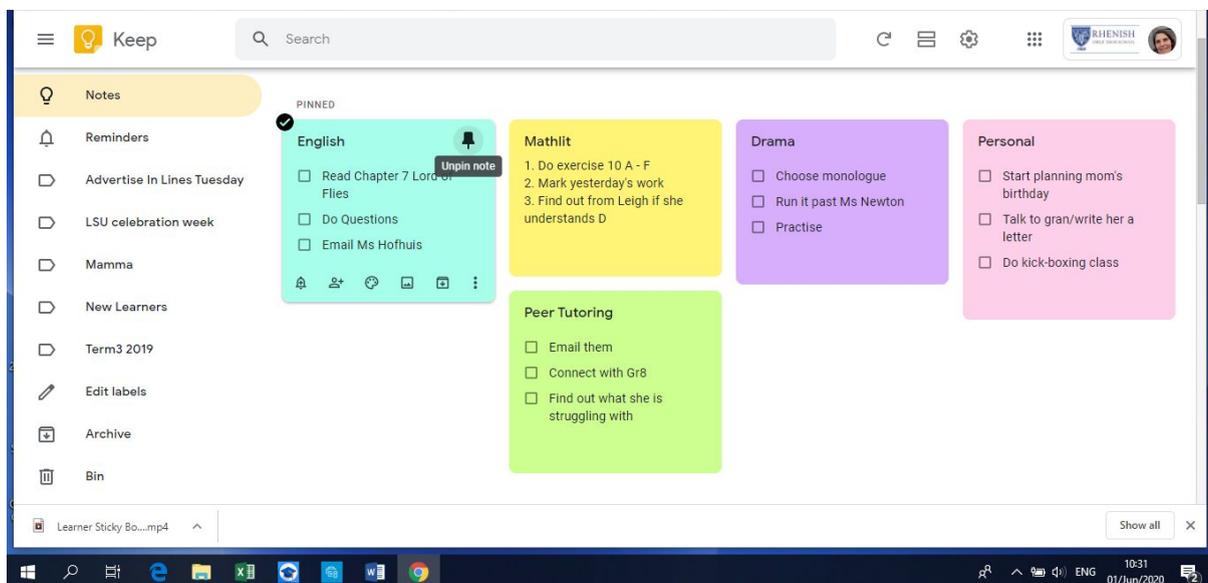
Sport-loving, hard-working Grade 9 Thank you, Ma'am for the tip about the gift wrap board and sticky notes! I think it's helping me to get organized... (See video of gift wrap board attached to this email.)

Home-schooling mom I like lists...a long piece of string hanging from the top of a door with index cards attached with clothes pins, subjects written on one side and smileys or hearts on the other, and then flip each card as subjects are completed until you see all smiles/hearts for the day.

TWO TAKE HOME/STAY HOME TIPS AND FREEBIES

1. TRY GOOGLE KEEP FOR LISTS

THIS IS SUCH A COOL TOOL! YOU CAN FIND IT WHEN YOU GO TO YOUR RHENISH EMAIL AND LOOK UNDER YOUR GOOGLE APPS WHICH YOU ACCESS BY CLICKING ON THE WAFFLE PAN NEXT TO YOUR PERSONAL ICON AT THE TOP RIGHT HAND CORNER. ALL YOUR SUBJECTS OR TOPICS CAN BE MADE INTO COLOURED LISTS WITH TICK BOXES.



2. MAKE YOUR OWN KANBAN BY USING GOOGLE SHEETS

WE WERE SURPRISED THAT SOMETHING AS SOLID AS COLUMNS AND ROWS CAN BE CHANGED INTO AN INTERACTIVE BOARD WHERE YOU CAN MOVE YOUR CARDS ACROSS YOUR LISTS JUST LIKE PRODUCT MANAGERS DO! THE TEMPLATE FOR THIS IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#). REMEMBER TO MAKE A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT IF YOU WANT TO USE IT.

The screenshot shows a Google Sheet titled "School-at-home Grade 9". The sheet is set up as a Kanban board with columns representing different stages of task completion. The columns are: May Week 1, Admin for every day, Important date for finished work or handing in necessary tasks or tests, Analyse, Tackle down, Commit, DONE/ FINISHED/ KLAAR, and Re-visit this some time. The rows represent different subjects and tasks:

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
|---|------------|--|---|--|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | May Week 1 | Admin for every day (Check your emails and Classroom and fill in on this form) | Important date for finished work or handing in necessary tasks or tests | Analyse (Read your emails for the day, go to Classroom, get your books ready and know what you're supposed to do! Be sure to move the tasks you've done one block to your right on this table) | Tackle down (Choose a subject, watch the videos, make notes and do the work. Update this sheet and move the stuff you did one or two columns further.) | Commit (Mark your work, do corrections, practise the oral, make a video, take a pic, submit your work, email your teacher if you don't understand or want to say hello and pat yourself on the back for getting this far) | DONE/ FINISHED/ KLAAR | Re-visit this some time (This is only if you feel you still don't understand it or want to let it 'sit in the oven' until you have time to get back to it. Or maybe your Commit column is too full and you want to make some space. If it sits here, you can remember to ask your friend or teacher about this.) |
| 2 | English | | | | Watch two videos about introduction to poetry | | | |
| 3 | | | | Do Comprehension in exam paper | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | Do the poem, Soccer, Karoo style |
| 5 | Afrikaans | | | Doen taaofoefeninge | | | | |

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Quote for cover page taken from *The Time Keeper* by Mitch Albom.

Please be advised to contact the Learner Support Unit at RGHS should you continue to struggle to manage your work despite continued efforts of putting the above strategies in place.