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Napping to Success is Equal to Napping in School

Sleep is vital in maintaining cognitive efficiency and overall health in adults and students. High school students are often sleep-deprived because of the overwhelming workload and stress from school. Students are expected to maintain straight A's, participate in 3-5 extracurriculars, and sustain a social life without any breaks in their hectic schedules. However, nap time allows high school students to relax and refocus on schoolwork. Nap time also brings benefits such as an increased attention span and efficiency in the corporate world. As a result, some companies adopted napping pods to improve employee productivity. Like some adults who benefit from the strategic resting periods in the corporate world, high school students need nap time to alleviate sleep deprivation caused by demanding academic work to enhance their well-being and performance—even if it is just a temporary solution.

The daily fatigue experienced by people globally underscores the urgent need for a solution like nap time, which offers a plethora of beneficial attributes to students such as enhanced productivity. Alarming statistics from the McKinsey Health Institute survey revealed that more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of workers from 29 out of the 30 countries surveyed experience fatigue and tiredness daily (Robinson). The widespread lethargy suggests that the global work culture, outlined by long hours and insufficient breaks, affects people worldwide. It hinders the

performance of workers, which leads to high turnover rates of companies and destabilizes organizations. The statistics of workers in the United States gathered from Paychex's survey are even more concerning. 81% of employees experience the afternoon crash (the dip in energy as the workday progresses), and 1 in 4 admit they have fallen asleep at work before (Robinson). This continues to point to the systemic issue of the standardized workday structure. The crash is not just a momentary loss of energy; it is a persistent issue that diminishes the quality of work. Fatigue grasps every corner of worker's lives, yet students face the same problem. Like adults, they also experience the afternoon crash. The energy dip, correlated with the natural circadian rhythms of the human body, is a pivotal sign that students need breaks. If nap time is incorporated into the schedule of students and workers, it could increase their quality of work and enhance their performance levels.

Schools should include designated napping areas so students can gain the same benefits as employees at companies that recognize the benefits of nap time. NASA, a governmental agency, is a company that acknowledges the benefits of nap time. NASA pilots take 15-30 minute naps that enhance their alertness by 34% and reaction time by 16% (Robinson, henrymuscara). Similar to NASA pilots who have to perform well under high-stakes situations (where their lives could be at stake), high school students face similar challenges, whether that be exams, presentations, or competitions. If nap time provides obvious benefits to NASA pilots, students should receive the same benefits to improve their academic performance. Other companies like Nike, Pizza Hut, and Thrive Global also provide workers with special napping pods (Robinson). As companies in the corporate world have implemented sleeping pods to address the issue, schools can designate quiet areas where students can rejuvenate their minds.

The change would not only benefit the student's overall well-being but also teach them the value of rest.

However, critics may argue that nap time does not effectively address the root problem: a lack of sleep; yet students are only looking for a temporary solution to increase their work productivity when they feel tired. Although naps can provide temporary relief to the body, it is only a short-term solution (Patti). Allowing nap times during the workday could provide a false sense of security to workers, leading to the misconception that nap times can “make up” for their lack of sleep at night. Instead of promoting nap time as a substitute for sleep, creating a healthy sleep schedule would be more beneficial. Establishing a consistent sleep cycle can enhance cognitive abilities and allow people to remain focused throughout the entire workday. This applies to both employees and students. Instead of focusing on temporary solutions, shifting the goal to long-term benefits will be advantageous to everyone. Nonetheless, students are looking for a short-term solution. In many cases, students usually have an overload of work on one day of the week and only need a small nap to get them through the night. Spending just 30 minutes a day napping can increase a student’s ability to complete their assignments in a timely and efficient manner. Instead of laboring through an assignment without true comprehension of the material, a short nap can rejuvenate the student, increase their familiarity with the topic, and ultimately finish a would-be 2-hour assignment before the nap in just 30 minutes after a snooze.

Nap time can alleviate the sleep deficits in students while increasing the physical well-being of a student, inadvertently creating an environment that fosters productivity and overall health for students and teachers. Due to the demanding schedules students tackle—balancing academics, extracurricular activities, family, and social lives—many struggle

to maintain an adequate sleep schedule (Engles). As students struggle to balance their unending responsibilities, chronic fatigue from their persistent lack of sleep will affect the productivity and quality of their work. Teens should have an average of 8-10 hours of sleep per night, but 7 out of 10 high school students do not reach that goal (Brooks). Over 70% of high students are sleep-deprived, and the absence of effective solutions is concerning. This is why the incorporation of nap periods in schools may help alleviate the sleep deficit and reduce the percentage of fatigued students. While nap time cannot replace the benefits of prolonged sleep cycles, it offers students temporary relief and sustains them through the day until nighttime. Additionally, sleep deprivation affects not only the mental health but also the physical well-being of a student. Research has shown that sleeping reduces the risk of diabetes, obesity or weight gain, other chronic illnesses, and acne (Engles, Wuh). An adequate amount of sleep helps the body maintain a strong immune system.

However, a lack of sleep reduces the time a human body has to rest, and the immune system starts to diminish, increasing the likelihood of falling sick. A sick student cannot study or perform as well as another student who has had an ample amount of sleep. If students can get a chance during the day to gain extra sleep, it could help keep their immune systems strong. Thus, adding nap time can help maintain a physically fit body suited with a strong immune system. Napping is also a healthier choice compared to chugging caffeine or energy drinks. Although caffeine and energy drinks can provide temporary relief, increased reliance on these drinks can lead to a harmful cycle of dependency and addiction. Not only is nap time healthier for the body, but it also provides a natural way of rejuvenating energy. Promoting nap times in school can mirror the benefits seen in the workplace, allowing both students to gain advantages like improved focus and efficiency in their work.

Moreover, despite slight drawbacks, integrating rest periods into the academic schedule benefits students and teachers. Nap time can trigger sleep inertia, devaluing the point of nap time; and the time it takes to fall asleep and wake up is not worth the later rewards (Patti). Sleep inertia, the feeling of waking up groggier and less alert than before, can impair cognitive functions instead of improving them. Instead of napping to become more alert, naps contribute to the opposite effect, completely devaluing the use of nap time. Plus, who wants to be woken up by two blaring alarms every day? Yet the small break in the work schedule benefits not only students but also teachers. Educators can utilize this time to finish grading papers and other administrative tasks or just relax and take a break from students (henrymuscara). Taking a break from this hectic world, they can use this time to catch up with their friends and keep up with the social life around them. Students would also have the option to take a short break from the rigorous course load. Whether that be napping or some form of self-care, this can lead to improved academic performance. Rather than viewing nap time as an interruption in the schedule, it should be seen as a vital component to foster academic success and personal well-being.

The integration of nap time into high school schedules can help students alleviate sleep deprivation and boost their academic performance. Short rest periods throughout the day can enhance cognitive functions and improve overall well-being. While some argue that naptime is not a viable long-term solution, they overlook the immediate benefits these breaks bring to the overworked students. Implementing this rest period can foster healthier learning environments for students, preparing them to thrive in this increasingly fast-paced world. On a larger scale, are there any effective methods, other than nap time, to combat sleep deprivation in students?

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