A Brief Overview of Good Time Management

Questions to Ask Yourself about Time Management:
How can I balance conflicting priorities?
How can I deal with surprises in time scheduling?
What level of commitments can I handle

“Our costliest expenditure is time…” - Theophrastus

3 Steps to effective Time Management:

Each of these areas is inter-related and fundamentally important to individuals’ ability to manage their time effectively.

Goals should be:

- **Specific**: Be specific about the task at hand; i.e. instead of saying ‘study biology’, write down specific objectives such as, ‘I will read pg. 129 – 145’, or, ’I will write out study questions for chapter 1.’
- **Measurable**: There should be some tangible evidence of success.
- **Achievable**: Be realistic about the task to be completed in a time frame you have set. Based on your knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses, use this information to maximize your chances of successfully completing the tasks you have planned.
- **Realistic**: Setting goals for every minute of the day is unrealistic. Different people will need to plan in varying degrees of detail. You may need to plan on the hour, the half hour, by fifteen-minute blocks, or smaller amounts if you have an extremely busy schedule.
- **Time framed**: Specify when you plan to work and how long you anticipate it will take you to achieve each goal. Try to stick to your plans for time, but recognize that some things may take longer than initially planned for.

While these strategies for goals are related directly to Time Management efforts, the same basic truths hold true of any goal setting efforts. To truly be effective they must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and have a time frame in which they must be accomplished.
Motivation

- Managing your time will give you more free time. If this isn’t motivation to manage your time actively, nothing will be!
- Find something that will motivate you to accomplish your goals in the allocated time.
- Reward yourself for accomplishing your goals.

One of the most difficult parts of time management is motivating yourself to follow your scheduled plan.

Effective Time Scheduling

- Consider a time log to find out how you spend your time. Write down every task, including eating, sleeping, leisure time, etc., and the amount of time it took. Then analyze how you spend your time and where you could have made your time usage more efficient.
- Make a list of everything you have to do in a week and the amount of time that you need to accomplish this, include everything (sleeping, eating, studying, working, relax time, movies, class, exercise, going out with friends, travel time, etc.) Then total the amount of time for these activities. A week only has 168 hours in it (7 days X 24 hours). Most individuals will find that they are committed to more hours of week than there are actual hours. This requires the individual to prioritize the activities in their life.
- Make a “to-do list” every day, and make it a goal to accomplish everything on your list.
- Use a daily/weekly planner to keep track of what you need to accomplish.
- Use a long-term calendar to record test dates, important due dates, things that you need to plan ahead for.

General Principles of Time Management:

- Many effective schedulers take 5-10 minutes, either in the morning or before they go to bed, to plan their day.
- Allow larger blocks of time for grasping new and/or difficult concepts.
- Keep up with your schedule daily. Letting yourself get behind allows work to build up and it may take longer periods of time to get the work done if this happens.
- Concentrate on learning material the first time around. Then work on reviewing and refreshing material. This will allow you to determine where you need to do more studying instead of reviewing material you are already strong in.
- Use waiting time effectively! Many times you can accomplish a great deal of work in the short bits of time you have before or after class, while you wait for appointments, etc. This is valuable study time that allows you to distribute information over time.
- Divide and conquer. Divide large projects into manageable sections and prepare a schedule for each section.

Keys to Effective Time Management:

- Know how to evaluate and complete tasks in order of importance.
- Recognize your time ‘bandits’:
What are the things that keep you from doing what you planned (T.V., phone, friends)? Avoid them during planned study sessions and use one of them as reward when finished.

Find a good study area. Control your study environment (shut off the T.V., don’t answer the phone, close your dorm room/bedroom door, ask people not to bother you for a few hours, study elsewhere if this isn’t working.)

- Learn to say NO. Protect your planned time and don’t spread yourself too thin with extracurricular activities. Over time you will learn what is a manageable work/study load that you can handle.

**Tips for Procrastinators:**

1. Get to work right away. (Do a rough outline, start on the middle if you get stuck in starting or ending)
2. Study everyday – Make it a routine! Spending time everyday on each course will prevent pile up. For some, it works best to simply plan study time like it was another class. It can then be a daily scheduled event that you will do.
3. Use rewards after study sessions to encourage you to work again the next day. There’s no better feeling than accomplishment!

**General Time Management Tips:**

- Tools that can be used: Planners, digital assistants, computerized schedules, pieces of paper, calendars, time logs, etc.
- Don’t forget relaxation time.
- Get enough sleep. Proper sleep will allow you to be more efficient in your usage of time.
- Task diversity may be necessary to avoid boredom.
- 80% of a student’s semester can be planned out within the first 2 weeks.
- Ask yourself what you NEED to do.
- Know how to get work done efficiently and quickly without sacrificing quality.
- Keep long- and short-term views in mind.

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## What are Common Issues for Students?

### Personal Issues:
- Moving to a new environment
- Leaving family
- Living with a roommate
- Meeting new people
- Making personal decisions every day
- Facing new peer pressures (sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.)
- Setting priorities
- Speaking up in class
- Communicating with instructors
- Developing semester course schedules
- Seeking academic assistance when problems arise
- Balancing academics and social life
- Managing time
- Learning how to study
- Learning the difference between high school and college
- Discovering how best to use technology

### Interpersonal Challenges:
- Connecting to a new friendship group
- Starting and managing romantic relationships
- Learning how to show emotions in appropriate ways
- Managing conflict situations
- Recognizing/deciding to act on sexual orientation
- Helping to boost self confidence

### Career/Lifestyle Challenges:
- Deciding on participation in internships and other work experiences
- Choosing or changing a major
- Deciding to leave school/change schools
- Making decisions related to future issues (marriage, income needs, etc.)
- Managing money and financial aid
- Managing family and at-home issues (children, spouses, etc.)
- Learning about different careers

### Physical Challenges:
- Coping with weight gain/loss
- Forming positive health habits and breaking problem habits
- Becoming self-reliant in managing health/stress
- Finding lifetime hobbies and activities

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*Sources: “Common Issues for Students” in the Peer Mentor Handbook: Iowa State University; Scottish Further Education Unit “Sample Peer Mentoring Handbook”;*
Five Stages of Adjustment

Stage A: Honeymoon
- Before students arrive at school and for the first few days
- Students are enthusiastic and want to meet new people. They want to get away from home and start out on their own
- College faculty and staff are very welcoming

Stage B: Culture Shock
- New set of surroundings hard to adjust to
- Difficult to adjust to roommate
- Too many or too few people around
- Expectations and values differ from prior experiences
- Student has difficulty finding his/her way around and feels lost
- Community bathroom is problematic
- Excitement wears off and people withdraw

Stage C: Initial Adjustment
- Physical adjustment occurs and students feel more “at home”
- This stage occurs more quickly for extroverts than for introverts
- Gap between home and college customs and values persists

Stage D: Mental Isolation
- Even though student has adjusted to the physical environment, other things stand out as “different”
- Feeling that getting to know others is hard
- Feeling that no one else feels the same
- Feeling alone
- Values are challenged
- Students tend to sit in their rooms alone
- Cliques may form
- Critical time period for many students

Stage E: Acceptance & Integration
- Students feel good again
- Students feel more completely “at home”
- Students feel they are part of their new environment
- Home values reconciled with college values

http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/aap/currentmentors.html
Some Academic Terms Used In College

**ACADEMIC ADVISOR:** A faculty member assigned to advise students individually on selection of courses and related curriculum problems.

**ACADEMIC PROBATION:** This is a warning to the student that his or her academic progress is unsatisfactory. In some colleges there are several degrees of academic probation.

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE:** A two-year degree in the arts or sciences.

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE:** A student receives this degree upon completing his or her undergraduate studies. There is a Bachelor's of Art (B.A.) and a Bachelor's of Science (B.S.)

**CATALOG:** A campus publication, used by students and faculty. This book provides information ranging from specific college academic and non-academic programs; rules and regulations; and admission policies. Also included are the institution’s academic and non-academic calendars.

**CLEP:** College Level Examination Program. Test given to college students that allows them to prove their knowledge in certain areas of studies. By passing these tests, students can earn credit and advance to higher course levels.

**CREDIT/HOURS:** What a student receives upon completing a college course. Credits are based on the number of hours spent in a class.

**CURRICULUM/PREREQUISITE:** Courses the student is required to take before he or she can graduate from college.

**DEADLINE:** The due date for a course assignment project, paper, etc.

**DEAN:** Senior academic officer of a college. A college or university may have several schools headed by deans.

**DEGREE:** What a college student receives once he or she fulfills a course curriculum.

**DOCTORATE:** After completing a Master’s degree, a student can earn a doctorate for gaining additional graduate credits.

**DROP/ADD:** During the first days or weeks of a semester, the student is allowed to drop a course for that semester quarter.

**ELECTIVES:** Courses of interest that can be taken for credit, but cannot apply toward a major or minor. These courses are outside of a student’s required curriculum.

**GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA):** The grading system used in college. Numbers instead of letters are used to calculate academic progress and success.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY:** A program where students are allowed to take a course under an instructor’s direction, without classroom participation, and still gain academic credit.
MAJOR: A specialized field of study of that a student chooses to pursue through his or her college career.

MASTER'S DEGREE: A degree awarded to a student once he or she has completed the first level of graduate school.

MID-TERMS: Test administered mid-way through the semester or quarter to assess the students’ progress.

MINOR: Along with a major, students can take additional courses to complement their academic concentration and curriculum.

PASS/FAIL: A system where a student does not receive a letter grade for taking a course. Depending upon the student’s achievement in the class, the word PASS or FAIL appears on the transcript.

QUARTER: One of four terms in a college year/fall, winter, spring, summer.

REGISTRAR: Processes and maintains students’ transcripts and other official records affiliated with students’ attendance and accomplishments.

SEMESTER: The school year is composed of semesters. Depending on the institution, there can be two to three semesters per year. Semesters usually last three to four months.

SYLLABUS: An instructor’s plan of action for the class. It is a schedule of requirements usually explaining the intent of the course and what the student’s responsibilities are, such as assigned readings or papers, and when the tests are due during the semester or quarter.

TRANSCRIPT: The compilation of the student's grades, credits, honors, etc., received through his or her college career.
HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TRANSITION

There are many different ways in which high school is different from college. Listed below are six categories where college may be more (or less) than what you expect.

**College Academic Environment**
- Instruction is mainly via lecture.
- Readings complement but do not necessarily duplicate lectures.
- There are usually more students on campus.
- There are more social distractions.
- Classes meet less frequently and for fewer hours per week.
- There is less "busywork."
- The tasks often are less structured and less concrete.
- Using the library effectively is more important.
- Students are held responsible for what they were supposed to learn in high school and in other courses.
- Class discussions often are aimed at raising questions with no clear right or wrong answer.
- There is much more emphasis on understanding theory.

**College Grading**
- Harder work is required to earn a grade of A or B.
- Simple completion of work often earns a grade of C or below.
- Many semester grades are based on just two or three test scores.
- Exam questions are often more difficult to predict.
- There are more writing assignments.
- Essay exams are more common.

**College Study Strategies**
- Effective reading comprehension skills are more important.
- Taking good notes is more important.
- Few visual and study aids are provided.
- Identifying the main ideas is more important.
- Effective communication skills are more important.
- Students must independently seek additional and supplementary sources of information.
- Students must recognize the need and initiate requests for additional help. Students need to monitor their own progress.
- Paying attention in class is more important.
- Studying is more important.
Support Systems in College
- Relationships with family and friends change.
- There is less contact with instructors.
- There is less individual feedback.
- There is often more academic competition.
- Behavior problems are not tolerated
- Students often are given little direction.

Stress in College
- There is an increased workload and a faster pace.
- Students are more independent and are held accountable for their behavior.
- It is more difficult to earn high grades.
- An entire course is completed in 14 weeks or less.
- Many students experience increased financial responsibilities.
- Many students experience new and increased social pressures.
- Students are expected to know what they want from college, classes, life, etc.

Students' Responsibilities in College
- There are an increased number of decisions to be made.
- More self-evaluation and monitoring are required.
- More independent reading and studying are required.
- Students are more responsible for managing their own time and commitments.
- Students establish and attain their own goals.
- Students must determine when they need help and locate the appropriate resource.
- Students are more responsible to whomever is paying for their education (including themselves!).
- Interest in learning often must be generated by the student.
- Motivation to succeed often must be generated by the student.

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