Time Management

Time management is a crucial skill for college success. Everyone has 168 hours in a week. How you use those hours will determine how successful you are.

Factors to Consider when Setting up Personal Time Management Plan:

Be aware of how you are presently using your time. Keep a time log for a few days. Note when you are most alert. Note what your big time wasters are. Remember the following:

- Review immediately before participation classes (foreign language discussion classes)
- Review immediately following lecture classes
- Daily short reviews preferable to occasional long review
- Use daytime hours for study
- Study hardest subjects first
- Break big projects down
- Make lists
- Setting up a Time Management Plan on a weekly calendar:
- Record fixed commitments (classes, work, sports practice, etc.)
- Schedule daily living activities (sleep, meals, personal time)
- Schedule review time
- Schedule recreation time
- Schedule study time for each course
- Stick to your plan
- Additional Activities:
- Use Monthly Calendars (all calendars are available at Academic Support Services) to plan big projects
- Use course syllabi to complete semester calendars. Record exams in one color and paper deadlines in different color.

Time Management Tips

Going from high school to college is a major transition in your life. A big part of that transition is your being able to assume complete responsibility for the use of your time. In other words, you are now completely in charge with respect to your time management.

You, like everyone else, have 168 hours in every week. How you use time can determine your success or failure in college. The management of time is the number-one skill to master in college. It is also a very important life skill. Yet students frequently squander time. A survey conducted recently at a prominent Eastern liberal arts college found that college freshmen spent roughly one-third of their waking hours during a typical weekday engaged in social activities or idle leisure. This "free time" amounted to nearly twice the time the students spent studying. And on the weekend the ratio of social and idle leisure time to study time for the same group was almost six to one!! This is probably true of most Wabash first year students as well, but it doesn't have to be. There are two things one can

do to change that: (1) by doing a job in less time than usual, and (2) by using small blocks of time that you usually waste. The first requires that you study more efficiently and the second requires you to save time by changing your habits and making the most of "hidden" time.

If you are similar to the vast majority of first year college students, you will have at least one, if not all, of the following time-management problems:

- You have difficulty settling down to work. You are always getting ready to study, but for one reason or another, a lot of time goes by before you actually tackle your assignments.

- Once you begin studying, you waste a lot of time jumping from one thing to another, trying to do too many different things in a brief period of time. You don't stay with one thing long enough to get very much accomplished.

- You don't get much studying done in the time you spend trying. Not that you don't go through the motions of studying, but somehow you just don't do as much real studying as you know you should.

These three difficulties are slightly different aspects of the same basic problem. What it indicates is that when you study, you fail to use your time wisely and to concentrate effectively so that you really accomplish a meaningful amount of work. THIS CAN BE CORRECTED. If procrastination and concentration are problems for you, check out the section on these skills.

Just how much time should it take to be successful in college? Well, it is recommended that you should spend two hours outside of class for each hour you are in class — so say you are taking four courses and one of those courses is a lab course, then you are spending about 15 hours in class. So you should be spending about 30 hours a week studying and preparing, or a total of 45 hours a week. THAT'S MORE THAN A FULL TIME JOB!! If you take 56 hours out for sleeping (8 hours/night); that still leaves 67 hours a week for eating, personal care, recreation, part-time work, etc. So, with 168 hours in a week, there is plenty of time to get everything done if you just learn to manage your time.

Before you prepare a planned schedule, try to identify systematically any weaknesses in your present study schedule. You can do this by keeping a time diary for a period of one week. At the end of each hour note how you spent that hour. Don't give yourself credit for studying unless you were actually studying, not daydreaming. During the time you are keeping a time log, pay attention to how you feel during the day. What are your peak times? When do you feel most alert? When is your drag period? At the end of the week, try to identify what your big time wasters are: is it TV, the telephone, time spent on email or surfing the "net" or just messing around? Once you identify your time wasters, try to do something to minimize these. Once you know how you are presently spending your time, then you are ready to set up a personal time management program.

Factors to consider before you prepare your time management schedule:

1. When preparing for a participation course where you will be called upon in class, reserve some time just before the class period to study your daily assignment.

2. For a lecture course, keep the time immediately following or as soon as possible after the class period free to spend reviewing what was said in class, organizing and expanding your notes so they will be coherent later when you are studying. Studies on retention of lecture material tell us that approximately 50% of the material from lecture is lost if it is not reviewed within 24 hours of the lecture. The sooner the review occurs after the lecture the more you will retain.

3. Break long periods of study with short relaxation periods. A good rule is to take a five- to ten-minute break after each hour of concentrated study.

4. Studying a given subject in fairly short, daily periods is far superior to occasional long periods.

5. Most students find that the late afternoon is a good time to schedule recreation and relaxation. Typically this is not a productive study time. Exercise and recreation provides one with a good frame of mind for an evening of study.

6. Many college students waste prime study hours during the day. Try to use those small blocks of time between classes for effective study. Research tells us that an hour of study during the day is worth an hour and a half after the dinner hour and two hours after midnight.

7. Experiment with your schedule until you find the proper balance for you, then stick to it. Building habits of regularity is essential to scholastic success and the key to good time management.

For best results in efficient time management, follow this sequence in preparing your schedule:

1. ***Record Fixed Time Commitments.*** Write all your regularly scheduled activities such as classes, labs, religious services, employment, practices, etc. on your schedule. A weekly calendar is available on this website — Google Calendars are also excellent. They are also available from Ms. Rosenberg in room 101 in the Armory.

2. ***Schedule Daily Living Activities.*** Set aside ample (but not excessive) time for eating, sleeping, dressing, etc. Although most students try to get by on less, it is recommended that one schedule between 7 and 8 hours a night for sleep. Also, schedule three hours a day for eating and personal time. Although we don't usually recommend trying to do two things at once, there are examples where this can be a very effective time management tool. Everyone has to eat, so plan to eat when you

can socialize with your friends. This way you are accomplishing two important things at once.

3. ***Schedule Review Time.*** Reserve time for reviewing either before or after each class. Remember, for a lecture course the time immediately following the class period should be kept free for revising and expanding your notes; for a participation course the time just prior to class should be reserved for reviewing the day's assignment.

4. ***Schedule Recreation Time***. Set aside regular time for recreation. Research supports the fact that a sound body is necessary for a sound mind. Remember, late afternoon is a good time to schedule exercise.

5. ***Schedule Preparation Periods.*** For each course, schedule sufficient time for preparing outside assignments. The amount of time to be scheduled will depend upon the difficulty level of the material, your ability to master the material, the grade you wish to receive, and the efficiency of your study methods. Preparation periods should be scheduled at times when interference is at a minimum and should be long enough to permit the accomplishment of a significant amount of work. Be sure to write the name of each course in all time periods on your schedule when you plan to study it. Don't just write "Study."

6. ***Schedule the Most Difficult Subject or the One You Like Least First.*** Always try to get your most difficult subject or the one you enjoy least out of the way first. Your mind is most alert then, and you will feel invigorated when you tackle those course you enjoy.

Other Helpful Hints:

1. ***Study at Regular Times and Places***. Establishing habits of regularity in studying is extremely important. Knowing what you are going to study, and when, saves a lot of time in making decisions. It is amazing how much time we spend thinking about what we are going to do. Establishing habits cuts down on procrastination.

2. ***Use Free Time for Studying***. Those scattered one or two hours of "free" time between classes are easily wasted. Using them for reviewing and organizing lecture notes or doing the reading for the next class are very efficient uses of this time. Also, don't forget to use "Chapel Period" for review when you don't have something else scheduled.

3. ***Set a Two-Hour Limit.*** After studying one subject for two hours, many people begin to tire and their ability to concentrate decreases rapidly. To keep up your efficiency, take relaxation breaks every hour (for five or ten minutes) and switch to studying another subject after two hours.

4. ***Study on the Weekends.*** Some time should be set aside for study on the weekends since this is a particularly good time to work on special projects. Additionally,

weekend hours should be used for "payback" hours -- time for those subjects that you have slighted during the week because of paper deadlines or exams.

5. ***Break big projects into smaller chunks.*** Set goals for when each part of a big project will be completed. Monthly calendars provide a form for such planning. These are available on this website or from Academic Support Services.

6. ***Good time managers are list makers.*** Make a list of things you need to do either right before you go to sleep at night or first thing each morning. Then number each item according to its importance. Keep paper or a calendar with you to jot down the things you have to do or make notes to yourself. This frees your mind and allows you to focus on your studies.

7. ***Plan your entire semester***. When you receive your course syllabi, take time to complete a semester calendar recording all exams and paper deadlines. Some students find it helpful to record exams in one color and papers in a different color. Then post the calendar in a location where you will see it every day. The semester calendars are available on this website.

8. ***Recite often.*** In a large research study students were divided into different groups. One group used 100% of its time in reading an article over and over again, while another group spent 80% of its time reading and 20% reciting the same article. Other groups read and recited in different proportions. The final group spent only 20% of its time reading and 80% in reciting, and this group clearly emerged with the highest score on the evaluation.

9. ***Be assertive about protecting your study time.*** Interruptions are big time wasters so learn to say "no" to various interruptions, activities, and requests if they occur during your planned study time.

10. ***Stick to your time management plan***. Once you have developed a program, stick to it. Good time management skills, like other skills, require practice. However, you must be flexible enough to make changes if your plan is not working for you.