Time Management

Time management is a skill every student needs to learn in order to be successful in college! It seems easy enough, but there are many skills to learn in terms of time management: planning (use of a planner/calendar), how to prioritize, how to balance, keeping tasks manageable and avoiding procrastination. Below these skills are listed and briefly explained. It is important for students to take some time to learn and become comfortable with each of these skills. Once mastered and adapted to meet individual needs, students will be prepared to manage their lives effectively and successfully!

Skills with Time Management:

- Planning – this is the first step to time management and helps to identify just what has to be done. Students should set time aside to plan at the beginning of the semester and at least once every week (for example on Sunday evening) for updating.
- Prioritizing – this helps to identify what must be done, could be done, and should only be done if there is time left over. There is always an abundance of things to do, but never enough time to complete everything, right? Prioritizing helps to make students’ days feel more productive by identifying and completing the tasks that are most important to them.
- Creating Balance – this helps to keep life in perspective. In order to be truly successful with their time, students must create a balance between work/school and fun.
- Keeping Tasks Manageable – this is necessary to completing a task on time and in good quality. Is it truly possible to study five chapters in two hours? Or how about writing a good quality paper in one day that has been assigned for weeks? No, of course not, but many students have tried. This creates a lot of unnecessary stress, and produces work that is below the quality of what a student can really achieve. Tasks must be broken down into smaller, more manageable parts and assigned realistic time frames.
- Avoiding Procrastination – this is very difficult to do because procrastinating is so easy! Procrastination occurs when students fear what they have to do and therefore postpone getting started on it to avoid the anxiety and stress associated with this fear. A good rule of thumb is to just get started. Feeling guilty about what you are not accomplishing is an excellent way to continue to procrastinate.

Purposes of Time Management:

- It helps to reduce stress.
- It helps to keep life balanced.
- It helps to increase productivity by allowing students to become more effective with your time.
- It helps students to achieve their goals.

Time Management – how to:

- Start by analyzing how you currently use your time.
  - Keep a time log for a week that is typical for you. If you would like to, you may do this task retroactively and record what you did for the past week.

Adapted from...
• Analyze the log to see what needs to be changed or what you would like to change.
• Keep a list of the kind of interruptions that distracted you from your – both internal and external. Make decisions as to how to handle then when they arise.
  • Some examples include: a crisis of some kind, telephone, facebook, inadequate planning, attempting too much, drop-in visitors, personal disorganization, lack of self-discipline, inability to say no, procrastination, leaving tasks unfinished, socializing when you have planned to work, incomplete information, travel, personal issues, etc.
• Next create a schedule.
• Set goals and write them down. This should include assignments, papers, and exams/tests for school.
• Break your final goals into smaller goals and then move backwards and set up a schedule of when to reach these smaller goals.
  • For example, for a term paper due on November 15:
    • Nov. 15 - hand paper in
    • Nov. 12 - do final reading of paper, correct any errors
    • Nov. 1 - begin writing paper
      - introduction by Nov. 3
      - section 1 by Nov. 7
      - section 2 by Nov. 9
      - conclusion by Nov. 10
    • Oct. 30 - organize research
    • Oct. 15 - begin research/go to library
    • Oct. 12 - begin thinking and talking to others about the topic
• Lastly, use an integrated system to keep your eye upon your goals and to manage your time.
  • Use monthly schedules, and write your goals at the end of each month.
  • Use a daily planner. Mark it properly so that tasks are noted in the priority in which they should be completed.
  • Make a list of “things to do” every day. Prioritize your tasks – 1, 2, 3, etc. – on a daily basis.

Pirate Tutoring Center, 2500 Old Cafeteria Building, tutoring@ecu.edu

* FOR RESIDENTS – make sure to make enough copies for attending residents

Adapted from…