

## Chapter 2

### Making the Most of Your Time

#### I. CHAPTER SUMMARY

*Learning outcomes for this chapter*

- LO 2.1 Discuss strategies to manage your time effectively
- LO 2.2 Identify ways to deal with surprises and distractions
- LO 2.3 Explain ways to balance competing priorities

*Message to the student*

This chapter provides an opportunity for the student to become aware of time management techniques and strategies that can influence not only academic success but also personal success. New technological devices have led to incessant interruptions in our lives. It takes self-discipline and self-understanding to know when it is appropriate to tune in and when you should tune out. Use this chapter to become aware of the time it takes for individuals (and yourself) to accomplish the tasks that you choose as priorities.

*Message to the instructor*

“Unlimited minutes...” “rollover minutes...” “buy minutes as you need them...” are plans touted by cell phone companies that give us all the impression that we have more time than we really do. The reality is, however, that our minutes are finite. Students will arrive with a variety of time management skills and tools shaped by their lifestyle, habits, and attitudes. As with many behaviors, rather than trying to convince students that there are one or two “right ways” to manage time, a more useful opening question is to ask students if they are satisfied with the results of how they use their time. The focus should be on their engagement over time with tasks and activities that matter. If they are satisfied with the results of how the time is spent, then the likelihood or, even the need of, changing their behaviors is low. If they are not satisfied with the results, then students might be more interested in learning ways to change. The ability to use time wisely might best be taught by your students. Assess through class discussion those students who are successful with their time and ask them to share strategies that work with those who want more information.

#### II. KEY IDEAS AND CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER

Refer also to key terms listed in back of the chapter.

balance  
black holes  
e-break  
priorities  
procrastination  
self-management  
visualization

### III. CLARIFYING QUESTIONS/ DISCUSSION PROMPTS

At the end of each chapter in the Annotated Instructor's Edition (AIE), teaching tips, discussion prompts, student alerts and additional exercises and activities are organized around specific learning outcomes. These questions can be used to encourage class discussion, small group work, and/or individual reflection about the information presented in this chapter.

1. What tools are useful for getting the most out of your day or your time?
2. When everything seems important, how do you determine what to do first?
3. How long does it take for you to
  - read a chapter in a textbook?
  - read 20 pages in a novel?
  - review for a test in a course for which you are working for a “B”? an “A”?
  - eat a meal?
  - “catch up” with your friends?
  - check your e-mail? Facebook?
  - make a phone call? Send a few texts?
  - sleep and feel rested?
4. What time of day do you consider your prime time?
5. What do you do during your prime times?
6. What is one habit you could change regarding your use of time?
7. What are your beliefs about time management?
8. How will you use time management skills when you are out of school?

### IV. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Consider using the following exercises when teaching this chapter. Always refer to the Instructor's Annotations at the end of each chapter in the AIE. Those listed below with an asterisk (\*) can be found at the end of this chapter in Section VIII; those with a double asterisk (\*\*) are in the student text. Others are self-explanatory.

Use the calendar and your syllabi to map out the semester (if students are in a learning community, they should review their syllabi from all of these classes to identify opportunities to maximize learning in the context of multiple classes); students can predict early on when the busy times will be (15-20 minutes, in or out of class)

- \* Planning Backwards (10-15 minutes, in or out of class)
- \* 168 Hours in a Week Check Sheet (in or out of class; 20 minutes); see also AIE
- \* The Cost of Higher Education (15-20 minutes, in class)
- \*\* Try It! 3 (in class, 25 minutes total-10 minutes individual time, 15 minutes of group time)
- \*\* Try It! 5 (in class, 20 minutes total-5 minutes individual time, 15 minutes of group time)

V. USING THE P.O.W.E.R. LEARNING PROCESS IN YOUR INSTRUCTION  
Whether you are learning to learn or learning to teach, the P.O.W.E.R. Learning process is a useful tool. Here are our ideas for applying this process as an instructor with this chapter:

- P.repare:** Consider your attitudes and biases regarding time management. Ask yourself how this will affect your teaching this topic. Make copies of the weekly time chart. Bring your own tools to class to show students: calendar, watch, things-to-do lists, smart phones, cell phones, and other electronic gizmos.
- O.rganize:** Allow for a follow-up day in your syllabus to discuss time management after students have begun using these skills. Look at your lesson plan for time management. How is your style and preference reflected in the classroom?
- W.ork:** During class allow students to create a things-to-do list and a weekly plan; use the TRY IT! exercises. Ask students to create a list of ways that they waste time or that they allow others to waste their time. Ask students to list ways they have successfully used their time. Ask them to describe their engagement in their learning—effectively using the time to learn.  
What do they miss when they lack engagement? Give students a sample long-term assignment (i.e., ten-minute PowerPoint presentation that is due six weeks from today) and have them determine the tasks and time frame for accomplishing this assignment. As a class, discuss the different considerations for successfully completing this assignment.  
Ask students to bring in their syllabi and calendars. Request that they write all of their tests and major assignments in their calendars. Do they notice that tests fall on similar weeks? Are there patterns for assignments? Does this information provide insight to when there will be stress periods during the semester? Can your students create strategies for dealing with this predictable stress?
- E.valuate:** One week after the initial discussion/lecture about time management, take another class period and ask for time schedules. Ask students to report their awareness of time wasters. Compare this information to the first discussion. Are your students more or less aware of how they use their time? How do they cope with the constant rings, beeps, and sounds that vie for their attention throughout the day?
- R.ethink:** Ask your students to consider how they will change the way they plan their use of time. An assignment to consider is requesting

your students to review their calendar a month later and to see if they have changed their habits. Are they feeling less stressed out? Are they able to develop human relationships that are based on face-to-face interaction and not solely through the assistance of technology? What role does face-to-face contact play in the experience of a college education? In the life of an educated person? These topics are particularly important to return to later in the semester as students come to understand that there is an ebb and flow to the work pace over a 16-week period.

TRY IT! In the space below, begin a teaching journal of the ideas that worked and changes you would make the next time you teach this topic.

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VI. CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE TEXT

Consider bringing up this chapter's ideas again in the following contexts:

- Chapter 1 a natural connection between goal setting and this information
- Chapter 5 test taking connects nicely; particularly, planning time for test preparation
- Chapter 6 reading requires time.... Coming to understand that good readers are flexible regarding reading speed based on the type of material they are reading can reinforce the idea that good time managers are able to be flexible with the time that particular activity takes
- Chapter 7 writing papers and preparing for major projects and presentations allows for hands-on applications of skills involved in this chapter
- Chapter 14 stress management is greatly influenced by a student's use of time
- Career Chapter time management is one of the most frequently connected academic and job skills

## VII. CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Creating opportunities for learners to become actively involved in the process of thinking, doing, and reflecting is a key role for the instructor. In addition to supporting the private dialogue between the textbook author and the student, you need to encourage students to share their thoughts with one another and with you, thus extending the conversation into the classroom setting. We believe that you must consciously connect the course content to

- the individual student's life,
- the broader academic community,
- the world in which we live—our global society.

Here are some ideas that can carry the conversation beyond the chapter activities:

**GOAL:** To connect the information to the individual student's life.

Ask your students to consider what they want to accomplish in the next five years. What kinds of relationships, jobs, skills, and talents do they want to have? Then ask them to work backwards and consider what they hope to accomplish within one year. Finally, ask them to make a list of the things they want to accomplish tomorrow. Do they see a correlation between tomorrow's tasks and their "hoped for" accomplishments at the end of the year? At the end of five years? The relationship between "the activities I participate in today and the abilities I have in the future" is fundamental for students to grasp. Have them write an intention or reflection statement about this idea.

**GOAL:** To connect the information to the programs and practices in the broader academic community.

1. Ask students to consider the clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities that are available and attractive to them. Can they identify skills or experiences that can be gained through membership to one of those groups? If so, they can see participation as both a benefit from a personal and academic viewpoint. Often students will tell you that they would love to join a group or participate in a service project but that they do not have time. Remind them that the habits developed in college will be those they carry into their communities after graduation. Consider using the "168 hours in a day" check sheet to see how many "waking, uncommitted" hours they really have in a week. Student leaders indicate that development of strong self-management/time management skills provided them with the ability to take advantage of unique and life-changing opportunities.
2. If your students are in a learning community or set of linked courses, ask them to review the course syllabi and make a connection between and among the assignments and due dates.

GOAL: To connect to the global society.

The bulk of this chapter is focused on preparing a student to make the “most of their time” as it is valued in United States. Consider asking students to become more aware of how this is not the only way to view time. Make an assignment for your students to meet with an international student, a visiting faculty member from another country, or with a faculty member who has taught abroad. Encourage them to find out how time is valued or used within the context of that culture. Specifically, ask your students to compare mealtime habits, phrases popular in the culture that refer to time (such as in the United States, we use phrases like “time is money,” “24/7,” “time flies when you are having fun,” etc.). What differences or similarities do they notice? What do they believe accounts for these differences? Ask them to write a paper or reaction card on this.

### VIII. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT TEACHING THIS CHAPTER

- Planning Backwards
- 168 Hours in a Week
- The Cost of Higher Education

## PLANNING BACKWARDS

A good time manager keeps a daily to-do list, a weekly schedule, semester calendar, and regular assignment list. Yet these devices serve only to alert students (and others) of upcoming commitments; they do not keep assignments from being done at the last minute. The concept of “planning backwards” can help with this concern. You can illustrate this idea through the following case study:

*Two weeks from today, Sarah must turn in an 8-10 page paper analyzing the differences between the Allied air attack on Germany in 1943-45 and the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999. Her professor wants her paper to be double-spaced and printed rather than sent through e-mail. As part of her documentation, she needs to provide at least three Web sites that are accurate, accessible, and current as well as appropriate citations for any other materials that she uses. Naturally, she has several other assignments and commitments during this two-week period: attending 16 hours of class lectures and 3 hours of supplemental instruction each week, reading 60 pages in her psychology textbook during the next 3 days, daily math homework that takes about 2 hours each day, completion of a novel for English, the homecoming parade/game and party over one of the weekends, a planned trip home during the other weekend, and a work-study job in the library that demands 12 hours each week.*

Ask your students to take this situation and using a calendar, plan back from the due date, the steps and time it will take to complete the paper at least 24 hours before it is due. Tell them to put themselves in Sarah’s shoes and to allot the time it would take them personally to complete each commitment. Hand out a two-week schedule and ask them to

indicate on each day what will be done. You can have them share their solutions in small groups and/or you can provide feedback on their individual plans. This type of planning requires a self-awareness that is critical to student success. It is a habit to encourage and refer to throughout the semester.

## 168 HOURS IN A WEEK

This activity allows you to understand how you use your time each week. Everyone has the same amount of time and knowing how you choose to use your time will give you the power to change your behaviors.

**Step 1.** List the amount of time per week for each activity (arrive at a daily average and multiply by 7; account for weekend differences):

- a. Class time (# of hours in class each week) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Job/work \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Studying \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Commuting/transportation time \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Athletics (Varsity sports and practice) \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Non-school related interests \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Family responsibilities (cleaning, cooking, shopping) \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Sleeping \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Eating \_\_\_\_\_
- j. Personal grooming (bathing, hair, make-up, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** Add together “a-j” for a SUBTOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

Now subtract your subtotal from 168 for a TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

If the number in your TOTAL line is negative, you have committed more time than there is in a week. **YOU ARE IN TROUBLE.** If you have time left over, ask yourself what choices there are for your time. Do you have time for more sleep? Volunteering? Friends?

## THE COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A simple way to enlighten students concerning the value of their money is by illustrating the cost of a college education. Use this activity to have students come up with the true investment they are making in college.

### *Procedure*

**Step 1.** Have students figure out how much it actually costs per year to attend school. Encourage them to add in all of the costs, even if there is not a category (such as study abroad). They should determine what their total expenses would be throughout their entire undergraduate experience (four, five, or even six years).

- Step 2.** Next, ask your students to do a Web search of starting salaries of two types of jobs: those requiring an undergraduate college degree and a typical job (usually minimum wage) that does not require an undergraduate degree. Multiply each salary type by 30 years of employment (just arrive at the gross number; do not try to adjust for raises, benefits, increase in minimum wage, inflation, or deductions for taxes, insurance, etc.)
- Step 3.** Subtract the cost of an undergraduate education from the gross amount of working for 30 years in a job requiring such an education. Then compare that to the total amount earned if the student simply went to work and did not earn an undergraduate education.
- Step 4.** Ask them what they have discovered. Are they making an investment in going to college? Are they likely to earn more over a lifetime with a college degree than without one? How much of an investment is their degree in their future financial security?