

A woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt, is smiling while working on a laptop. She is sitting at a dark desk in a bright office with large windows in the background. The scene is partially overlaid by a blue graphic element on the left side.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Time management

Time management



Strategies to share with students

Suggested ideas and practices educators can share with students to support awareness of the topic and development of the skill. Strategies can be adopted/adapted as needed.

- Create a list of tasks and prioritize them based on urgency.** Make sure to break down larger tasks into small and more manageable chunks to help you stay motivated. Use different colours or tags to identify the urgency of each task and help keep you on track. Assigning tasks as low/medium/high priority can be helpful.
- Plan in advance.** Schedule your activities as far in advance as you can and include as many specifics as possible (what you'll do, how much time to devote to each part etc.). Keep track of the time it takes you to complete regular tasks so you can accurately schedule them in the future.
- Focus on one task at a time.** Multitasking may reduce productivity while working on one task at a time will help you complete it more proficiently. Focusing on one task will also allow your mind to transition more easily to the next task. Consider the urgency of your tasks and prioritize them accordingly.
- Set aside time for other aspects of life besides work.** Make sure you are also planning and scheduling non-academic activities. You can also get in the habit of rewarding yourself for completing your tasks, which can also help with motivation.



Time management



Strategies to share with students

Suggested ideas and practices educators can share with students to support awareness of the topic and development of the skill. Strategies can be adopted/adapted as needed.

- Apply known time management system strategies.** The Pomodoro Technique is one example of a tool that helps people manage their time effectively. This technique involves breaking down tasks into intervals. In practice, this approach could involve organizing your study time into work sessions of 25 minutes with breaks in between.
- Reflect on your method of completing work.** Keep track of how you spend your time and the methods you are using. You may need to update your strategies if they are not working for your current situation. Be realistic and honest with yourself.



Time management



Tips for course design and delivery

Ways educators can bring awareness of the topic and incorporate development of the skill into post-secondary course design and delivery.

- Consider when your deadlines are set** (day of the week, time of day, etc.) and try to spread them throughout the term when possible.
- Break down larger tasks/assignments into more manageable pieces** (e.g., brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and editing) to encourage students to spread out their work and avoid procrastination.
- Schedule time for breaks with course components where possible.**
- Communicate major deadlines and upcoming busy periods** with students early in the term so that they are prepared.



Time management



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Time Management in Practice

Overview

This activity provides students with specific scenarios and asks them to consider which time management strategies they would apply. Students can work individually or in groups to apply the strategies to each scenario, and this can be followed by a discussion and/or reflection.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- [Time Management Strategies PDF.](#)



Time management

Instructions

1. At the beginning of the term during your introductory class or at busier times in the term when you wish to emphasize time management, provide students with the [Time Management Strategies PDF](#).
2. Use the following scenarios to engage students in a discussion about their time managements strategies. Revise the scenarios or add new ones as needed.
 - Scenario 1: A couple of weeks after the fall semester started (Sep 21st), Nadir was reminded by his instructor that a large group assignment is due in the first week of October (Oct 1st). As Nadir starts to think about this assignment, he comes to the realization that he also promised to volunteer as a peer mentor on September 24th and his birthday falls on October 4th. What are some ways that Nadir can manage his time in this situation?
 - Scenario 2: Nica is in her last year of undergraduate studies. Her first semester was incredibly busy, and she had to work over the Christmas break to pay the remainder of her tuition. Starting her last winter term (January 4th), her full year course has a small 5% writing assignment due on January 14th and her 2 other courses have 25% midterms on the week of January 21st. A couple of days before the start of the term, Nica's best friend from her hometown fell ill which has Nica quite worried. What are some ways Nica can manage her time in this situation?
3. Assign students to small groups and allow them to discuss the case studies.
4. Have students share their strategies in a whole class setting.
5. Follow up the activity with a personal reflection or discussion about how students have used these strategies in their own lives, or if they have any other strategies, they use to manage their time.

Variation(s)

- Ask students to write time management scenarios based on experiences they have had in the past and then get them to exchange with other groups.



Time management



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Hourly Assessment Tool

Overview

This time assessment tool is designed to help students visualize how they typically spend their time in a week. This activity is best applied before midterms or another busy time in the term. A discussion can follow where students are invited to share their reflections.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- Organizer
- [Hourly assessment handout](#)



Time management

Instructions

1. At the beginning of the course, ask students to fill out the [hourly assessment sheet](#), which evaluates how each student spends their time in a week.
2. Ask students to reflect on and respond to any or all of the following prompts:
 - What area is the most important to you and which is the least important?
 - If you are surprised by these values, is there an area that you can rearrange to better support the goal of your week?
 - When do you function the most efficiently for your most important tasks? Can you rearrange your schedule to optimize the times when you are most alert?
 - How important is a set schedule to you when regarding your performance in your most important tasks? Is flexibility in your schedule helpful or harmful overall?
 - It could be beneficial to create a weekly or monthly planner with your most important tasks and focus on the short and major deadlines first.
 - A few weeks after you have created a plan, you may want to come back to this activity to see if there have been any changes to your time spent on the above activities. Reflecting on change—whether it be desired change or not—a good practice overall.
3. Invite students to share their responses and thoughts about the above prompts as a class.

Variation(s)

- Encourage students to revisit their weekly activities regularly. They should assess whether the given activities continue to be important and if the amount of time they spend on them should increase or decrease based on their goals. Students can also consider using creative and thinking-outside-the-box approaches to organize their weeks (e.g., combining tasks, doing something you would normally do in the morning at night instead, etc.).



Time management



Activities to do with students

Downloadable activities with suggested guidelines that educators can do with students. Activities can be adopted/adapted as needed.

Activity: Fillable calendars

Overview

These calendars serve as templates to help students plan and schedule their time effectively. Students may download these calendars as needed. Early in the term, ask students to download the calendars and enter all their academic and personal deadlines/commitments. Have students monitor and reflect on their strategies as needed throughout the term.

Review the [Educator Activity Guide](#) before getting started with this activity.

Time

- Under 20 minutes
- 20 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
- Over several classes

Format

- Individual
- In pairs
- Small groups
- Large groups
- Whole class

Modality

- In person
- Online synchronous
- Online asynchronous

Resources

- Module notes
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Laptop/tablet
- [Calendar](#)



Time management

Instructions

1. Early in the term, invite students to download the [calendars](#). Note that on the Excel document there is a “How to Use” tab that provides some explanation for how to best use the calendars. Explain the instructions and encourage students to review the tab so they understand how to use the tool.
2. Invite students to open the syllabus for the course and/or other syllabi from other courses they are taking. Have students add all relevant academic and personal dates and commitments to the calendar.
3. Encourage students to monitor and reflect on their time management strategies and update them as needed (e.g., once per week).
4. Close to the end of the course, ask students to review the questions in the “Reflection” tab. These questions can help students identify what worked for them and where adjustments can be made.

Variation(s)

- Encourage students to share their reflections about the effectiveness of these calendars with their peers. These things can include key items that worked for them and adjustments they made throughout using the calendars.

