Time
A College Student’s Biggest Dilemma:
Are You Using Your Time Wisely?

You have arrived at Rust College scheduling the maximum load for your first module, 9 hours, because you know you can handle the work. Why not, that is only 22.5 hours of classroom time a week. You can still remember spending 25 to 30 hours a week in classroom time while in high school, and you were able to do the work. The module is even two weeks longer than your six weeks grading period in high school, so you do not see any problems with a max load. Then you reach the last week of the module with three papers due and three tests to study for, and if you fail any of them you may not pass one or more classes. You go to each professor’s and complain about the workload, but your words fall on deaf ears. Where did all the time go?

Poor time management may be the biggest single reason for students failing on the college level. For the first time in your life you are responsible for your own time management. Teachers are no longer around to give you a handout for each test and provide you with classroom time to study. Mom and Dad are not there either to remind you to get your homework done and to study. So how do you go about getting everything you need done and still have time for a social life? Everyone says this should be the best time of your life, but things just do not seem to be working out that way.

Time Management and the College Student

First, it is time for you as a college student to understand there are some key differences between high school and college (you can see these differences in the handout, The Differences Between High School and College, attached as appendix A). Second, you need to understand you may have just started your first full-time job. You may think that 22.5 hours is not a full time job. However, after reading The Differences Between High School and College, and find out that you need to spend at least one hour outside of class for each hour in class, you will soon find this is a full-time job. Third, this may also be the first job where you are the boss. Think about it, you have just been handed a full time management position without any training. The students that make it in college are the ones that understand this and seek the training needed for the position.

Here is an exercise that will help you understand how time management works. Take a clean empty salad dressing jar, 4 ping-pong balls, a bag of dried kidney beans, and a bag of rice. The most important things you need to get done in any one day are the ping-pong balls. They should be placed in the jar first. Next are the things we would like to get done but are not that important to us. They are represented by the kidney beans so fill the jar halfway up with kidney beans. In each day we have natural distractions, which are events that have no importance at all. These events are represented with rice so fill the jar to the very top with rice. Now clean off the table where you are working and empty the jar, separating the rice, kidney beans, and ping-pong balls.

Here is the problem most of us face when we have no time management skills. We let the distractions of the day take up our time, so let’s put the rice in the jar first. Then we feel we have time for the important things later so we put them aside and take care of the little things. Now place the kidney beans in the jar. Most of the day is now gone and you need to take care of the important
things. Pick up the four ping-pong balls and without forcing them down into the beans and rice, drop each one of them in the jar. Guess what, they do not fit. You have just learned the first lesson in time management. Do not let the distractions of the day come before the most important things of the day. If you do, you will always run out of time.

Let’s take a look at some things each student can do to improve their time management skills.

1. Develop good habits.
   A. The biggest reason students fail when it comes to time management is because they do not know what they are doing, so they do nothing. By doing nothing, students allow the little things to take over and they develop bad habits. To make things worse, often when we feel overwhelmed the easiest thing to do is to do nothing. The important thing to remember is that just like bad habits, good habits can be learned and established.

2. Develop goals and schedules.
   A. All good time management programs are developed around goals and schedules. Each student should begin each module by collecting all their class course outlines and laying out what needs to be accomplished in each class. By knowing this you can set goals for accomplishing each task and develop a time line. Goals need to be specific, realistic, challenging, attainable, measurable, and easily accomplished within a realistic timeframe.
      1. Specific: I need to write a term paper for Principles of Management.
      2. Realistic: College students should be able to write a term paper during any module.
      3. Challenging: If you are a “C” student, try to make a “B.”
      4. Attainable: Most students wait until the last minute to write a term paper and seem to get it done, so writing one in an eight week period is attainable.
      5. Measurable: You can measure your results by getting the paper done.
      6. Timeframe: All goals need to be accomplished in a set period of time.
   B. Now that your goals are listed, it’s time to set up your short, intermediate, and long-range goals and a timeframe for accomplishing each task. If you have three term papers to write, you may set a goal of writing one paper every three weeks. Those are longer-range plans. Intermediate-range plans would be to do the research the first week, write out a draft the second week, and complete the first term paper by the end of the third week. Short-range goals may be the things we need to get done in any one day. Monday I will spend two hours in the library looking up material, Tuesday I will spend some time looking up material on the internet, and so on. You also need to spend some time studying for each class, so now you can begin to set up a schedule of how your will spend you time each week of the module.
   C. Students would be wise to purchase a day planner and write out the schedule for each of their goals and study times.

3. Study time and helpful hints.
A. Schedule your study time about the same time every day, so that it becomes a matter of habit. If you scheduled your study time like professors set office hours, then you take control over your time and develop good habits.

B. Posting your study hours reminds both you and your friends that this is your time to study and you do not want to be disturbed.

C. Study time needs to be uniform. Humans are creatures of habit, and if we develop good habits they stay with you. Habits are things you do the same way over and over again. If you always get up at 7 a.m., soon you do not need to set an alarm clock, you will just wake up at that time every day. The same thing with studying. If you study the same time every day, you will soon find yourself doing it without any effort on your part.

D. It is recommended that you spend at least one hour after each class studying. This is a good time to update your notes if needed and see if you can add what you learned today to the things you have learned in the past. You also need to spend about 30 minutes later that day going over the things you will cover in class the next day.

E. Also, you need to schedule about two hours each weekend to review all the material you covered in class. By scheduling time for each task, big or small, and sticking to the schedule, you begin to develop the habits that will change your grades from D’s and C’s into A’s and B’s.

4. Do not schedule all your time around schoolwork. Spending all your time studying is almost as harmful to you as spending all your time socializing. Part of the reason why you are in college is to develop responsibility and relationships. You need to schedule time for recreational activities along with studying. This allows the information you have just learned a chance to process and aids you in becoming well rounded. Even time for things like eating and sleeping should be considered.

5. Try to leave a little unscheduled time each day. This does not have to be some long period of time, but should be about 30 minutes a day. Even the best-laid plans often have ways of getting messed up. If you schedule every minute of the day and something happens that throws you of your schedule, it becomes too hard to recover. Always incorporate some flexibility in your schedule. If you find yourself off schedule, re-evaluate what you are trying to accomplish that day. Make sure that the things most important to you get done. If you have to give up something, make it one of the small tasks that can be dropped or rescheduled. Remember, your schedule is not set in stone, and may change week to week.

One of the biggest problems that most of us face each day is procrastination. You know, putting off that important task until some other time. After all, you have so much time, eight full weeks. One of the biggest reasons why most of us procrastinate is a fear of being evaluated. We have been taught from childhood that the real measure of a person is in what you accomplish. If I do nothing I can not fail at anything. The reasoning may be weak, but the fear is real. While it is true you can not fail at something you do not try, remember you cannot succeed either. Remember that
procrastination is a habit, and once we learn how to procrastinate it will take over our lives at school, home, and work.

1. Ways to avoid procrastination.
   A. Stop looking at any task only in the terms of failure. Weigh each task in terms of risk and reward. If the risks are greater than the reward, then you should take on the risk. However, if you feel the risk is too great, you need to re-evaluate what you are trying to accomplish. If you have taken three really hard classes in one module, it may mean that you have to drop one and take it at a later date.
   B. Sometimes we set goals for ourselves that are just too hard to accomplish and we feel like we have failed. It might be good for some students to keep in mind that the real goal in attending college is to graduate, and not to take a max load and get done in three years. Some students are able to do this while others find this a difficult task. If you take four years or more to accomplish your goal so be it. Remember that everyone who completes the task earns the same degree, regardless of the amount of time it took to accomplish it.
   C. Do not be afraid to fail, seek help when needed, and do not feel you have failed because you did not get an “A” for your effort. Often the best way to learn is by making mistakes. Getting started early allows us to make some mistakes and recover in time to still make a passing grade. Professors have office hours to help students; do not be afraid to take advantage of this time. Another key point to remember is that your main goal when entering college should be to get a degree. Not everyone who received a degree got straight “A’s,” do not think that you have too.

Some information found in this handout came from:


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Appendix A

*The differences Between High School and College*

Transitioning from High School to College may be one of the hardest things young college students face:

*Here are some things to Consider*

**Some key differences between High School and College**

### Studying

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<th>College</th>
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<td>1. Time for studying is often provided for in class or during study hall. Little time is spent outside of class for studying.</td>
<td>1. Professors require you study on your own. Often material is not covered in class; students should consider no less than an hour of study time for each hour in class.</td>
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<td>2. Note taking is often not required. Teachers often provide handouts or use review sheets for testing.</td>
<td>2. Note taking is a needed skill. Students should spend time daily studying their notes.</td>
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<td>3. Assignments are shorter in length and covered in class.</td>
<td>3. Assignments are much longer in length and while you are responsible for them they may not be discussed fully in class.</td>
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### Testing

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<td>1. Teachers often give more tests covering less material</td>
<td>1. Professors may give only a midterm and final; it is the student’s responsibility to study larger amounts of material over a longer period of time.</td>
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<td>2. Teachers try to arrange tests around school events and other courses.</td>
<td>2. Professors give tests with little regard to outside events and often during the same period of time as other professors. This is often the case with Midterms and Finals.</td>
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<td>3. In order to show Mastery of a subject students are often only required to be able to reproduce the material covered in class. There is little need to apply learned skills to new material.</td>
<td>3. Students are often required to apply learned skills to new material to show they have mastered the material.</td>
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### Grades

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<td>1. Grades are often given for homework or other minor work.</td>
<td>1. Often things like homework carry little weight in a student’s grade. Work is often given to increase the student’s mastery of a subject so they can do better on a test and no grade is given.</td>
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2. Homework grades often help students overall grade and may make up for poor test grades.

3. Extra credit is often given to help students raise their grade.

4. A bad test grade may not have as big an effect on a student's final grade.

5. The grade of D is considered passing.

6. “Effort counts” Often teachers pass students based on the effort they used in class.

2. Major tests, speeches, and written work provide the professor with the information needed to assign a grade.

3. Extra credit may not be an option. Students are required to perform as required in Course Outlines.

4. Because Tests are often given infrequently, a poor grade on one test, such as a midterm, is much more harmful to a student's class standing.

5. At Rust College any grade of D in your major will require that you retake the class and a student is required to maintain a 2.0 GPA in order to graduate.

6. College work is Results based. Professors provide office hours and are willing to give needed help to master a subject along with any advice a student may need.

The information found in this handout was obtained from a similar handout found on the University of Kentucky’s Web cite, author is unknown.

The material found in this handout may be used by any faculty member of Rust College.

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