



SI-8 The Most Precious Teaching Asset

“Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed,” writes Peter Drucker. Time is the great equalizer. For no matter how rich or poor, scholarly or ignorant, old or young a person is, each has 24 hours per day, no more, no less.

It’s what we do with the 24 hours of life given to each of us that makes all the difference in our life’s outcome. And, as far as teaching, what we do with the instructional minutes we have makes all the difference in teaching for success.

In this Success Insight, let’s pause for a few moments and look at ideas for implementing time management within the classroom and outside the classroom.

Unless you instruct under a competency-based or self-paced curriculum, the time frame for your class is fixed. You and your students have only a certain number of class hours to complete planned learning objectives.

Therefore, how you and your students use in-class and out-of-class preparation hours is crucial in achieving learning outcomes.

According to Hammond and Morrison, *The Stuff Americans are Made Of*, North Americans perceive time in two categories, “do” time and “go” time. Creeping into our feeling for time is reflection, pondering, and just “being” time. This is what mindfulness is all about, and it’s a very powerful cognitive tool.

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“Do” time is outcome oriented, flexible, and informal as compared to “go” time, which is process directed, fixed and formal. For example, in education, we do homework but we go to class.

Whichever time mode you are in, there are practical ideas in this issue that can help you take control and make time work for you. If you don't manage your time, you will be managed by it.

Time management is a critical success factor, and it begins with planning, even though this flies in the face of what Hammond and Morrison believe is a North American cultural preference for action first and questions later.

They note, “The downside [to action first, planning later] is that too often we spend our time hopping around wanting to go somewhere but not sure where and indeed going nowhere in particular.” Without adequate class-time planning, your students may get the feeling that your class is going nowhere in particular—a demotivating attitude that blocks learning.

A proven time-planning strategy is to divide your proposed learning activities into three categories: A, B and C.

- **A** activities are essential to achieving the learning goals described in your syllabus.
- **B** activities lead to the accomplishment of secondary objectives.
- **C** activities facilitate the learning of nice-to-know knowledge and skills. By categorizing learning activities and carefully planning each class session, you will create a time plan that guides your use of each class session.

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If it's crunch time, and you're struggling to complete all your A objectives for the term, look carefully at teaching tasks that can inadvertently consume precious learning time: announcements, handouts and returned paper distribution, attendance, testing, and test review.

If you create ways to accomplish these tasks in less time, or eliminate those not absolutely critical to the learning outcomes you set, you are time-managing your class.

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