

## Becoming a Strategic Learner | LASSI Instructional Modules

### Questions To Guide Your Thinking About **Motivation**

The information and exercises in this module are designed to help you improve your motivation to succeed in college and to help you to be more effective and efficient in your studies. Your LASSI score on motivation gives you an idea about the degree to which you accept responsibility for performing the specific tasks required for success in college. Motivation addresses the degree to which you want to or are willing to complete the work necessary for you to reach your own academic and post-college goals.

Questions/Issues for you to think about as you complete this module:

- Are you clear about your goals?
- Are you successful in both setting and achieving your goals?
- Do you believe you can be a successful student?
- Do your beliefs about yourself and college help you to succeed, or do you have self-sabotaging beliefs?
- Do you think high achievement is more a matter of luck than effort?
- Do you think your academic abilities are something you were just born with, or do you think that there are things you can do to help yourself earn better grades?

### Short-term And Long-term Goals

Not only should you set useful goals, you should also set both short-term and long-term goals.

- **Short-term goals** are ones that you will achieve in the near future (e.g., in a day, within a week, or possibly within a few months).
- **Long-term goals** are ones that you will achieve over a longer period of time (e.g., one semester, one year, five years, or twenty years).

Long-term goals often are our most meaningful and important goals. One problem, however, is that the achievement of these goals is usually far in the future. As a result, we often have trouble staying focused and maintaining a positive attitude toward reaching these goals. This is why it is helpful to set up what we call "enabling goals."

- An **enabling goal** is a special type of shorter-term goal. It is created to help us achieve a long-term goal. Enabling goals are like stepping stones that help us measure our progress toward reaching longer-term goals.

**For example:**

If one of your long-term goals is to get an electrical engineering degree in five years, you can set up enabling goals for each semester or quarter of college that support this long-term goal. These goals could include attending classes, participating in professional development and internship opportunities at your school, maintaining a certain grade point average, or staying up-to-date with your readings and assignments.

### **Suggestions For Becoming A More Motivated Student**

Here are some suggestions for you gathered from students who have succeeded in college:

- Consult self-help books to help you set and achieve goals.
- If you have already selected a major field of study, confer with recent graduates or students nearing graduation to identify the best teachers, the most worthwhile courses, and what other campus activities you might consider pursuing. If you are having difficulty selecting a major, check out books on careers and college majors.
- Begin by separating wishes ("I want to win the lottery.") and dreams ("I would like to be tall.") from goals.
- Build your own study space. Many college study guides provide useful suggestions about personalizing your study space. You need a place that contains all the supplies and materials you need to study effectively and efficiently. If you have to search for paper clips, rulers, staplers, and other materials when they are needed, you are either not going to use them, or you are going to waste a lot of time. Either way, the time and effort you put into your studying is going to be diluted.
- It helps to think in terms of short-term rather than long-term goals. Focus on your short-term goals and your enabling goals. By achieving these, you are on your way to accomplishing your long-term goals. Start with what you are going to do today to achieve your goals.

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### Why Understanding Anxiety Is Important

Controlling anxiety is important because high anxiety can sabotage our own learning and studying activities. Anxiety is a perception of threat. It occurs when we believe or think that we may be in danger or when we expect something uncomfortable or bad to happen. Thinking about this future discomfort or suffering is what alerts or otherwise activates us to worry.

Examples of anxiety include: worrying about failing a test, fear of speaking in front of a class, or worrying about completing assignments. Coping with anxiety is a key part of self-regulation. Successful students understand the nature of anxiety and its components. They find effective techniques for coping with anxiety. They are more aware of the instances when their emotions, negative thoughts, and fears are sabotaging their success in college. Successful students know how to relax and how to cope with their academic tension and anxiety.

The Anxiety scale measures how tense or anxious you are when approaching academic tasks. Anxiety affects how you think, your ability to concentrate, and your ability to perform well on academic tasks. If you are relaxed and relatively stress-free, then you will be able to concentrate and direct your efforts toward learning the information being presented or studied. However, if your anxiety increases, you may have problems concentrating on your coursework.

Anxiety, or worry, can interfere with your success as a student by diverting your attention away from your coursework, such as studying or taking a test. If you are tense or anxious, then you are likely to be self-critical and think negative thoughts about how well you will learn the information and how well you will perform on tests. It creates a competition between worrying about what is bothering you and getting your work done. It is paying attention to these negative thoughts that can keep you from concentrating on your coursework.

### Suggestions For Reducing Anxiety And Points To Remember About Anxiety

Here are some helpful points and suggestions to remember about anxiety:

- Events or situations do not cause anxiety.
- Your anxiety originates from the perceptions and beliefs that you have about certain events or situations. Therefore, coping with and eliminating anxiety is within your control.
- Anxiety causes several consequences that can be detrimental to your mental and physical health as well as your academic performance.
- There are many ways to reduce your anxiety, but the best way to do this is to change your self-sabotaging beliefs into realistic enabling beliefs.

- The first step to changing your beliefs is becoming aware of the beliefs you have about yourself and different events or situations.
- By paying attention to your self-talk, you can become more aware of your beliefs. You can also reduce your anxiety by using more realistic and positive self-talk.
- Not only is it important to change your beliefs, but it is also important to engage in activities that will help to reduce the symptoms of anxiety.
- Changing your beliefs takes time, so often it is important to also use more immediate solutions for reducing your anxiety (e.g., thought-stopping).
- Reducing anxiety is a continual process that you must monitor and evaluate in order to be successful.

Remember, you have control of the anxiety you feel. It is important to focus on who YOU are and how YOU feel. Feeling concern about doing well in college is good. This will help you stay motivated and achieve your goals. But when you begin to feel anxious or panicky, it is important to become aware of these feelings and do something about them.

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Coping With Anxiety**

- Try to identify the events in your life that are stressful for you and why they seem to make you anxious. Analyze your list to see which stressors are realistic and which ones are not. Often we worry about matters that are not really very realistic, such as working hard to prepare for a test but still worrying that we will receive a flunking grade.
- Speak to counselors at your college's counseling center to learn basic stress management techniques such as muscle relaxation or meditation.
- Ask your teachers, counselors, or parents for help in learning to reduce anxiety over college issues.
- Start a regular exercise program or join a recreational sports team. You will be more likely to stay with the activity if you choose one you really enjoy rather than one that seems like drudgery.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available to help you learn how to deal with anxiety and eliminate self-sabotaging thoughts so that you will be better able to reach your achievement goals.
- Develop your own personal style of getting things done in a calm, orderly way. Whenever possible, take on projects one at a time and work on them until completed.
- Find a friend, counselor, or therapist with whom you can talk. It's extremely helpful to get negative feelings off your chest.
- Write in a journal. If you don't really like talking about your feelings with someone, this is extremely helpful for expressing your negative emotions. Often, by getting them down on paper, you will reduce their effects on your mind and body.

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### **Attitude: An Important Factor In Succeeding**

Being successful at anything begins with a positive attitude. Consider the 1999, 2000, and 2001 Tour de France winner, Lance Armstrong, who fought a difficult battle with cancer. Without a positive mental attitude, would he have been able to overcome a life-threatening disease and then go on to win one of the most grueling events in sports for three years in a row? No matter what you set out to do, the journey begins with your attitude. You need the feeling and belief that you want to do something. You must also have the beliefs that it is worthwhile to do, and that you will do what it takes to succeed.

Your attitude toward college relates to how important your education is to you and how committed you are to doing the work it takes to complete it successfully. Everything you do affects how well you do in college. The effect may be positive or negative, but there will be an effect. You will be more likely to put forth the effort needed to complete academic tasks if you see that what you are learning in each class is related to your academic goals and your life goals. Important parts of developing a positive attitude are being able to set goals for yourself and feeling good about yourself as you achieve them.

A person's attitude is one of the most important factors associated with success. In every profession (e.g., sports, entertainment, education, business, medicine, politics, the military) successful people believe they can succeed, and they maintain the energy, interest, and focus required to succeed. It is not always easy, but most successful people accept and face challenges in order to accomplish their most important and meaningful goals.

### **Suggestions For Creating And Maintaining Positive Attitudes**

Here are some helpful ideas, methods, and suggestions for generating and maintaining positive attitudes:

- Set goals that are based on your values, beliefs, and interests.
- Set goals that are specific and measurable, are challenging and realistic, and have clear start and completion dates/times.
- Set both short-term and long-term goals. For long-term goals, set enabling goals.
- Analyze your goals for conflict and commitment.
- Think about the relationships between completing college and reaching your goals.

- Think about your reasons for going to college and relate these to your performance in college.
- Identify negative thoughts that you have about yourself, particularly as a student, and change them into more positive thoughts.

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Creating A Positive Attitude**

- Consult self-help books to help you set and achieve goals.
- If you have already selected a major field of study, confer with recent graduates or students nearing graduation to identify the best teachers, the most worthwhile courses, and other campus activities you might consider pursuing.
- If you are having difficulty selecting a major, check out the career or advising center at your college or make an appointment with an advisor or counselor there.
- Separate wishes (I want to win the lottery) and dreams (I would like to be tall) from your goals.
- It helps to think in terms of short-term rather than long-term goals. Focus on your short-term goals and your enabling goals. By achieving these, you are on your way to accomplishing your long-term goals. Start with what you are going to do today to achieve your goals.
- Clarify your personal, academic, social, and occupational/professional goals so that you know what you want to achieve in life and then find out how college can help you to meet those goals.
- Investigate how the classes you are taking and the subjects you are studying might be useful to you in the future. Talk with your classmates, teachers, advisors, or parents to find out how the subject matter you are studying and the assignments you are completing might relate to your other courses you are taking and your future goals.
- As new information and skills are presented in your classes, try to think of ways they can be useful to you in other courses or in the future.
- Ask your instructor for examples of how the information being presented relates to areas of interest to you, and try making your own connections between what you are learning and your other interests.

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### Why Understanding Concentration Is Important

Concentration is about managing your learning and directing your attention to achieve your academic goals. This involves becoming aware of yourself, your environment, and the factors that both positively and negatively influence your concentration. You can use this knowledge to take steps to control your concentration.

Successful students are able to focus their attention and maintain their concentration on college-related activities, such as studying and listening in class, rather than on distracting thoughts, emotions, or situations, such as:

- thinking about a party coming up this weekend,
- worrying about how you will do on an upcoming test, or
- listening to TV while you are doing homework.

The human brain has a limited capacity to process what is going on in the immediate environment around us and in our own thoughts. If you are distracted, you have less capacity to focus on the task at hand.

As a student, this means that distractions will divert your attention away from your coursework. If you are able to concentrate well, you can direct your attention fairly easily to the task at hand, even if there are other potentially distracting events in your personal life. However, if you have poor concentration, it is difficult to direct your attention and maintain your concentration on college-related activities and what you are trying to learn. As a result, you may not learn important information or critical skills.

### Suggestions For Improving Concentration

Here are some helpful ideas and suggestions to improve your concentration so you can succeed in college:

- Just because you are attending class does not mean that you are concentrating. Attending class is not the same as concentrating on the content.
- People can concentrate on a limited number of items at one time so make sure you are focusing on what is important.
- You need to become aware of distractions that reduce your concentration and limit the number of these while trying to perform academic tasks.
- You need to become aware of situations when you have concentration problems and what causes these problems.

- You need to reflect on your past experiences with concentration and think about strategies that have helped you concentrate so you can use them again.
- You must constantly monitor your level of concentration to make sure you are focusing on the task at hand and not letting your mind wander.
- You must take control and use strategies that will help you concentrate during both studying and listening activities.
- Finding a good concentration environment is one of the first steps to take when improving your concentration.

Remember, concentration is something that you can control. By using some of the strategies presented in this module, you may begin to see improvements in your levels of concentration during both studying and listening activities. It is your responsibility to realize when you are having concentration problems and to do something about those problems.

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Concentration**

- Monitor your thinking when you are doing your coursework both in class and out of class (e.g., at home, at the library). You need to identify what is negatively affecting your concentration and work to eliminate or minimize the thoughts or actions that draw your attention away from the task at hand.
- Focus your concentration by actively participating. Ask the instructor questions in class or ask yourself questions while studying. Actively participating helps keep you involved in the task at hand (and also makes learning easier).
- Try to think about relationships among what you are studying now, your prior knowledge, and material you want to learn.
- Take thorough notes to help you focus during class.
- Try to eat well, get adequate sleep, and follow a regular sleep pattern (i.e., go to bed and get up at approximately the same time each day).
- Check out books, self-help materials, or programs available to help you learn to focus your attention and maintain your concentration.
- Visit your college's learning center and ask about materials or workshops on improving your concentration.



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### Points To Remember About Information Processing

How you process information has a strong impact on how successful you will be in college.

Here are a few important points to remember about information processing:

- If you want to learn and understand new information, you must be active in using strategies that help you construct your own meaning.

Simply using repetition or trying to memorize what the instructor says will not be very helpful for learning and remembering over time.

- There are many different strategies that go beyond simple repetition and memorization that can help you learn information in a more meaningful way.

Simple repetition and other simple memorization strategies can help you retain some new information. However, there is a limit to what you can remember using simple repetition, and rarely do you retain that information for long.

- Information can be learned for shorter or longer periods of time.

Some information you need to learn only for a semester, while other information is vital for later courses or for your future profession. How well and how long you need to remember material is a major determinant of the types of strategies you use.

- In order to store information in long-term memory, you must use strategies that force you to do something with or change the information. Long-term memory requires making connections between the new knowledge and your existing knowledge.

It is much easier to remember new information if you can build connections between the new information and what you already know. These connections help us store new information with related knowledge so it is easier to recall for future use.

- To be able to recall information, you must store it in a way that makes it easy to retrieve when you need it.

Storing new information with related knowledge helps us recall it. Also, building connections among parts of the new knowledge also helps us remember it.

- The types of strategies that you choose to use will depend on the type of information you are learning and what you want to do with the information.

Different strategies help us with different types of learning. The strategies also vary depending on how the information will be used in the future. For example, do you just have to recall it or will you have to use it to solve problems?

### Suggestions For Improving Your Information Processing

Here are some ideas and suggestions to help improve your information processing skills:

- Information processing involves both making new knowledge relevant to what we already know and storing new knowledge so that it can be recalled when it is needed.
- We construct our own meaning when acquiring new knowledge.
- We can use different strategies for moving pieces of information along the memory continuum from very short-term memory to very long-term memory.
- Three different categories of strategies you can choose from are rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies.
- Rehearsal strategies put information into short-term memory only.
- In order to move information into longer-term memory, you must do something with the information.
- Elaboration and organizational strategies help you make information more meaningful and move information into long-term memory.
- Being both fluent and flexible in your strategy use will help you be successful in different learning situations.
- Not every strategy is right for every situation.
- Working smart, not working hard, means optimizing your strategy use to be both effective and efficient.
- There are many different factors about you and the situations you must face that will influence the types of strategies you should choose.

Remember, it is always important to think about which strategies will help you to achieve the goals that you have set for yourself in every situation. You cannot know how to be successful until you have defined what success is to you. By focusing on what you want to achieve, you will be better able to choose the strategies that will help you understand and recall the necessary information in every situation.

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Information Processing**

- Go over what you have read or heard with another student or a parent and try to explain it to them.
- Think of ways in which you could use the information that you are studying now or in the future.
- Ask yourself questions about the material you are trying to learn and try to answer those questions.
- Try to make a drawing, picture, or outline of the material you are studying.
- Ask your teacher or counselor for help in developing knowledge acquisition strategies that will help you organize information and make it meaningful as you are studying.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available to help you learn how to use information processing strategies.
- Speak to someone in the learning center at your college or university about ways to improve your information processing.

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### Selecting Important Information Helps You To Be Effective And Efficient at **SELECTING MAIN IDEAS**

Selecting main ideas means selecting important information to concentrate on during class or while you are reading and studying. Effective and efficient studying and learning requires that you be able to select the important material for in-depth attention. You have to make judgments about what is and is not important to learn.

Most lectures, discussions, and textbooks contain repetitive material, extra examples, and supporting details to explain what is being taught or presented. A major college task involves separating the important material from the supporting details or examples. You need to remember important material for tests or future reference. You need the less important information to help you learn, but it does not have to be remembered.

If you cannot select the critical information, then you will try to learn a huge amount of material. Much of the supporting material does not need to be remembered after you have learned the main ideas. If you don't separate the key points from the supporting details, you can waste a good deal of time that could be put to better use helping you reach your other important academic and life goals.

### Suggestions For Improving Your Skills At **Selecting Main Ideas**

Here are some helpful points and suggestions to help you look for and find important information:

- Finding the main idea is a special case of identifying important information.
- The type of academic task you must perform after learning information will influence which information you should choose as important.
- Your instructor's expectations will also influence which information you should focus on learning.
- Your goals and purposes for reading or listening will influence which information is important to you.
- You need to know different methods that authors use for highlighting or developing main ideas.
- It is important to know the difference between main ideas and supporting details.
- Being able to identify main ideas will help both your comprehension of new material and your concentration while learning it.

## **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Skills At Selecting Main Ideas**

- Ask your instructor for help in identifying main ideas in your textbook and study materials.
- Listen for key terms during class, such as: "In summary," or "It is important to remember." Your instructors will often use key phrases or a different tone of voice to emphasize important information that you need to know.
- Pair up with another student who is doing well in the class to study. As you go over the material you will see how a successful student identifies the important information.
- Learn to use the aids provided in many textbooks which highlight key concepts and help to organize the information being studied. Examples are:
  - Chapter summaries,
  - Preview or review questions,
  - Bold type, and
  - Shading or highlighting.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available in your learning center or college bookstore. Learn how to identify important information so that you will be better able to effectively and efficiently reach your achievement goals.

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### What Is Self-Testing?

The information and Activities in this module are designed to help you improve how you monitor and check your learning and understanding by using some form of **Self-Testing**. This skill will help you succeed in college because you will be more effective and efficient in your studies. Your score on the LASSI self-testing scale indicates the degree to which you check your understanding of new material while performing the specific tasks required for success in college. Self-testing addresses your ability to monitor your comprehension while trying to achieve your academic goals.

### Suggestions For Improving Your Self-Testing

Here are some more helpful suggestions to improve your self-testing abilities and help you succeed in college:

- You need to become aware of your understanding by constantly monitoring yourself as you are learning new information.
- You must take control of your understanding by using self-testing strategies.
- You can use different types of self-testing strategies depending on the types of situations and problems that you encounter.
- The self-testing strategies that you choose will depend on your goals and what you are studying and learning.
- Self-testing is one of the best ways to improve your performance in college.

Remember, self-testing is a way to self-regulate your learning. By using some of the strategies presented in this module, you may begin to see improvements in your ability to self-test while learning new material. It is your responsibility to realize when you are having comprehension problems and to do something about those problems. The payoff is well worth the effort.

## **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Self-Testing**

- When reading your textbook or other class materials, stop periodically and try to summarize the content in your own words. Check to see if you are correct.
- Review your class notes to see if they are complete and understandable.
- Answer the review questions at the end of chapters and/or sections in your textbooks.
- Compose and answer potential questions before, during, and after reading class material, studying, or going to class. These questions can help you to find the areas you need to concentrate on when trying to understand the material or when preparing for an exam.
- Try to restate what you are learning in your own words or explain it to a classmate or parent. Pay particular attention to those segments of the material that are difficult for you to explain. These are significant clues for what you need to study further.
- Try to apply a principle or method you are learning to see if you understand it.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available to help you learn how to use self-testing. These materials are available in your college's learning center or at the bookstore.
- Consult a learning assistance counselor or staff person at your college's learning or tutoring center.

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### Creating Your Own Study Aids

Often, creating your own study aids is even more helpful than using the ones that your textbook provides for you. By creating your own aids (e.g., notes, charts, graphs, summaries, outlines, flashcards), you are able to process the information more thoroughly and organize the information in a way that makes sense to you. Some methods you might use to generate your own study aids include:

- taking notes,
- creating diagrams,
- creating charts and summary sheets, or
- underlining or highlighting class notes and reading materials.

The following screens provide some activities for thinking about study aids. You need to learn how you can create your own study aids. You also need to practice creating your own study aids.

### Suggestions For Improving Your Use Of Study Aids

Here are some methods and suggestions to help improve your use of study aids. The following can enhance your performance in college:

- You need to learn how to use the study aids provided to you by your textbooks and your teachers.
- You need to learn how to create and use your own study aids.
- You need to become aware of and use the resources that your campus makes available to you.

Remember that the study aids that you choose to use will relate to the goals that you set for yourself and the skills and knowledge that you have or want to acquire. In order to improve your use of study aids, focus on the relationships that study aids have with other aspects of you as a learner.

## **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Use Of Study Aids**

- Look at your class materials, such as your textbooks, workbooks, or supplementary materials and see what kinds of aids they include. If you are unclear about how to use these aids, ask your instructor or someone else in your class.
- Ask your instructors, counselors, parents, or classmates for help in developing your own study aids.
- Find out what other aids are available at your school (e.g., tutors, reference materials, study guides) and what is effective for other students in your classes.
- Use the examples, graphs, and charts provided in your textbooks to check your understanding of the material.
- Use any outlines or lists of major points supplied by your instructors to help guide your studying activities.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available at your bookstore, library, or learning center. They can help you learn to create and use study aids. Study aids will make you better able to effectively and efficiently reach your achievement goals.



## **Becoming a Strategic Learner | LASSI Instructional Modules**

### **Test Strategies Are Necessary Before, During, And After Taking Tests**

Using test strategies effectively occurs before, during, and after taking tests. Effective test performance depends on both preparation strategies and test-taking strategies. You need to know how to prepare for the type of test or performance that will be required. You also need to know how to make sure that you perform your best when you actually take the test. Test preparation also takes place after an exam because you want to review your work and determine if you should change the way you study for a similar test in the future.

For example, test preparation includes knowing about the type of test you will be taking. Is it going to be a short-answer or multiple-choice exam?

Test preparation also includes knowing about methods for studying and learning the material in a way that will facilitate remembering the material and using it at a later time. How you study for a test is determined by many factors. These include:

- the content,
- how you will be tested or evaluated,
- the time you have available to study,
- your instructor's expectations and grading criteria, and
- your knowledge about different learning and study strategies and methods.

### **Suggestions For Improving Your Test Strategies**

We have discussed a number of different approaches you can take to help yourself prepare for and take different kinds of tests. They generally fall into the following four categories:

- Preparing well before you go into the test is the best way to improve your test performance.
- Use strategies that fit with the type of test you are taking and the type of questions that are being asked.
- Use strategies before, during, and after the test to improve your test-taking skills.
- Use post-test-taking strategies to note where you were successful, learn from your mistakes, and improve both your preparation and your performance on the next test.

Remember that the test strategies that you choose to use will not only relate to the test itself but will also relate to your goals, your time management, your concentration, and your other dimensions as a learner. In order to improve your test-taking skills, you must focus on these other areas in conjunction with your test strategies (for help see the other modules in this series).

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Test Strategies**

- Ask each of your instructors for their ideas on how to prepare for their tests and for strategies for taking their tests.
- Ask your instructors for sample test questions or develop your own based on what you know about how you will be tested in each course.
- Practice writing complete answers for essay or short-answer questions. Ask your instructor for feedback before the test.
- Talk with your classmates to determine the test-preparation and test-taking strategies they use and how well those strategies work for them.
- Check out some of the books, self-help materials, or programs available to help you learn how to prepare for and take tests. Then you will be better able to reach your achievement goals and demonstrate what you have learned.

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### What Is Time Management?

The information and exercises in this section are designed to help you improve your use of **time management**. This will help you successfully complete your academic tasks. Your score on this LASSI scale gives you an idea about the degree to which you:

- create and use realistic schedules based on your own goals,
- organize and monitor your use of time,
- anticipate and deal with scheduling problems, and
- avoid procrastination.

By actively managing your time, you are taking responsibility for your learning and using your time to create more chances for success in college. Time management addresses the extent to which you are willing to plan your time efficiently and effectively in order to achieve your academic and life goals. Whether we do it consciously or not, we are always making choices about how we are spending our time. Time management is a tool we can use to make those choices consciously and in relation to our own goals.

### Suggestions For Improving Your Time Management

Here is a list of helpful points and suggestions for you to use to improve your time management and reduce your procrastination:

- Realize that you are in control of your time management.
- Maximize the time you spend on your more important goals, and minimize the time you spend on your less important goals.
- Keep your schedule realistic.
- Use time management strategies that will help you stay on schedule.
- Do not overcommit yourself and learn to tell others "No."
- Be flexible and allow for trade-offs.
- Study a little each day.
- Know yourself (e.g., your best and worst times of day, which subjects are easier or harder for you) and use this information to plan your schedule.
- Procrastination is a form of self-deception that can be identified and controlled.
- Use procrastination elimination strategies that will work for your particular form of self-deception.
- Give yourself breaks and rewards as you complete certain tasks.

Remember, you have control of how you choose to manage your time. It is important to focus on your goals and the time you need to achieve them. By planning your time according to your priorities, using strategies that support this plan, and then sticking to the plan, you will be more successful at achieving your goals.

### **Suggestions From Other Students For Improving Your Time Management**

- Know your attention span. How long can you really concentrate? Some students can concentrate for 3-4 hours without taking a break. Others can only concentrate for 30-50 minutes at a time. This also depends on the kind of work you are doing and how tired you are feeling. Remember, it's not just how long you spend studying, it is also what you do with that time. If you are not concentrating and using effective learning strategies (see the Information Processing Module for tips on college learning strategies), you are not really studying.
- Know your biological rhythms. Don't study when it's convenient. Study when you are at your best. "Morning people" work better in the morning. "Night people" work better at night. Know which you are and use your best times for study times. Do other tasks (e.g., laundry, TV, errands) during your "down" times.
- Set priorities for what you need or want to accomplish. Identify how much time is required to realistically accomplish those priorities. Make sure that you don't work on low priority items until you have finished or can no longer work on the higher priority items.
- Do your least favorite work first and your most favorite work last. That way you always have something to look forward to that will keep you going.
- Use your schedule. Stop relying on your memory to remember it. Get a schedule book that works for you and keep it with you. No matter what you plan to do (even meals and TV viewing), put it in your book.
- Use the time you have available. You may find that you no longer have large blocks of time to work. Learn how to use smaller time blocks. If you have an hour, study hard for 40 minutes and then quit. You have given yourself 20 minutes of leisure time and you finished 40 minutes of work.
- Set a deadline and have someone hold you accountable for it. If you are a hard-core procrastinator, you might promise yourself something valuable, such as concert tickets or a favorite CD.
- Think about and pinpoint where delays typically start while you are working. Determine where your motivation starts to wane (i.e., at the beginning, middle, or homestretch of a project?) and commit yourself to using strategies to change.
- Consult self-help books in the area of time management. They are in most libraries and learning centers.
- Talk to the specialists at your college's learning center and see if they have any special materials or workshops to help you.