Managing Coursework

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We are now passed the half-way point in this class. How are things going? What other classes are you taking this term?

Managing current coursework depends largely on managing your time. Let’s review some time-management tips from previous learning units.

First, don’t procrastinate. Sure, sometimes, you can get away with it. You waited until the last minute, but you managed to get that assignment done in time. You convince yourself that you work best under pressure. This is dangerous, because it lulls you into a false sense of security. You might think, “If I got away with it once, I can get away with it again. I work best under pressure.” Sooner or later, though, procrastination will get you. A learning unit closes before you’re finished with that quiz. Your computer crashes just as you’re putting the finishing touches on that paper due in a half an hour. Getting things done ahead of time means you will have a lot less stress in your life.

Second, make sure you’re keeping tabs on your schedule. Have you developed a system that works? Are you utilizing your free time, however small the increments? Have you figured out what time of the day you study best? Are you a morning person, or are you a night owl? Take some time to reflect upon what you’re doing well and what issues you might need to address.

Third, look ahead. What can you do now to make those busy last weeks of the term a little less hectic? Could you start making flashcards to help you study for your final at the end of the term, for example?

Finally, while managing coursework in the short term, it’s also important to plan for future coursework. Here are some tips to keep in mind. Do not wait until the last term to take most challenging classes. Take them in your first 2 to 3 terms. In the event that you need to take a skill-building course to succeed in the long run, you’ll want to get those done first. Try to balance challenging courses with less challenging ones. For example, if you find math difficult but creative writing comes easily to you, pair those classes together in a term. Also think about what will be going on outside of school. What times of the year are particularly busy for your job? Do you help out on the family farm at harvest time? If you are on a sports team, when does your season start? Avoid taking the most challenging courses during these busy times. Anticipate that you will need extra time studying in the Success Center. Above all, checking in with an advisor is always a good idea.

Now, let’s put those time management skills to work and get started on the final project!