

Activity  
**10**

# Scheduling Your Student Life

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**Context:** Out of class; Learning Strategies for Math Success

**Keywords:** mathematics, academic planning

**Student Activity Time:** 1 hour

*Students completed a schedule management assignment in their first college mathematics course.*

## Introducing the Reflection Activity

Making the most of your time is one skill that can have a significant impact on students' success in academic courses and their entire academic career. For students in pre-college mathematics, an educator provides students with a reflection activity to recall their goals, identify their time constraints, and describe their math experience. Students completed the activity on their own and had a short discussion in class. The purpose of this activity was to support students' consideration of their schedule and responsibilities as it relates to their success in their mathematics course.

In the first class meeting, the educator explained the course objectives and schedule and introduced the scheduling activity to students. The educator introduced several key tips for student time management success, such as planning for 2 to 3 hours of studying for every hour spent in class. The educator candidly discussed that one of students' barriers for success is not having enough time to practice, especially for those who may not be as confident in their math skills. To review the assignment, the educator provided a worked example of a student schedule that included times for classes, studying, work, commuting, and other broad life responsibilities. The worksheet prompted students to reply to four sub-assignments: assessment of current academic commitment, confidence rating of math skills, a biography of their math experience, and designing a schedule. In the next class session, the educator separated the students into groups to discuss their schedules and share any tips based on their own experiences.

The outcomes of this activity include revised study plans, expectations for the term, and a tangible artifact and practice to support long term success as a student. Students also recognize their strengths and weaknesses as it relates to being a successful math learner.

## Recreating the Reflection Activity

|   | Description   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Assign the scheduling activity on the first day of class.   |
| 2 | Discuss time requirements for course success and offer tips for time management.  |
| 3 | Separate the students into groups to discuss their schedules during the next class session and collect a copy of student schedules. |
| 4 | Review student schedules, facilitate study groups, and adjust office hours, if possible, to accommodate students.                   |
| 5 | Assist students in scheduling regular study groups in the next class session.   |

**DIGITAL  
LIBRARY  
CONTENT**

10.1 Schedule  
Template &  
Example

### **In the words of the Educator: Tips and Inspiration**

*Give examples.* I try to bring a pre-worked example to class, because a lot of students won't know what you mean by organizing their time until they see it. A lot of students will bring in ideas from the life-skills that they have at their disposal, but sharing ideas about efficiency, and the importance of sleep, helps. Students want to learn to work smarter and not harder and this activity helps them do that. Especially for students in their first semester, the purpose of the activity is to get them prepared to be college students. For some of the more experienced students, this still provides a good reminder.

*Use the activity to form study groups and office hour visits.* One thing to do is to ask students to block off your office hours on their schedule too. It explicitly makes office hours a priority that should be a part of their schedule. I've also used it to help adjust my office hours. If it's clear that a lot of students are in class, or have other conflicts, I can change my office hours so that more of them can come. Another option is to use the activity to create study groups. Students who are available at the same times can plan to have a standing study group every week.

*What was the inspiration for the reflection activity?* I first learned about this activity from our First Year Experience program. For mathematics, being organized is certainly a helpful tool for people to be successful. Summer quarters are definitely a shock for most students when they realize how much time they need to study for each class. Everyone has good intentions, but when you realize how much time you need to be successful it adjusts your expectations so that you can put in the time to get the grades that you want. When I was talking one on one with students, I found that the biggest barrier to their success was time. What I found is that any student can become competent with math if they have enough time to spend practicing, even if they have challenges. With the right amount of time and effort, they can be really successful. This was my attempt to give them some direction to think about how their time management skills have an impact on their academic lives.