

TIME MANAGEMENT IN ONLINE EDUCATION (УПРАВЛІННЯ ЧАСОМ У ДИСТАНЦІЙНОМУ НАВЧАННІ)

Розглядається питання і надаються рекомендації з розподілу часу викладача на постановку завдань, презентацію та пояснення матеріалу, перевірку домашніх завдань, інші види роботи зі студентами в режимі онлайн.

It is certainly true that the Web-based environment creates significantly more reading requirements for both teachers and students. It is also true that the immediacy of Web communication sets expectations of instant response that many facilitators initially try to meet. They then tire quickly of Web-based learning environments and the toll it takes of their time. The only way to alleviate this situation is to have an effective time management plan, to clearly articulate your plan to your students, and then to faithfully adhere to the plan. There are five basic tenets you need to include in your time management plan.

Firstly, plan specific activities for the time you would have normally allocated for classroom attendance in the course. Secondly, plan specific days and times that you will be available for office hours. Thirdly, set aside specific days and times allocated for evaluating student homework, discussion board participation, chat transcripts, etc. Fourthly, at the beginning of the course, make it clear to students what your availability plan is so they have clear expectations of your feedback and turn-around time. Fifthly, key your homework turn-around time to specific due dates (if it is a time-dependent course) instead of to the date the homework is received by you.

The key is to schedule specific times, let your students know what those times are, and then stick to your plan.

In the online environment, you plan to spend your “classroom” time (equal to the classroom time you would spend in a specific full-time day course given to students attending classes at university on a regular basis) in answering student e-mail and reading student discussion board and chat transcripts. You might schedule the regular classroom hours for those activities as though you had your classes in the classroom at university with full-time students. It is important, therefore, to let your students know that these are your days for answering e-mail for this particular class so they don't have an expectation of immediate answers when they have sent their message at midnight on Sunday. This would then constitute those regular hours per week that you would normally schedule for the class. In addition,

you would select hours (according to the program) per week for chat office hours. It is advisable that you select times that are most likely to match with the majority of your students. Finally, determine and articulate what your turnaround time will be on home assignments.

It is important to design a time management plan that lets you maintain your sanity and meets the needs of your students. Though many teachers may initially feel the desire to answer e-mail every day and turn around homework within forty-eight hours, they would soon find themselves overwhelmed – particularly if they have more than one course to teach at a time online. Just because the Internet allows us the luxury of communicating twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week it is not reasonable to expect immediate reply or fulfillment. It is best to establish the right and sound habits and set student expectations early on. That way, as you take on more online courses you will not find yourself among those instructors who beg to return to the classroom simply because they have overloaded your time.

Though as easy and sound the above recommendations may look, they are not always easy to fulfill. The first rule in Web-based education is that the online educators must push beyond our comfort zone. They must venture beyond the known, acceptable, and conventional. They must take fundamental change in the way they think about educational patterns. The same goes for time management while preparing and conducting online courses. Take, for example, the endeavor of trying to keep conventional schedules and balance them with irregular hours that probably most of adult students can use for their online work. Think of the amount of emotional and physical pressure it might bring. Though if online educators stick to only what is comfortable, they will likely fail.

The second rule in Web-based education is plan, plan, plan, and then do more planning. When beginning to plan for an Internet course, in addition to all the usual problems of planning a class that must fit within a curriculum and an entire course of study, one must also plan for the added factor of the Web-based delivery environment. It goes without saying that the underside and the essence of planning process is time management.

The third rule Web-based education is that interactive communication is paramount. Interaction cannot be emphasized enough. Unfortunately, too many developers have taken it to mean provide a quiz every third screen or force students to log in every day and count the number of logins in their grade. Neither of these seems to be a good example of interaction especially seen in the perspective of Web-based education time management. Effective interaction requires communication – not over saturation or useless repetition.