

## Access FSU

### Episode 03: Take Time to Make Time (Time Management)

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KimBoo: Welcome to access FSU, the podcast for the Office of Accessibility Services at Florida State University. Your host, OAS Accessibility Specialist Shannon Bernick and Accessible Technology Coordinator KimBoo York. We are here to shine a solutions-oriented spotlight on issues and concerns for university students of all levels, including undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and non-degree seeking. Thank you for joining us. Welcome to the third episode of Access FSU. I'm KimBoo York here with Shannon Bernick, your hosts. And this episode we're focusing on some tools and we think would be very useful for students, not just the FSU, but at any location. Because it's time management! Time management is one of those things you get ahead of it, get behind it, the mission of the card. I'm trying to get the horse to move the cart sometimes it could just feel a little overwhelming. I will have to be honest, with our listeners and tell you that from my vaunted age, this is an ongoing thing. Time management is something that can change based on what you're doing in your life, whether you're in school or at your job. And it can change based on the circumstances of your health. And there's just a lot of variables to it. You can find about 2 billion videos on YouTube on time management techniques. And a lot of them tout themselves as the perfect tool, the way you need to manage your time. And we're not going to do that here. We're here because we know that students have a wide variety of needs and a lot of different methods on how to meet those needs. Our approach to time management is going to be one that will accept different ways that it can be utilized to improve your academic life and your academic career and how it can help you actually manage your stress. Which is one thing I think a lot of people don't think about. They get so stressed out about doing a calendar or doing time-management correctly that they forget that it's a tool that's supposed to help you manage your stress and stress levels. So Shannon's going to...Shannon has done this presentation before, she's really great at it. She's going to go over and go into a lot of details. I'm going to add some obvious questions along the way because that's just what I tend to do. Well, we're going to start out and we're going to -- actually, I'm going to put Shannon on the spot a little bit and have her talk about what time management is its value to students and just going forward what we're going to be talking about.

Shannon: Yeah, so time management is really a process of organizing and planning how you're going to divide the time that you have between the specific activities or tasks that you have to do. And the idea behind it is that it enables you to work smarter as opposed to working harder. So simply taking that time to make time enables you to reduce some of those symptoms that we often see associated with disability. So for example, if you are a student who experiences ADHD, one of the symptoms might be procrastination. So you have a really hard time initiating tasks. And of course you're going to spend time trying to manage that symptom, that procrastination. When you're spending time managing the symptom, of course, you're not spending time on your work or your tasks. And so that can lead you to fall further behind and may begin to exacerbate some of the other symptoms of your diagnosis. So in the case of ADHD, we see that procrastination anxiety cycle. So procreate, you're experiencing

procrastination as a result of the ADHD diagnosis. That means you're not initiating tasks the way you'd like to. And then you begin to experience anxiety because you know that you're falling behind. So we kinda see this vicious cycle that comes into play while students have to manage the symptoms of their diagnosis, while also trying to manage staying on task with their activities.

KimBoo: All right. That is eye-opening even for me a little bit, sometimes that saying... take time, make time... take time to make time! is vitally important than on the front end. It can sometimes look like you're spending a lot of time not doing the things you need to do, but you are making that time for it. So good reminder for me. I think we're going to back up a little bit and I know as I'm recording this, it is the middle of the semester, but, you know, the term starts three times a year with spring, summer, and fall. So what are the best ways for students to get organized for classes at the start of the term. I know some are already starting to organize themselves for summer.

Shannon: Absolutely. It's so important at the start of the semester to get started with planning as soon as you've attended all of your first classes. And you've gotten a syllabus from each of your professors. And it's really simple. You just want to sit down with those with the syllabus from each class and a monthly calendar. And I know this is going to sound a bit old-fashion, but it's really a great idea to print off the calendar. There's actually research that shows when you hand write something, your brain processes it a little differently and you're more likely to remember it. Additionally, printed calendars can be posted in a very visible location, which serves as a really good reminder for you of what your schedule looks like. With the syllabus and hand calendar. You also want to grab a pen and a pencil so that you can go ahead and do some long-term planning. And we're simply going to start breaking it down month by month for the duration of the semester. And so taking each class one by one, you want to turn to the page where the professor has outlined their assignments for the, for the course. And you just want to take your pen and you want to highlight each of those assignments on your calendar. So if you have your first exam on June 20th in pen, you want to write biology exam on June 20th. So that you know, that that is pretty set in stone. It's not very likely to change. And that's why we're going to put it in pen. Once you have worked through each of your courses with the syllabus, you want to also add in any other obligations that you have. So perfect. Perhaps you have a job or employment where you work. You may have social activities if you're involved in Greek Life or any kind of extra curricular activity where you have obligations already in place, you know, are going to happen this semester. And of course, you want to make sure that you can make things like your exercise and self-care routines, put them on your schedule. It's a great way to, to remember to get them in. And a lot of times if people write it down, they feel more obligated to it. And we know there are so many benefits to exercise in self care. So those are, are something that we definitely want to put in pen because they're not something that's going to change. We're always going to need them. And then of course, if you have any errands or chores that you're obligated to. We know some of our students who live in different facilities on campus may be obligated to help cooking for their roommates or to help cleaning. So if you have something like that, That's irregularly standing task, you want to make sure you pen that in as well. And then also, if you have any vacations or special occasions that are coming up, perhaps a friend's wedding or a formal social event for your Greek life. You want to make sure you go ahead and append those into, because those can be something that serve as a lot of inspiration, something that we can look forward to as we're checking things off our list.

KimBoo: And I would like to point out too, I am the tech person. I will live and die by my programs and apps and all of those things, but I also have a written to do list that I do carry around with me. For

students who might have mobility issues or who are blind, lot of times you rely on technology to fill in the gaps of being able to do things like write down on a calendar or lists. But what Shannon is pointing out, and I do know this as a successful technology person is that there is a hand-body-mind link. So when we're suggesting they read something down, we want to make it clear that what we're trying to do is build up a connection in those neuropathways so that these things that you're writing down are remembered better. So you may not be able to write them down in exactly the way shaman is describing. But we urge you to try to include your body into making up this calendar, more than just typing on the keypad or doing the voice recording, which also known as popular with a lot of students. It will help you build those pathways to make the connections so this is more real to you. I think of my calendar on the wall all the time. so that its real to me. So I totally get where you're coming with with that one. We called me out completely. I'm like, Oh yeah, I love my calendar on my computers, but also there's this one taped to the wall, like I'm still a kid. So some great suggestions there. My next question, is that now that the student has drafted out their calendar, they have their timeline in place, right? What can they do to break down the workload? Midterms, projects, papers. Just having the due date on there might seem a little overwhelming. So how can we break up down?

Shannon: Absolutely. In what we started with, there is long-term planning so that we can kind of see the big picture of the semester, see kind of the direction that the professors are heading with the course. But of course, if we only look at what we have to do over the next 16 weeks, it can feel very overwhelming. And so if you notice, if you buy a calendar in the store and even on your phone, it'll show you the monthly layout of a calendar. And then it breaks it down by week right after that. Um, and that's exactly what we want to do to make our tests more manageable. We want to do what we call short-term planning. And that is simply going to be by the week. So at the start of the week, and this can, can be, can vary depending on the person. You know, a lot of my students who I work with one-on-one prefer to do this on Monday because they feel like it's the start of their week. But I do have a few students that prefer to do it midweek just based on their schedules. So on depending on what the start of the week is for you, you want to sit down and you want to look at that long-term calendar and see what assignments are up, are coming up for you. So of course, there's going to be some things that are going to be due that week. And then there may be other things that you're kind of looking at in the back of your mind that are coming up. And you're going to decide what days this week am I going to work on each task? Now, you might have those regular standing things like on Monday nights, I read for my class on Tuesday morning. So you may have standing assignments that you do regularly each week. And then you may look at something like, Oh, I have an English paper due on Friday. It's about five pages. So I think that's going to take me about two days to work on. I have some time on Tuesday and I have some time on Thursday. Those are going to be my two days to work on that assignment. And it is important to keep in mind how much time it takes you to complete an assignment. Sometimes it takes longer than we think it will. So it's nice if we can kind of build that buffer time in there. And this is where your pencil is going to come into play. You're actually going to pencil in your weekly assignments using pencil because we're recognizing the flexibility of it, right? So we used our pen for those hard deadlines that aren't likely to change. But of course, things come up throughout the week. We, we may get sick. We may have to help a friend. A professor might tell us that they like to finish this in-class activity outside of class. So things kinda change. And penciling in our shirt, short-term planning gives us, gives us the flexibility to change things if we need to. And then the final piece of courses that you do want to look ahead. If you have a very large assignment coming up, you might want to say, Hey, this ten-page paper isn't due for

two weeks, but I have Wednesday afternoon off, so I think I'm going to get started on it this week. And of course, that alleviate some of the stress as that deadline approaches as well.

KimBoo: Well you really call me out -- We watch each other while we are recording this I started laughing when she started talking about it may take a little bit more time than you plan on -- I am notorious for under planning. "This will just take me a few hours!" Three days later I'm still crying over it. Yes.

Shannon: I'm not sure if it's just my age or what, but things are taking me so much longer than they used to!

KimBoo: But it's it's terrible, isn't it? Well, let's, let's just hope that our students are wiser than their elders. and manage a little bit of padding.

Shannon: Absolutely.

KimBoo: But at this point, I want to talk a little bit about students with disabilities, particularly, especially if there's anxiety in the mix, an issue with autism spectrum. A lot of times they get overwhelmed looking even at the weekly view or just trying to breakdown projects like that. I mean, I get overwhelmed. My anxiety isn't even that high. What strategies do you recommend for prioritizing on the timeline yet?

Shannon: So we talked about the long-term planning with the monthly calendar and then breaking that down into some short-term planning by the weekly calendar. In terms of prioritizing, we want to break it down even further to just looking at what you have scheduled for the day. So at the start of the day, we can review that calendar, see what tasks are due and which are planned. And then we're going to decide how to prioritize them. And there's a great little tool for helping students prioritize what activities they should do. And it's called the Eisenhower Matrix, which was actually—

KimBoo: Okay that sounds a little fancy. "Eisenhower Matrix"? It does sound fancy, but it was actually what President Eisenhower used for making decisions. And we essentially take the task that we have, the list of tasks that we have to do. And we're going to rate them on two different criteria. The first one is how important is this task to your work? And then the second one is how time sensitive is it or how urgent is it. So we're going to decide what to do and when to do it based on importance and time sensitivity. And then we have this cute little chart that we can plug it into. So if you have an activity that is important to your work, so perhaps a research paper, and it's due tomorrow morning. That is both important and time-sensitive. So you are going to do that first. That is going to top your list and priorities. If you have something that's important. So you do have a 10 page research paper due by not due until next Friday, then it's not really time sensitive. So if I have an activity like that, I'm going to decide on another time to work on it. So I can say, well, I don't have time today to work on this like I thought I would, but I know that I'm going to have some time on Saturday morning, so I'm going to decide to work on that Saturday morning. The next option is you might have something that is time sensitive, but it's not important to your work. So perhaps you have a dog and he's almost out of food low, of course, the dog needs to eat and you do need to make sure he has breakfast tomorrow morning. That's time-sensitive. In this case, you can either delegate the task to someone else. So for example, maybe your roommate is going shopping and you would ask them if they could run by Pet Smart and pick up a bag of dog food for you. Or you might even take advantage of the delivery service, which is one of the benefits of the many services that are offered now. And you could go ahead and maybe order

from your Amazon Prime account and it can be delivered to your house tomorrow. So it's time sensitive but not important to your work. You either delegate it to someone else or you can take advantage of the delivery service. And then the final category for things that are not time sensitive and they're not important to your work. So maybe you are just dying to try your new video game out, right? But that's not time sensitive. You could really do that at anytime you wanted. And it's also definitely not important to your work. It's not going to help you get that research paper done. Your high, they're going to delete it from your schedule altogether. But of course it is something that you enjoy, so you might not want to do that. So you can just delay it. You can say, once I get through the first two pages of my research paper, I'm going to take 30 minutes, taking a break, relaxing, refreshing, and I'm going to play my video games for 30 minutes then. So we have do activities that are important in time-sensitive. Decide when to do activities that are important but not time-sensitive. Delegate or take advantage of that delivery services for activities that are time sensitive but not important to your work. And then delete or delay those activities that are neither time-sensitive, nor important to your work. Okay, that actually went a lot better than--- A lot less complicated than I thought it was going to be when you first said it. I do like that It is basically a matrix based on two questions. Keeps it simple, easy to remember as well. So you can ask those two questions of yourself and mentally sort out something you're looking at. And of course, I, I love the automation part of that whole thing because you know me, I'm all about the automation aspect of it. But yes, I actually do have my dog food delivery on a schedule because otherwise my dog would go hungry some mornings because I'd be waking up and and I'd be like, "oh no!" I ran out! So then I'm ready to the store before I have to work. And it's all sorts of terrible. I think it just shows that there are simple ways to prioritize using this matrix, for instance. And there are simple ways to fix problems. Maybe you just don't have to put brain power into, and even with playing the video game a video game, you know, deprioritizing that, kind of takes it off the stress books. Oh, I love my video game. It's not a priority right now. I will get to that tonight when I have some friends over; right now, I have other things that are higher priority and sometimes just the act of doing that -- as somebody who does have anxieties in general, sometimes just the act of taking it off the table reduces my stress so much.

Shannon: Absolutely. And the same for me that decide on a time to do it. Because sometimes like I know something's important and I know it's not due for two weeks, but it's there in my mind. So just deciding like, Hey, I can't get to it today, but I know I'm going to work on a Saturday morning or I know I'm going to work on it Tuesday evening. Just knowing that I've already set aside that time to work on it just lets me take a breath that you know, like, okay, it will get done. So yeah, definitely helpful though important.

KimBoo: So important. So that can leads into the next question or topic focus that we're going to do is that they know what tasks they are going to work on when they've done that prioritization with the Eisenhower Matrix. I'm just going to love on that name a little bit more because that's just awesome. It's so futuristic even though Eisenhower was president, like 70 years ago. Once they have those tasks prioritize, which strategies can they use to manage their actual work time? Yeah, so there's a few things that we can do in general. And of course some of them are very common. Like you want to designate a quiet, comfortable, and safe space to do your work. And of course, you want to make sure that you gather all of the materials that you're going to need to complete the activity. So your syllabus or the assignment description, any kind of research materials, your computer or laptop, whatever it is that you're going to need to complete the task. You want to make sure that you have those materials available. Another thing that you'd like to have available is a timer. And this doesn't have to be a timer.

If you just Google timer, you can find all kinds of websites that have a variety of timers. Some of them that sound a buzzer when the time is up. Which is very helpful maybe for someone who is visually impaired. And then there are also timers that will flash a light that when the time is up for someone who may be hearing impaired. But you want to make sure you have that timer with you so that you can take advantage of something called the Pomodoro Technique. And what the Pomodoro Technique is, is it's meant to ensure that you're only working for the amount of time that you are going to be effective. So you don't want to work so long that you're just exhausting yourself. And and really just doing the same thing over and over because you're so exhausted, you're not, you're not thinking straight. Or perhaps the quality of your work suffers because you're not thinking Well. So what the Pomodoro Technique is, is you're going to decide on the task to be done using that Eisenhower Matrix in your calendar. And then you're going to set your timer. Now, the Pomodoro technique traditionally recommends 25 minutes. And I always say you want to use self-awareness here, right? Because there's some people who, it takes them 25 minutes to get started. So setting it for 25 minutes, they're not going to be able to get much done. And then there's other people who after 15 minutes they've checked out and haven't done anything the last 10 minutes. So you definitely want to use some self-awareness here and you can just kinda play with that. Start with 25 minutes, see how it works for you and then adjust it accordingly. And of course, you're going to work for that amount of time. And then when the buzzer sounds or the light flashes from your timer, you're going to put a checkmark on a piece of paper. And you're going to take about a five-minute break. After that five minute break, you're going to come back your timer again for those 25 minutes or the time that you felt thought was best for you, work for that amount of time when the buzzer sounds or the light flashes, you're going to take another five-minute break and place a check mark on the paper. You're going to continue this same pattern until you get to four check-marks. Once you've gotten to that fourth check mark, you're going to take a longer break. And this can be anywhere between 15 and 30 minutes so that you can assimilate the new information that you've been working on. And of course, rest before those next round of pomodoros come up.

KimBoo: As soon as she mentioned the Pomodoro method I was all thumbs up there behind the scenes because that's one I've used a lot, both as a professional writer and just in my personal life, my work life, I highly recommend it. And what's really interesting is that is a very popular method. So for those of you who perhaps are on social media sites, like Discord. or if you're watching YouTube, you can set up group Pomodoro sprints and do a study together type of thing that kinda gives you a little bit a group encouragement as your all in the same place at the same time. So if that's something that would help you, definitely you set up your own discord server for that or join some friends who get together do that. I know that if you go on YouTube, this is guilty pleasure of mine: "study with me." And you'll pull up a lot of videos of people just doing Pomodoro methods on screen, like three hours. Yeah, that's just it, a little bit and mood music in the background and it's just them hunched over their desk or their computer, they're doing fine. And it's a recorded session so that if at times don't match up with you particularly, you can skip forward or pause it for a little bit. These are the types of ways that you can reach out and not just feel stuck tied to a timer, which can sometimes feel a little oppressive for some students. But it does work, Pomodoro is so great. Do you use it personally Shannon?

Shannon: I do not use it personally!

KimBoo: The shame is revealed!

Shannon: The shame is revealed! (laughter) My anxiety drives me to work for long periods of time. So unfortunately, I do not use that. But a lot of people have success with that.

KimBoo: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And it's like I said, it's one of those things where you can find different ways to incorporate it, and a lot of writers that I work with, we do sprints online, writing sprints together as community using the Pomodoro method. So it does work for a lot of people. So please e-mail and let Shannon know that she need to try the Pomodoro method for herself.

Shannon: The shame! I promote it, I've promoted it with my students for years. And I, unfortunately I do not use that.

KimBoo: But that's an okay, everybody has their own methods. I mean, that's one of our standby mottos here.

Shannon: Yes.

KimBoo: Not everything is going to work for everybody. Certainly, if the anxiety of a timer running in the background, this is an issue for you. Sometimes that's why a group I recommend to students like that happens enzymes because someone else is watching the time, and they say time's up. So there's lots of different ways for students to explore pomodoro, I just ask them to reach out and do reseach about it, but it's such an excellent, excellent system. I do use all the time.

Shannon: I need a gentle timer, like one of those gentle alarm clocks where the light slowly comes on in the morning and it's like you're awake out.

KimBoo: I that I I love it.

Shannon: Yeah. I mean, I need that in a timer! just slowly start to remind me that it's time.

KimBoo: Now you've given me a challenge because I will find that for you, Shannon. it's my job to find it. Then I'll do I will find it for you. So we're going to wrap up here. We've been at this for half an hour already. I can't believe that, but that's really great advice. And some things back and forth. You have any final reminders for students regarding time management, things should think about or if they run into speed bumps in their time management, What resources do they have?

Shannon: Yeah, absolutely. So the first thing is that, you know, we we want to make sure that we're always rewarding ourselves for the work that we do, especially right now during the pandemic, the end of the semester. These are challenging times, right? And, and it's, there's going to be difficulties that we encounter. People. Just find it very satisfying. Just crossing those activities. They're less in like for some people. Just put that line through it is satisfying for them. But remember back at the very beginning we talked about making sure that time for exercise and self-care. And that includes rewarding yourself for the work that you've done. And of course, that's specific to the individual so that my time with you yeah, absolutely. That video game, someone else might be yoga, whatever it is for the individual. And of course, we want to try as much as possible to complete the tasks that we've planned for the day. Give it hopefully that we've selected a, a reasonable amount of tasks to do for the day and we want to try to stick with that. But of course sometimes it is going to take longer than we think it will or something else is going to come up. And so we just want to be flexible with those times. If possible, we want to plan some buffer time into our schedule where we can either take a break or we can get some extra work done. And we want to be open to moving those tasks around it there. We wrote them in pencil so that

we could erase them and move them. So we definitely want to be flexible with that. And of course, it is related to your schoolwork. You always want to make sure that you're keeping that open communication with your instructors. Especially if you have an accommodation where you have extended time on assignments. As soon as you have an experience. Flare-up of your disability and you realize that you're not going to be able to make that deadline. Talk to your instructors about that, let them know that you're going to need to use that accommodation. And then of course be sure to take breaks when your timer goes off. But even if your timer hasn't gone off and you're really just struggling, go ahead and take that break. It's okay. The method, the Pomodoro technique does not have to be an exact science. So listen to yourself. Be self-aware. If you really need a break, go ahead and take it. And then of course, the most important thing, be kind to yourself. As we talked about. I think on each of our episodes already, we're in the middle of a global pandemic. We're at the end of a very challenging semester, semester of remote learning. On top of that, a lot of our students are dealing with this, managing the symptoms of their disability. So life can be hard, right? And it's not always going to go exactly as we planned. In fact, most times it will not go as we could. That be kind to yourself. And try again tomorrow.

KimBoo: And touching on the point that, if you go back to the beginning, When we started this podcast: time management techniques and suggestions that have been made here are to help you manage your time and manage your stress. It's not to make you more stressed out that you're not doing it correctly. The correct way is the way that works best for you.

Shannon: Absolutely. So thank you so much for joining us on our third episode. We do have more episodes coming out . Our next one is going to be super special with a super special guest! Shannon, do you want to give us a little bit of a head's up on who is going to be joining us next time?

Shannon: Yes! So we are very fortunate next time to have our Program Director, Dr. Jennifer Mitchell with us. And we are going to be talking about the social model of disability, which is how we approach services from a programmatic level. So we are super excited to have her join us for our next session.

KimBoo: Yeah, we've mentioned before that we really, really love her and she's absolutely brilliant. And has been a great, great leader far department. And we think she's going to offer a lot of suggestions and comments that students are really going to like.

That's it for this episode. We hope that gave you some tools to use. And we will be back in a couple of weeks or so. with our next episode and our guest Dr. Jennifer Mitchell. So thank you for joining us. OAS is O-U-T out! Thanks for listening to the latest episode of Access FSU. You Did you find it interesting, helpful, insightful. Please let us know by emailing our office at [OAS@fsu.edu](mailto:OAS@fsu.edu) We are always looking for feedback on issues and suggestions for future episodes. Don't forget to subscribe to our show on your favorite podcast app, including iTunes, Stitcher, and Spotify. For more information about the Office of Accessibility Services at Florida State University visit our website at <https://dsst.fsu.edu/OAS>. We appreciate you taking the time to join us today.