

Tips for Student Scheduling For Students Ages 8-18

As adults, we are given tasks that require us to set goals and create our own schedule based upon the desired outcome. We select the resources necessary to achieve the task. As teachers, we must help students acquire the skills necessary to independently and effectively plan and organize their time.

What better way to do this than to have students schedule time during the school day! When students schedule their time they build the following executive function skills:

- thinking critically as they decide where and when to tackle a learning activity
- being flexible to work independently, with a partner, or in a small group
- compromising to share resources with peers
- setting goals and devising a plan to achieve them
- managing time
- initiating a task



Here are some tips to help you empower students to schedule their time:

- ☐ Create a learning activity to help students schedule their time or use a How-To Sheet that provides step-by-step instructions.
- ☐ Post and/or inform students of pre-scheduled events such as lunch, an event, a whole class lesson or discussion, small-group, mini-lessons, etc.
- ☐ Gradually scaffold student responsibility for scheduling. Being aware of what comes next allows the students to begin to have ownership over activities in class. As time goes on, you may extend the schedule to last an entire day or a week (for middle and high school).
- ☐ Give minimal choices at first. Once students have mastered the skill of filling out the schedule, take 2-3 activities from the activity list, and have them make choices to plan time. For instance, you might tell the class: "Today we will have a class discussion from 9:30 to 9:45. Then, you will have 30 minutes during which you will plan your time. There are 3 possible activities you can choose from. Look at your activity list and decide what you'd like to work on during this time."
- ☐ Provide intermediate deadlines to help the students organize their time. If particular assignments are due on certain days, students can make informed decisions about what tasks to complete when. It will also keep the task from lasting too long. Note: It's important to stick to deadlines once you have them in place! Don't get into the habit of making extensions.

- ❑ Provide feedback on students' schedules. Guide them in making decisions about how and when to select the various activities. As the students become more masterful in their scheduling, the feedback will become more content-based, as opposed to procedural.
- ❑ Encourage students to reflect in their journals, asking them to list what they accomplished in a given time period and evaluate their productivity.
- ❑ Offer guidance through small-group mini-lessons for those who continue to struggle with scheduling and facilitate a discussion with the group to decide what choices will be offered.
- ❑ To build students' awareness of scheduling, use questioning during active facilitation. "What do you think would be a good choice for today? Why?" Through these conversations, students learn to think ahead. They make decisions based on a list of required and choice activities and can plan based on their learning styles and readiness level, teacher feedback, assignment deadlines, and opportunities for collaboration.
- ❑ Be consistent. Provide time in the beginning and/or at the end of class for students to schedule. Gradually, the students will begin to do this on their own.