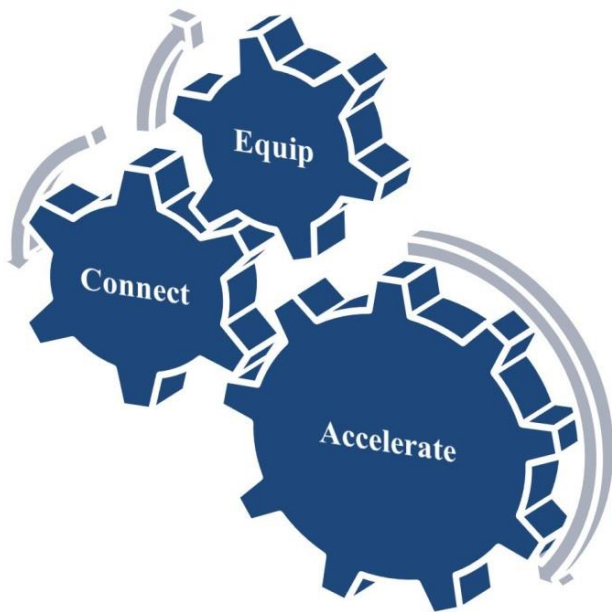


Unit 4

Presentation



ACE 100

Accelerate, Connect, Equip



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-Education that works for you.

Unit 4

Personal Growth

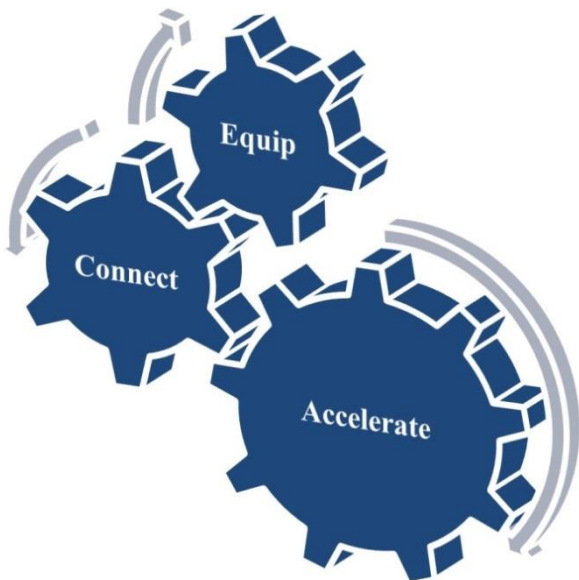


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Unit 4 Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ☐ Discover goal setting techniques to reach academic goals
- ☐ Identify tendencies that lead to procrastination
- ☐ Classify and apply best practices for time management
- ☐ Analyze personal learning styles

Topics:

- ☐ Setting Goals
- ☐ Procrastination
- ☐ Time Management
- ☐ Learning Styles

Setting Goals

“People often complain about lack of time when
the lack of direction is the real problem”

- Zig Ziglar

Setting Goals

Setting Goals

We all have goals throughout our lives that are important to us.

And now, at such a time as this, consider your academic goal and what you want to do with your life. You have set a goal to obtain a college degree and are working toward this admirable undertaking by completing each course. A degree represents hard work, commitment, and determination all to become a recognized expert in a field of study. Because of this, a degree will open doors you may not even see yet, which is a very exciting prospect.

Having goals and working toward them is an important part of having a full life, and whether big or small, is part of what makes life thrilling. Goals give us a sense of purpose, points us in the direction we want to go and gets us interested and engaged in learning and having new adventures. The path to goal attainment may not always be smooth or easy, and at times it may feel like we carrying an 80 pound pack trudging uphill, but the goal is worth all the effort. Let us carefully consider how we set our goals so that we increase the momentum in reaching each one.

Let us examine academic goals as an example; however the methods we will explore for setting goals can be applied to career, relationship, and personal health goals as well. Many students achieve their goals by developing and applying effective study habits. In the readings for this unit you will find several articles and videos that provide great insight into effective ways to study and prepare for class assignments. As an individual with many responsibilities, choose the methods that work for you and your schedule.

Setting Goals

Setting Goals

Living on purpose is achieved by setting goals and taking steps to make our dreams a reality. Following are several principles to follow to reach a goal:

Ready, Set, Goal

- ❑ **Set Goals that Motivate:** Focus on goals that are important to you. Define why the goal is valuable so that when difficulties block the path you will not let discouragement derail your efforts. What skills do you want to learn, what do you want to accomplish, what unhealthy habits or negative behaviors do you want to change, what improvements do you want to make to yourself or your surroundings?
- ❑ **Set Goals that are SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound. For example, avoid making the goals: *I want to have a better life* or *I want an education*. Outline specific factors that will make your life better or choose a specific degree level and field of study as your goal. Be sure to include the timeframe to achieve the goal and set benchmarks, or smaller tasks to complete that will help you reach your overall goal.
- ❑ **Write Down the Goals:** Writing helps make the goals concrete. Make sure the statement is worded positively rather than negatively. Use action words such as *will* rather than *might*. “I will complete six courses this year.”
- ❑ **Display the Goals:** Make the goals visible in your environment to serve as a motivating reminder that focuses your actions.
- ❑ **Take Action:** When you have outlined the plan, then it’s time to act. This is where determination and perseverance is necessary. Continue on the path to your goal no matter the roadblocks, challenges, or delays. When you reach the finish line celebrate the fact that you made it. Once achieved, take in the new view, for where you are going will be much more breathtaking than where you were.

Procrastination



“The best way to get something done is to begin.”

Procrastination

Procrastination

Procrastination is the act of putting something off that needs to be completed. It is often evidenced through those tasks we spend great energy justifying why we aren't doing. We can do this with daily tasks, projects, and even course work.

Habitual procrastination can be detrimental to accomplishing one's goals. Procrastinators often fill their day with low priority tasks or tasks that are easy, rather than tackling something more difficult, yet a high priority to complete.

There are several techniques we can employ to help us overcome the propensity to procrastinate according to the article "Overcome Procrastination" (n.d.) and these include recognizing, discovering why, and apply strategies to overcome such tendencies. Let's explore each one in detail.

Procrastination

How to Overcome Procrastination

Admit to Procrastinating

The first step to recovery is to recognize and admit there is a problem. When we are honest with ourselves we can find several indicators that we are procrastinating.

The first indicator is taking too much time to mull things over. For example, we see this evidenced when reading emails over and over without replying or facing a project or other task without taking action. There is a timeframe in which we should carefully contemplate an issue to formulate our thoughts, but this can quickly cross the line to procrastinating when a response or action is not taken.

A second indicator of procrastinating is beginning a high-priority task and finding something else to do instead. For instance, we might sit down to study or work on an assignment and distract ourselves by continually getting up to make a cup of coffee/tea, walking the dog, or cleaning the house. The task may be so daunting we find other distractions to busy ourselves instead of focusing and completing it.

A third indicator of procrastinating is leaving important items on a to-do list without working toward completing them. Filling one's time with low-priority tasks instead of handling what needs to be done or delaying until we *feel* like doing the task are indicators of procrastinating.

Procrastination

How to Overcome Procrastination

Determine the *Why* for Procrastinating

A method for overcoming the propensity to put thing off is to consider why we feel overwhelmed by the task at hand. Are there aspects we don't understand? Do we need further clarification? Do we need to develop certain skills before proceeding by asking for help?

We may find the answer to why is that we don't want to fail, so we are paralyzed by fear and do not attempt to progress. Perfectionists tend to procrastinate, for they would rather not do something at all than to do it imperfectly.

Another reason for procrastinating is disorganization. Be sure to prioritize tasks from most to least important and set up a timeframe to work on and complete each task. Setting benchmarks for completing each task in segments can also help in achieving the overall goal.

Procrastination

How to Overcome Procrastination

Apply Procrastination Proof Strategies

An effective technique to employ is to follow the *5 Minute Rule*. This method includes starting a task you have been putting off and making an agreement with yourself that you only have to work on it for 5 minutes. The initial 5 minutes can help us overcome irrational fears about the task and help us get started. When once we start something this will create momentum and make it more likely to finish. It's easier to go back to a task that we have “started” than to think of a task that we haven't even begun to look at. The 5 minute technique often turns into 30 minutes or even an hour of time well spent getting through the task.

Another strategy to help a person overcome the habit of procrastination is to set up a to-do list or task sheet that outlines benchmarks for completing the task in segments can also help. We will look at this strategy in more detail in the Time Management section.

Procrastination

Procrastination vs. Prioritization

Putting off an unimportant task isn't necessarily procrastination. It may just be good prioritization!

If you delay completing a task because you are tired and want to think more clearly it isn't procrastination, but good time management. Just make sure you don't delay starting the task for more than a day or so, and this only occurs occasionally event.

If you have a genuine good reason for rescheduling something important, then you're not necessarily procrastinating. But if you're simply *making an excuse* because you really just don't want to do it, then you are. ("Overcome Procrastination," n.d., para. 7-8)

Prioritizing one's tasks is an important skill. We can learn to order important tasks and use our time wisely to accomplish more of our goals by exploring time management skills.

Time Management

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”
-Stephen Covey

Time Management

Time management simply means the ability to use our time effectively and efficiently to accomplish the tasks set before us. One of your tasks is to complete this and other courses in order to accomplish your goal of obtaining a college degree. If it has been years since you were in school, be encouraged, for the beauty of online learning is that you can adapt your schedule to fit in time to study and complete course requirements. There is no travel time to and from campus and no long class periods to sit through. You learn on your schedule.

No matter your age or situation in life, if you are willing to commit to the path of higher education you can develop study skills and other academic competencies, such as math and writing, to become a college graduate. An important factor in reaching one's academic and other important life goals is practicing time management. We will explore strategies to become a more time savvy person, how to recognize and work with your natural rhythms for optimal energy and focus, and methods for creating a project management schedule that will help focus your tasks.

Time management is often a taken-for-granted skill even though it is not very difficult to understand as a concept. For many, it can be a bit of a challenge to practice. Time management requires the investment of a little time upfront to prioritize and organize your responsibilities and create a game plan that works for your life.

Time Management

Daily Schedule

The first step in managing one's time is to recognize what we spend time on. Informally jot down what you do each week by filling out a schedule such as shown below. This schedule is just to give you an idea where you may find extra hours in the day or where you might be using time unproductively.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6AM							
7AM							
8AM							
9AM							
10AM							
11AM							
Noon							
1PM							
2PM							
3PM							
4PM							
5PM							
6PM							
7PM							
8PM							
9PM							
10PM							

Time Management

Time Management Strategies

Each one of us has important responsibilities and goals we want to achieve. There are many ways to reach the goal and one common thread for all of us is to manage time wisely. As we apply strategies that work for us, we can find time in the everyday to accomplish those tasks we must do and those that we want to do.

7 Strategies of Highly Productive People

1. **Focus on the Important:** Recognize and remove activities that are time drains and don't contribute to your goals.
2. **Plan Strategic Breaks:** Recreation is important so make to disconnect during the breaks and do what you love. Rest when tired, work when rested.
3. **Make a Task Sheet:** Having a To-Do list or Schedule can help keep you on track and identify time drains. The tasks can serve as benchmarks marking our productivity, if it's a new task then add it to the list and prioritize it
4. **Be Inspired:** Think outside the box if your current schedule is not working, this can ignite creativity and a desire to accomplish tasks in a new and efficient way. If you can automate it or delegate it, then do so.
5. **Learn to Say No:** It's okay to have time boundaries or to say no to new responsibilities or volunteer efforts that are not job specific.
6. **Optimize Every Minute:** Be fully focused on heavy mental tasks. Avoid trying to relax and work at the same time. Multi-tasking is not always the most effective strategy.
7. **Find Your Rhythm:** These can serve as benchmarks to accomplish multifaceted tasks, find the best time of day to do each task. Work with your natural rhythms – if you are focused in the morning, then do the heavy mental lifting in the AM and save the less mentally taxing work until after lunch.

Time Management

Natural Rhythms

When do you do your best work? When are you most focused? When are you least inspired and ready to think creatively? You may be a morning person or a night owl. These natural rhythms control our energy levels each day. Let's focus on the last strategy for productivity from the previous list – Natural Rhythms. This is also referred to as Circadian Rhythms. According to the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, circadian rhythms are defined as the:

physical, mental and behavioral changes that follow a roughly 24-hour cycle, responding primarily to light and darkness in an organism's environment. They are found in most living things, including animals, plants and many tiny microbes. The study of circadian rhythms is called chronobiology. (n.d., para. 1)

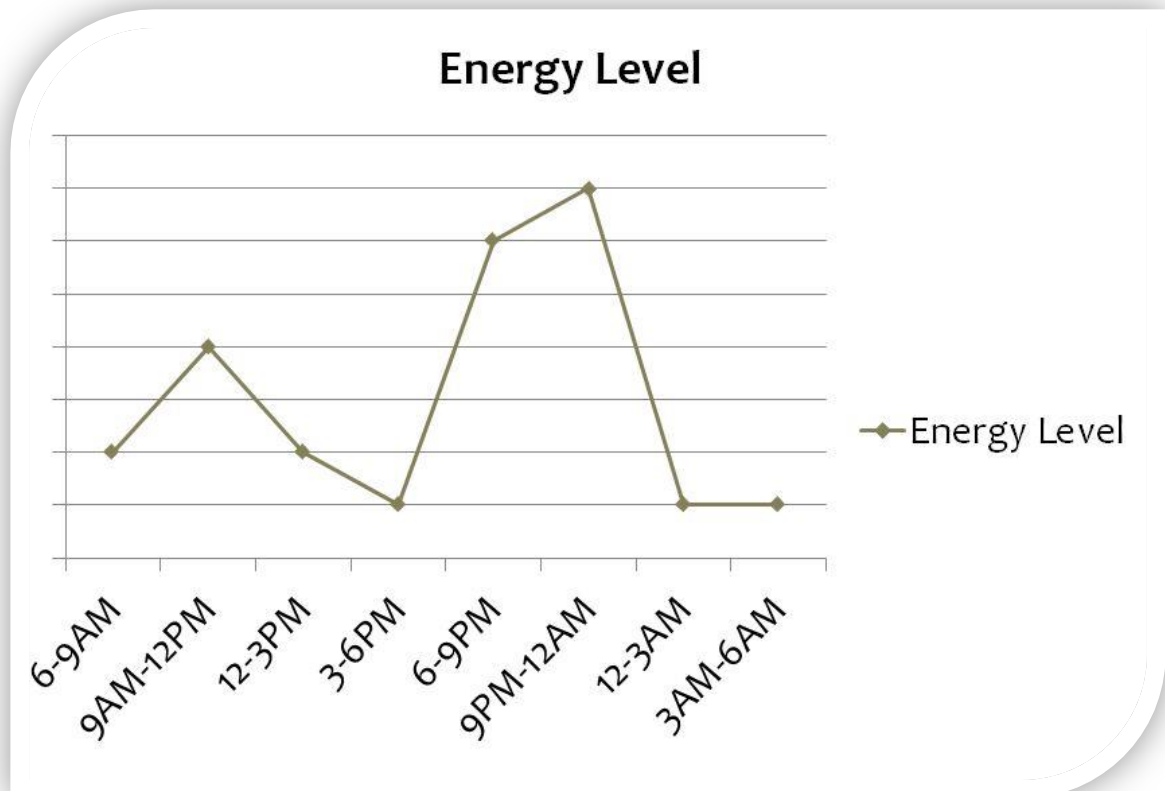
When we recognize this, then we can harness the power of our peak times of focus to accomplish certain tasks.

The advantage of online learning is that you can harness the power of your own circadian rhythm to complete your course work. You do not have to organize your schedule to drop off the kids at school to and make it to an 8AM class on a Monday morning, try to pay attention and take notes, and then rush to work. Online learners get to set their own schedule. If you function best on mental tasks in the early morning hours, then manage this time to log in and do course work at this time of day. However, if you find yourself focusing best after 9PM, then this would be the best time to schedule those tasks, such as school work, that take the most mental focus to complete.

Time Management

Natural Rhythms

Let's determine your daily pattern of energy and focus levels. Draw a graph on a piece of paper starting from when you wake up and ending when you go to bed. Diagram your energy levels. Following is an example with 3 hour increments. You can set your diagram up in the increments that work for you.



Time Management

Natural Rhythms

The key now is to apply the phenomenon of natural rhythms by matching activities to your energy levels. Consider a typical day and your levels of energy and focus during the day and start to map this on the graph. Most people have varying levels of energy during a day and so you will probably get see a pattern of highs and lows. If you've never considered this before, take a day or two to watch yourself and your energy levels throughout the day until the pattern emerges.

When you are putting together a *Task Sheet*, schedule your highest priority activities which require the most energy and concentration in your times of peak energy. It is much easier to focus and avoid distraction when we our energy is at its highest. Conversely, if you have lower levels of energy and focus during the day, work on the easier tasks that require less concentration.



Time Management

Task Sheet Sample

Task Sheet Sample

A major factor in successfully managing time is to prioritize responsibilities. Following is a sample task sheet template to demonstrate how to track each task that you are responsible for completing so that you can use your time wisely. The headings are examples to get you started, so use what works for you and your method of organizing your life.

[illegible]

Learning Styles

“Learning how to learn is one of the
most important skills in life.”
-Norma Fauziyah

Learning Styles

Recognizing your learning style can help you determine the best way to study and learn material both in college courses and in professional settings.

Once you have determined your preference for learning, you can use specific strategies to help you embrace your learning style and understand how others may learn best.

There are several theories and models of learning styles. The following is an adaptation of the VAK Learning Styles Model developed in the 1920s by psychologist in the 1920s to help classify the general methods people employed to learn. Think of these styles as learning preferences, for when needed most people can learn material presented in multiple methods. These three styles can help you understand how people prefer to learn and make sense of new information.

- ☐ **Take the following Learning Styles Assessment and use the results to respond to the Unit 4 Discussion board.**

Learning Style Assessment – Step 1

Rank each statement below with either a 1, 2, or 3:

1 = Seldom/Never

2 = Sometimes

3 = Often

Category A

- ☐ I remember information better if I write it down.
- ☐ I stay more focused if I can look at a person talking.
- ☐ I need a quiet work space to study or work.
- ☐ When I take an exam, I visualize a page of a textbook in my head.
- ☐ When I'm given directions verbally, I must write them down.
- ☐ It is distracting to listen to music when I'm working or studying.
- ☐ I don't always "get" jokes.
- ☐ I doodle on the margins of my notebook paper.
- ☐ I react very strongly to colors.
- ☐ **Total**

Category B

- ☐ My papers and notebooks are very messy.
- ☐ I trace words with my fingers as I read.
- ☐ I don't follow written directions very well.
- ☐ Writing is a difficult task for me.
- ☐ I tend to misread words such as "same" and "some"
- ☐ It's easier to listen to lectures and learn, rather than read.
- ☐ I am not good at interpreting people's body language.
- ☐ If a text has small print or the paper quality is poor, it is difficult to concentrate to read it.
- ☐ My eyes get tired quickly even though my vision is fine.
- ☐ **Total**

Category C

- ☐ I begin projects before reading the instructions.
- ☐ I don't like sitting at a desk for a long time.
- ☐ I prefer to watch a task being done rather than doing it myself.
- ☐ I use a trial and error method when problem solving.
- ☐ I like reading when I'm on an exercise bike or doing some other activity.
- ☐ I have to take a lot of study breaks.
- ☐ I don't give step-by-step instructions very well.
- ☐ I enjoy sports and exercise.
- ☐ I use my hands when I am describing something.
- ☐ When I rewrite or type up my notes, it's easier for me to remember them.
- ☐ **Total**

Learning Styles

Learning Style Assessment – Step 2

Total each category. The highest total is your preferred learning style.

Category A	Category B	Category C
Number of points	Number of Points	Number of Points

If your score indicates that you prefer to learn by using one method, you will normally learn best by using all three styles, rather than just your preferred learning style. Some people may have tendencies in more than one category. If so, just use the tips below for the categories you scored highest in to enhance understanding and learning of new materials.

Following are some examples of how to learn best in using each method.

Learning Styles

Learning Style Assessment – Step 3

Below are some suggestions on how to apply this information and get the best from your particular method of learning.

Category A = Visual Learners

- Prefer to learn by seeing. May think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs.
- During a lecture, classroom discussion, or meeting visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.
- Need to see information to know it.
- Have a strong sense of color, so use color coded notes and focus on learning resources such as graphics to reinforce your learning like videos, pictures, or diagrams.
- May have artistic tendencies.
- Often have difficulty following spoken instructions, so ask for written directions or write instructions down.
- May overreact or be sensitive to sound or noise, so find a quiet study/work environment to minimize distractions.
- Often misinterpret words, so visualize word spellings or facts you must memorize.

Learning Styles

Learning Style Assessment – Step 3

Below are some suggestions on how to apply this information and get the best from your particular method of learning.

Category B = Auditory Learner

- Prefer to learn by hearing
- Learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say.
- Interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard.
- Benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.
- Need to hear information to learn it, so listen to lectures or record yourself reading your notes and listen later.
- May have trouble following written directions or concepts. Create songs to improve memorization.
- Enjoy participating in class discussions/debates, so discuss your ideas verbally, record your ideas, then type/write them to improve writing skills.
- Use verbal analogies, and story telling to demonstrate your points.

Learning Styles

Learning Style Assessment – Step 3

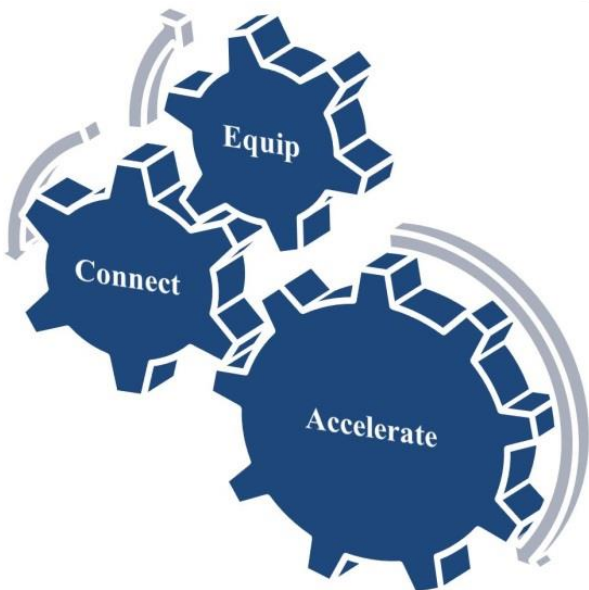
Below are some suggestions on how to apply this information and get the best from your particular method of learning.

Category C = Kinesthetic/Tactile Learner

- Prefer to learn by doing
- Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them
- Often find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration
- Prefer hands-on learning, so work or study in a standing position or while doing something else like exercising on a machine or chewing gum
- Often can assemble parts without looking at the directions.
- Do not like to sit still, so take frequent breaks
- Often have good coordination and learn best when physical activity is involved
- Skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before settling down to read it in detail

Unit 4 Assessment

Use this presentation to answer
to the questions in the
Unit 4 Exam



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