Study Skills and Time Management: Ideas from 2/23/21 Tutor Panel
Participants: Xamantha Valentine, Megan Velez, Raphaela Bolivar, and Ellie Misra

Time Management

- Megan: Distractions can be an issue. Some of us are privileged to have a private space. Some aren’t; communication with those around you is important. Maybe you can become aware of when it’s quietest in the house, be flexible about planning and use that time, getting small bits of reading done then, for example. It takes me 2 hours to get through 30 pages of a text, so I have to plan.

- Ellie: I try to time school work for the time of the day when I can best do it—I’m not good at reading mid-day, for example, so I schedule dense reading for mornings and evenings. I find that it’s not useful to force myself through the work.

- Raphaela: Multiple short blocks of study time, rather than long ones. I’ve made mistakes with that; it’s taken practice. I’ve learned that hour-long chunks, spread out throughout the day (so the time is broken up), work for me.

- Megan: Me too. I try to spend the first few weeks of the semester keeping track of how long it takes to do assignments, especially reading. That way, I can better predict how much time it’ll take me to do my work and make more realistic decisions about studying. I also like to break assignments into pieces, and not necessarily jump right into them (for example, forums) but instead prepare for them in bits.

- Ellie: I try to get a weekly rhythm going for my studies. For example, I was overwhelmed by a specific course, and then I found a pattern for my studies—see a video one day, do a forum post another day, etc.

General Organization

- Megan: Visuals really help, putting assignments into bullet points, color-coding, calendars. I use color coding—for notebooks, sticky notes, everything (ex: green for tutoring)

- Ellie: I like color coding too, and I keep a color-coded checklist, a running list of assignments, so I have a visual sense of what I need to do. Color coding and making lists are things I suggest a lot to tutees.

- Megan: A short to do list, a 2-day list, and time to evaluate the calendar, to see what can realistically fit there.

- Xamantha: I use a planner, having the week laid out helps, with daily goals, noting when it makes sense to do what on each day, seeing where there’s white space, asking myself—what can I do now that would help me feel productive? Note: I can over plan, as a form of procrastination.

- Raphaela: Using resources posted on Moodle, is so important, especially in this online world. What’s there that can help us? Those resources can save us time and get our work more focused.
Approaching Assignments

- Xamantha: I talk with others about what I’m working on, a form of pre-writing, clarifying, testing if I can explain it well.

- Megan: I talk with others to solidify my own understanding, generate ideas together, respond to questions

- Raphaela: I read assignments 3X, highlight steps (especially if the assignment is in paragraph form), make a bulleted list of what the assignment requires, do the assignment, go back and check to see if I did it all.

- Ellie: I try to avoid writing essays the night before (though I’ve done that!) by having a rough list of ideas that I can ruminate on ahead of time. I try to get the writing done early, then have a few days for a break. I try to go to the instructor’s office hours early on, to see if I’m on track, get feedback, and increase my confidence.

- Raphaela: Sometimes I like to start with the most difficult work, so it’s over and done with. Sometimes I like to start with the easiest work, so I can check it off and feel some sense of accomplishment.

- Megan: I set aside specific times for getting ready to do an assignment (separate from when I actually do the assignment). It’s time for reviewing the assignment, understanding it, going to Moodle, organizing my calendar, etc.

Attending to Ourselves

- Ellie: I negotiate with my housemates (parents, siblings, pets), putting my schedule on the refrigerator, so others can see it and know when I need to concentrate.

- Raphaela: I’ve been reading lately about how important it is to figure out how to re-group after feeling like we’ve messed up, dedicating time to re-prioritize, re-group, think about what to do, re-arrange time and study strategies in a way that increases a sense of self-confidence. Using encouraging phrases is important—telling yourself that you are capable!

- Xamantha: Self-care is important, prioritizing health, taking care of my body, drinking enough water, eating, sleeping, getting outside. It’s easy to justify not doing these. Sometimes I need to fight against inertia (something at rest stays at rest; something in motion stays in motion). Everyone needs to find what works for them, what gets them kick-started.