CENTER FOR ENGAGED INSTRUCTION
Provost's Office
Division of Teaching & Learning
UC Irvine

UCI CEI

Strategies for Classroom Time Management

1) Be FLEXIBLE

Know that your anticipated timing may fall apart and that this is a common part of teaching. Have contingency plans about what to do if you have extra time or about what to drop if you run out of time. Try not to stress about matters beyond your control.

One way to be less stressed is to focus on what you want the students to be able to do with the day's information as opposed to the amount of content to cover. In addition, don't write out your lectures verbatim; doing so can put extra pressure on you to get through everything—the students will notice and may be less likely to ask questions rather than interrupt. Being more extemporaneous can make you appear more approachable, as well.

2) Let students know the plan for the day

Write out your student learning outcomes and brief guide to the lesson on the board or on a Power Point slide. This will help you stay on track, and it provides students with a rough understanding of how long each task will take.

3) Plan for transition times

Remember to account for the time it takes for students to pull out a sheet of paper, organize into groups, read instructions, and get on task. If you think a particular activity should take 5 minutes, plan for 7 minutes. Activities that require students to move around take longer than activities requiring students to pair-up.

4) Come prepared

Arrive to class early. Set out all of your required materials/notes/markers beforehand and write on the board what you will be discussing later. Having an outline, or "advance organizer," gives students a road map and helps them to follow along.

5) Use a timer & let students know how much time they have

This will help you and the students stay on time. While you can use a watch or phone, it might be worth considering an online timer that you can put on the screen. This allows students to take personal responsibility for staying on task in the time you've allotted.

6) Use notes or Power Point when lecturing

This will help you stay on track and on time when lecturing. You *might* consider providing the students with notes or the Power Point beforehand. (If you worry that students might be less likely to pay attention in class or even attend if they are provided the Power Point ahead of time, you might consider providing them with incomplete slides that they need to fill out.)

7) Delegate tasks & assignments

Instead of taking time to pass out assignments or write on the board, assign a student to do it. Having students perform such tasks frees up more time for the instructor to achieve what he or she has planned.

8) Consider time of day and classroom dynamics

Is your class after lunch? Is it early in the morning or late in the evening? Depending on the time of day, students may be more lethargic or energetic. Likewise, consider how outgoing, talkative, and engaged your class is. Time of day and classroom dynamics should influence your planning and timing. For example, if your class is immediately after lunch, you might want to refrain from turning down the lights but instead think of how you can bring energy to the class (e.g., group activity).

9) Keep an eye on the clock

Get in the habit of glancing at the classroom clock. This will help you to make a mental note of how much time is left.

10) Learn from your past successes and failures

Use the midterm feedback to inform you of what has and what has not been working well. Also, reflect on what has worked and what has not in past classes. Try to keep a note of how long activities tended to take, what students found difficult and easy, and so on. This will help you plan in the future.

11) Try to save time at the end of the class for a clicker question or short quiz about the day's material.

Doing this is one of the best ways to get students to consciously think about the material instead of immediately forgetting once they leave the room. They can use the quizzes in their review for the course's major assessments.