

# All About the 1 to 2!

## The Issue: Most Students Don't Study Enough

The average high school student doesn't study very much, but they are really busy with school and activities. Informal group surveys of Cal Poly SLO freshmen, students attending a well regarded CSU campus, suggest that most studied only 3-5 hours per week in high school. This is consistent with two national surveys:

- A 1997 Brookings Institute paper reported that high school students studied an **average of 19 minutes per night**.
- The 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reports that **55% of high school students study three or less hours per week** and only 8% study 10 hours per week (more towards the lower end of those three hours).<sup>1</sup>

However, Cal Poly freshmen say they averaged at least 15 hours/week in other activities in high school such as sports, music, publications, or employment. Considering that these students were in class 30 hours a week (5 days, six periods) as high school students, they were quite busy managing a 50 hour work week. One thing you have to ask yourself is "what is your job right now?" If you answered Soccer or Skiing - that is incorrect. Your job is being a student first and athlete second. Your priorities are a big deal and if you prioritize an extra-curricular (that is what all those things are - extra to school), your education will suffer greatly.

Most new high school freshmen and current high school students have no idea what the study expectations are in high school, much less college. They may triple or quadruple their middle school efforts and feel good because they had never studied so much. But this is not nearly enough in high school. Following is an excerpt from a Dean at Cal Poly SLO addressing studying at the college level:

*"Freshmen entering Cal Poly experience quite a change. Instead of being in class 30 hours a week as in high school, class and lab time runs 15-20 hours per week. Most have not picked up an extracurricular activity. They have at least 25 hours of newly discovered time they didn't have in high school. Anecdotally, I find that many students may proudly triple or quadruple the hours they studied in high school upon entering college. Even though this may total only 10-15 hours a week, they feel good about what they are doing as they have never independently studied this much before. Yet their total time in class and studying adds to only around 30 hours per week - not even a full time job, not even as many academic hours as in high school."*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ceep.indiana.edu/hssse/images/HSSSE\\_2010\\_Report.pdf](http://ceep.indiana.edu/hssse/images/HSSSE_2010_Report.pdf)

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Similarly, freshmen enter high school and current high school students may feel that their studying skills are adequate, but their discipline and dedication to studying is often hampered by constant distractions (music, snapchat, 15 browser tabs open other than Khan Academy, etc.). As stated in the NSSE study, only 8% of students study what I consider a mediocre amount as high school students. Coincidentally, the top 10% of each class are typically the most prepared and successful for post high school experiences. Not because they are always the smartest, but typically because they have dedicated the time to learning that is required to gain knowledge.

## How does this work?

The 1 to 2 program suggest a minimum amount of time each night to spend completing homework, reviewing previous knowledge, working on projects, and/or preparing for future tests or quizzes. This 1 to 2 hours spent studying is very purposeful - it should be consistent and as distraction free as possible.

You finished your homework at school or in the first 30 minutes? Great - you have at least 30 to 90 minutes to spend reviewing your work, re-reading past chapters, or doing unassigned practice work to hone your skills. The concept of studying does not equate homework. Each teacher will be providing a list of activities that you can do during your 1 to 2 that is not related to homework. If you get stuck - try to think about things you found difficult in past lessons and make sure you understand the core concepts. Use resources like the web, friends, and old work to check yourself.

## Parent Contributions to the 1 to 2 Program

How are the parents involved? You are the one that will hopefully help enable and reinforce the idea at home. You want your child to be successful and well prepared for their future, right? Monitoring their time and how it is spent, without being the “heavy arm of the studying law”, will help them make it to that point. But that means you will at times have to bum them out a bit when they don't want to study or step up and help them re-prioritize.

Some helpful tips:

- Create a space that is theirs to study in - make it quiet, well-lit, and free of distractions.
- Make a studying agreement with your student - i.e. between 4 and 5:30 is study time
- Be consistent with that study time. Make it a habit and routine - it makes it less painful.
- Help them connect the time spent studying to the payoff that comes out later in the forms of a more attractive job, salary, lifestyle, work satisfaction, ability to travel, etc.
  - It is just like an investment - there is not always immediate payout, but time spent is not worthless.

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## Faculty Contributions to the 1 to 2 Program

Together we can significantly influence the academic environment. Every classroom can be a mini-University 101 academic orientation type experience but in a course and with an instructor in which the student will invest time and energy. Together we can present a common 25-35 study message focused on developing an academic work ethic. Individually we can present strategies and philosophies on learning from our own points of view. Following are some ideas for classes with new students for your consideration. Please also consider modifying this program to fit any classes of continuing students you might be teaching. Please post a 25-35 sign outside of your classroom.

### **First Class Meeting**

Hold up a 25-35 sign. Talk about the privilege and responsibilities of attending high school (less than 65% of the global population has the privilege to attend school to the high school level). Explain your academic expectations and give guidance on how to meet them successfully. Describe how to use 2-4 hours a week studying for your course. Explain what learning is and how to know if one has good understanding and has really mastered course material.

### **Course Syllabus**

Provide a clear, complete, informative course syllabus. Make sure there is a section on academic expectations and how to accomplish. It is especially important that our new freshmen have clear and informative course syllabi. Please consider a brief section on how students might use 2-4 hours / week in your course, why it is important, and how to know if they are truly learning.

### **Early and Frequent Grading Experiences**

Please help your students understand what to expect on an exam and how to study for success. Don't let your exams be a mystery. An early grading experience will give students the opportunity to analyze their study strategies and make adjustments. Frequent grading experiences (quizzes) give students multiple opportunities to understand their responsibilities without losing the opportunity for a decent grade.

### **Encouragement and Guidance throughout the Semester**

Take time frequently to ask students how things are going and let them know that you care. Continually provide guidance for studying and learning. New students, probably more than others, need to know that you personally care about their welfare and success so please make sure they know this throughout the Semester.