

## The Power of Quadrant II

- Purpose:** Demonstrate to students how much time they spend doing actions that do not help them reach important dreams and goals. Understanding the power of quadrant II will teach them how they can have more time for actions that are important to achieving their goals.
- Description:** Stephen Covey's the *Quadrant II Time Management System*, as described in Skip Downing's book, *On-Course: Strategies for Success in College*, defines the four quadrants according to the types of specific actions people take that either further or hinder them in achieving important goals. Students are then asked to list as many specific actions they took yesterday as they can, then to choose one they engaged in during a one hour time interval of the teacher's choice. The classroom is divided into four corners corresponding to the four quadrants. Students are then instructed to go to the quadrant appropriated to the specific action they were engaged in during that time interval. Next they compare their actions to those of others in the group to determine if each student is in the appropriate quadrant. A reporter will be chosen from each group who will summarize the actions representing the group. The teacher can question students in each group and suggest any changes that may be appropriate in the placement of students according to the four quadrants.
- Duration:** Approximately 30 minutes
- Timing:** During first three weeks of semester.
- Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the four quadrants and discern which of their actions are important in achieving their long-range goals.

**Materials:**

- \* Copies of blank quadrant table for each student.
- \* Optional: copies of filled in tables
- \* Instructors need a whiteboard, blackboard, or PowerPoint to explain the quadrants to students.

**Procedure/Directions:**

1. Have students make a list of specific actions they have taken in the last two days. The action is specific if it can be recorded with a video camera (Approximate time: 5 minutes)
2. Leave off specific actions that can be considered self-maintenance or self-care, such as sleeping, eating, drinking water, breathing, bathing, brushing your teeth, etc.

3. The instructor will then explain Stephen Covey's Quadrant II Time Management System: The following is a brief description of it: (Approximate time: 8 minutes)

Our actions can fall into four quadrants, depending on their **importance and urgency**. **Important** actions help us achieve goals that we value. If our actions will help us achieve goals we value, then we would be crazy not to do them. An action is **important** if it makes a difference to you achieving your dreams and goals a year later if you do it or not.

An **urgent** action helps us to **achieve a deadline**. Sometimes we are meeting deadlines that are not important. However if an action is important and helps us achieve our goals and would hinder us if we don't have it done **on-time**, then we would be crazy not to do it **on-time**.

The following table defines the quadrants:

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
I M P O R T A N T	<p><b>Quadrant I</b></p> <p>Important and Urgent, are actions done at the last minute under the pressure of looming deadlines</p>	<p><b>Quadrant II</b></p> <p>Important and not urgent, are important actions done without the pressure of looming deadlines. This is the quadrant in which your time is most productive doing your best work to achieve your goals.</p>
N O T I M P O R T A N T	<p><b>Quadrant III</b></p> <p>Not Important and Urgent, are unimportant actions done with a sense of urgency, often because you haven't yet learned to say no or let your phone go to message.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant IV</b></p> <p>Not Important and Not Urgent, are actions that can waste valuable time. These aren't good or bad; we all waste some time doing things that may be pleasurable but don't help us achieve our dreams and goals. Use these as rewards when you have honestly taken care of the important actions of quadrants 1 and 2.</p>

This table provides examples of actions in the respective four quadrants

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
I M P O R T A N T	<p><b>Quadrant I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cramming all night for a test tomorrow</li> <li>• Paying an electric bill the day it is due</li> <li>• Beginning a term paper a week before it is due</li> <li>• Leaving the house with barely enough time to make it an important appointment without being late</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quadrant II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studying for a test ahead of time</li> <li>• Beginning your term paper with plenty of time to do it well</li> <li>• Getting a tutor early in the semester to help you pass a class</li> <li>• Meeting with an instructor at mid-term to discuss your grade.</li> <li>• Beginning a study group</li> </ul>
N O T  I M P O R T A N T	<p><b>Quadrant III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking relatives to a doctor's appointment that they repeatedly scheduled when convenient for them, and during your classroom hours</li> <li>• Answering a ringing phone or texting while studying rather than letting it go to message.</li> <li>• Being roped into doing a favor for a friend the night before an exam just because you couldn't say no.</li> <li>• Attending a hastily called meeting that distracts you from meeting a deadline</li> <li>• Taking a long phone during study time from a distraught friend who is having difficulty with a personal relationship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quadrant IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing video games</li> <li>• Watching TV</li> <li>• Facebook and Twitter</li> <li>• Going out with friends rather than studying</li> <li>• Partying hardy and often rather than making your education a priority</li> </ul>

Quadrants III and IV are where students who don't think they have time to study will find the time. Students who are working, have families, and spend all their time in Quadrant I are most likely overcommitted and need to either cut working hours or take fewer units.

Label the four corners of the classroom corresponding to the four quadrants. The teacher then picks an hour of time when most students are not sleeping, and instructs students to recall a specific action they took during that hour. Direct students to go to the corner of the classroom that corresponds to the quadrant in which their specific action belongs. Give some examples from the above table of types of activities belonging in each quadrant (Approximate time: 3 minutes)

4. Students will share with each other their specific action and assess whether or not all belong in that quadrant. (Approximate time: 5 minutes)
5. One person from each quadrant will summarize the kind of actions represented in their respective quadrants, and explain why such actions belong there. If the instructor feels there are any misunderstandings of the quadrants, she/he can question the students in the group and send students to a more appropriate quadrant. (Approximate time: 10 minutes)

**Assessment:** Once the instructor is sure that the class understands the power of Quadrant II, the included blank table can either be completed in class or assigned as homework: (Approximate time: 20 minutes whether done at home or in class)

The Power of Quadrant II

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>URGENT</b>	<b>NOT URGENT</b>
<b>I M P O R T A N T</b>	<b>Quadrant I</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.	<b>Quadrant II</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.
<b>N O T  I M P O R T A N T</b>	<b>Quadrant III</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.	<b>Quadrant IV</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.

Skip Downing, *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life* (Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011)