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**M2 Lesson 1: What is work-life balance?**

Core Competencies:

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| * Communication | * Thinking | * Personal & Social |

Big Ideas:

* Finding balance between personal and work life promotes well-being

Curricular Competencies:

* Practice effective strategies for healthy school / work / life balance
* Communicate with the intent to highlight personal strengths, talents, accomplishments and abilities
* Identify career-life challenges and opportunities, and generate and apply strategies

Discussion

The work-life discussion questions can either be done in small groups in class, a gallery walk, a journal entry, independently in class, or through a discussion in class or in CANVAS.

We have been exploring the concept of work-life balance in terms of defining the complexity of it, as well as examining the importance of it in the modern professional world. However, as we’ve come across these pieces, the concept is a very personal one and will change depending on the person in question. So now is the time to consider your own work-life balance.

Predictably with such a controversial subject, understanding it in your own life is not easy. It requires some self-reflection and consideration of whether the reality of your work life may differ from how you’ve been perceiving it to be.

Although we are focusing on our personal work-life balance, we are sharing your reflective process in a discussion as your insights may help other students with their own work-life balance journey.

As a way of opening up your own understanding of your work-life balance, ask yourself these questions:

**1. What does a typical school and/or work day look like?**

As stated above, assessing your own work-life balance requires a little more reflection into your daily life than you’re likely used to. Being able to critically examine how you spend your day, both at work and outside the office will help make it clearer how that all-important balance can be achieved. What does a typical day look like for you? What is your schedule like? What takes priority? How often do you have to make changes on the go? Get a sense of your daily routine as you consider the rest of these questions.

**2. How often does school/work conflict with other aspects of your life?**

Despite the importance you put on work-life balance, most people who have worked even a single day of their life knows that sometimes your work will conflict with the rest of your life. That is just a reality of employment that we all need to come to terms with. Work-life balance doesn’t mean that you are ridding yourself of that conflict, but rather that you are managing more efficiently. So while you will occasionally miss dinner with the family because of a meeting or will have to put in some extra hours over the weekend, consider how often these conflicts occur. Is it an expected thing, or a rare occurrence? Do you find your work endlessly encroaching on your home life?

**3. Do you find yourself lacking in time?**

Time management is something that a lot of people have trouble with and as a result, you can feel as though you are constantly being run off your feet. Some professionals always seem to be looking for some extra time in the day to deal with their busy schedule. However, is this just a typical day or is it an unreasonable workload? Whether it’s at work or with your life outside the office, a lack of available time in the day could be an indication of a poor balance between your tasks at hand. Even if it’s just robbing you of time to unwind at the end of the day, that missing quality in your life is important and could make a significant impact on your overall health.

**4. Is there anything unnecessarily taking up your time?**

Sometimes the fact that you don’t have any available time in the day means that you are taking on far too much. You might step back and examine your schedule then think that there’s just no room among your many duties. However, it could be a simple matter of acknowledging that not everything is a priority. How often are you dealing with work tasks when you’re at home? Are you constantly checking in on emails over the weekend and trying to get a head start on the coming week’s work? Maybe other things are keeping your schedule busy once you leave work behind for the day, making it seem like you are always in work mode. Looking for ways to make your schedule more manageable may be the answer to finding that balance.

**5. How realistic are your expectations?**

Finally, you have to take a step back from it all and your dream concept of work-life balance and consider the reality of the situation. Some people have false perceptions of work-life balance that suggest work and the rest of your life should be given equal share. This is wrong for a number of reasons and, as previously stated, there is no one-size-fits-all equation to go by. So instead you must consider your situation, consider the balance you are striving for and ask yourself if it is realistic. Is there conflict in your life as a result of your work schedule? Are you missing time in your day due to your routine? Or is finding harmony between the aspects of your life a relatively easy accomplishment?

To complete this discussion, you may respond to these 5 questions by uploading a file, entering a text submission or answering the questions through audio or video. Make sure you check out the rubric to see how you will be graded for this discussion. To view the rubric, scroll to the top of this page and click the three small dots (see image below) and then click 'show rubric'.

Assessment:

As this is just a discussion either online or in class, no formal assessment is required.