Managing Your Finals Preparations Effectively

I. Plan for upcoming responsibilities
   a. Identify the responsibilities! (“End of Semester Plan”): have students review their courses and write down some of what they know is missing, and guess at grades. Then have them prioritize which courses they’re struggling most in, which less so, and which are lower on their priority list for time needed (doing well without much more effort needed)
   b. Identify the responsibilities, part 2 (ESP): have students write down at least two or three classes where there are assignments or a final coming up; think about some sub-components to getting those done and think about estimates of hours to work on those
   c. Plan to complete the responsibilities. Talk about how to complete the rest of the plan after they hear the other information today; show them the schedule that will help them plan the time remaining until finals week starts

II. Set Goals
   a. What if most of what you have left are projects? (“Organizing Study Projects”) review tips from handout
   b. SMART goals: have students generate an example and some ways to make them SMART

III. Prepare for Finals
   a. Get yourself motivated- why is it important that you do well on this test? Find reasons! (York website handout)
   b. Identify key ideas- after each class you can begin to do this by asking questions like: what was the main idea today? What issues/topics did the instructor spend time on and why? What questions does this bring up? What connects this to other course material?
   c. Understand those!
   d. Organize them with supporting information
   e. Quiz yourself
   f. 7 day study plan (handout)
   g. Review Right handout (to get a good start next semester)
IV. Haven’t been studying regularly? Don’t have 7 days? (York website)
   a. 8 steps: finish central course readings
   b. review for course focus and learning objectives
   c. know the weight, format, and other details of the exam itself
   d. set realistic goals and time to study
   e. re-prioritize other extracurricular activities
   f. use study aids
   g. decide what’s important
   h. get started ASAP but remember effective is better than efficient

V. Fight Procrastination
   a. Does this sound like you? (read ”excuses” from ISU handout)
   b. Causes- thinking and behavior
   c. Remedies:
      1. Rational self-talk: challenge your excuses and ’faulty’ reasoning
      2. Positive self-statements
      3. Avoid catastrophizing
      4. Design goals
      5. Set priorities
      6. Break down the tasks
      7. Get organized
      8. Commit yourself
      9. Use prompts and encouragers
     10. Reward yourself