

Planning and Time Management for Researchers

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What this workshop covers

- What you need to think about in planning & managing your time as a research student
- Time Management techniques
- Planning and goal-setting
- Collaboration
- Self-management: How do you use your 168 hours per week?

Time Management for Researchers: Your challenges

- **What are the main challenges of managing your time as a research student?**
- **How will you overcome the challenges you have identified?**

Prioritising

- Work back from your deadlines
- Identify the tasks you need to complete by the deadline
- Identify what the tasks involve
- Think about how long a task will take?
- Can you turn a big task into a series of small tasks?
- Remember .. writing always takes longer than you think
- Allocate time to do the work

ABC Technique

- ABC Method
- Allocate each task a category according to its importance
- A = high priority tasks
- B = medium priority tasks
- C = low priority tasks
- Make sure 'A' category tasks are scheduled in first.

ABC Technique – try it out

- **List everything you need or want to do tomorrow (at least 8 activities)**
- **Prioritise each item – A, B, C**
- **Now explain your priorities**

Time auditing/logging technique

- Monitor and log your time
- Make notes regularly during the day on how you are spending your time
- Do for 4-5 days
- This will increase your awareness of how you are spending your time & how much time you are wasting making coffee, updating Facebook etc.
- Can be first step in improving your time management

Audit your time

• **Jot down everything you did between 08.00-11.00 this morning (include EVERYTHING)**

- **8.00-8.30**
- **8.30-09.00**
- **09.00-09.30**
- **09.30-10.00**
- **10.00-10.30**
- **10.30-11.00**

The Pomodoro Technique

- Helps you plan and manage your time (particularly useful for writing)
- You need a writing goal – what do you want to write today? Decide on your writing task
- Set a timer for 25 mins to work on your writing
- 5-10 min break
- Begin writing again
- Minimise distractions
- As you get used to it, set daily targets for the number of Pomodori you want to complete

Know when & where you work best

- Identify the time of day when you are at your best
 - For many of us it is the morning
- Ensure that you've worked on your research before you lose control of your day
- Location matters – find somewhere to study that suits you

Planning

- Use time you put aside for study for studying... not for texting, emailing, tweeting etc.
- Avoid distractions of technology
- How do you think best? Do you need to write things down? Keep a research notebook
- Find a planning technique that works for you:
 - Brainstorming
 - Spider diagrams & mind maps
 - Flow charts
 - Organising ideas into headings
 - Putting together an ideas board/storyboard

Planning and managing your tasks

- Set yourself some goals – long-term & short-term
- Define your goal clearly
- List the steps to take to reach the goal
- Think of possible problems that could interfere
- Think of solutions to the problems
- Set a timeline for reaching the goal
- Evaluate your progress
- Reward yourself for your achievements

(from McCombs & Pope, 1994: Motivating hard to reach students)

Planning & managing your reading

- You will be reading lots – accept that you may not be able to read everything
- Make sure you know the recommended reading in your area/key thinkers/seminal texts
- Use contents pages, introductory chapters (books) & abstracts (journals) to check relevance of the chapter/article for you
- Use bibliographies to identify further reading
- Keep up-to-date records of your reading – IT IS WORTH IT!

Planning & managing your writing

From Silva (2001) How to Write a Lot

- Allot time to write
- Defend your writing time
- Set out a specific goal for each writing session
- Clarify your writing goals once a month
- Monitor how much you are writing (i.e. word count)

Collaborate

- Your peers can help you to manage your time
- Form a study group or partnership
- Meet regularly – share how you are getting on & share your goals
- Be responsible for reporting back on your progress & for asking peers about their progress
- Use the support available
- Working with others will make you feel better

Self-management – 168 hours exercise

**How much time are you allocating to your
studies each week?**

Answer the questions to find out

<http://humbox.ac.uk/3691/>

What have you learnt from this exercise?

Planning & Time Management:

Your strategies?

Questions?

References

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