

TIME MANAGEMENT: UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

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Module code: LCBB4006

Module name: Academic skills

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Introduction

The process of efficiently organizing your time for various activities is called time management. The objective of time management is to maximize efficiency while minimizing costs or input resources and to create an appropriate environment for qualitative progress in academic, professional, and personal life.

For a better understanding of the concept, a summary of the time management chapter from Cottrell (2019), *The Study Skills Handbook*, and examples of some of the time management tools and techniques are provided followed by a brief reflection on the time management importance and a conclusion that will lay out an overview regarding time management skills.

Time management quick guide

According to Cottrell (2019, p. 125) two time-related factors will have a significant impact on your academic success:

- The time spent studying.
- How effectively studying time is organized and used.

If a qualitative and systematic combination of these two factors will persist during time spent at the university, the student is more likely to achieve greater results in academic and professional careers.

To effectively manage your time, follow ten steps:

1. Systematically think about time management to learn how you use your time, figure out how to best manage your time to accomplish your goals, and plan your time.
2. Find out how much time you need for individual study and your program's time requirements (Cottrell, 2019, p.129).
3. Be aware of how long it takes you to complete tasks on your own. Think about how you spend your time and what you can do to make the most of it to benefit your studies, career goals, and well-being (Cottrell, 2019, pp. 130-134).

4. Decide your time usage by applying time circles to determine how much time you need to provide for various tasks. Compare this to how you actually spend your time (Cottrell, 2019, pp. 133-135).
5. Prioritize your tasks and make a list with start and finish times for each of them (Cottrell, 2019, p. 136).
6. Plan your schedule and keep your time organized. Be comprehensive and precise in your time planning. Be specific about what you intend to do with your time and keep track of crucial dates and deadlines. Systematically plan for these (Cottrell, 2019, pp. 137-140).
7. Implement plan tasks step by step. Place your plan where it is easily visible, for example on a wall in front of your bed so that every day you will be reminded about your tasks and deadlines. Determine what could sabotage your plans and gain more control over where and how you spend your time (Cottrell, 2019, p. 118).
8. Apply time management techniques and tools to achieve high efficiency in implementing your plan. Time management tools like SMART Goals, Eisenhower matrix, Pomodoro technique, and Pareto analysis, provide clarity, and a problem-solving mindset that will allow you to accomplish your goals.
9. Manage distractions and procrastination by developing an understanding of the critical moments during study time where a distraction could occur and identify the causes of this occurrence to avoid distraction traps in the future. Organize your proximity environment in a comfortable way to maintain your focus and allow time to plan strategies to manage distractions and procrastination. A moment of focusing and clarifying your purpose at the beginning of your study will improve the stability of the mindset, thus enhancing your ability to avoid distraction (Cottrell, 2019, pp 145-149).
10. Monitor the movement of the studying process for a better understanding of your progress and be flexible by adjusting the process to stay within your planned time boundaries (Cottrell, 2019, p. 132).

Time management tools and techniques

- I. SMART Goals is a useful tool that helps you to get clear, focused, and motivated to reach your goals. It can also facilitate defining your goals and setting a deadline for each of them. SMART is an acronym for Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; Time-bound. Anyone, anywhere, can use SMART goals without the need for professional tools or training.
- II. Pareto analysis is a technique used to generate decisions and works by statistically separating a limited number of input factors that have the greatest impact on an outcome. This technique does not provide solutions to issues but helps identify the most significant causes for most of their problems. Once the causes have been identified, strategies to address those problems must be applied.
- III. The Eisenhower Matrix is a time management tool that organizes and prioritizes tasks by urgency and importance. The idea behind this tool is to divide your tasks into four categories based on the tasks to be done first, the tasks to schedule for later, the tasks to delegate, and the tasks to be deleted.
- IV. The Pomodoro technique is a time management tool that divides study into shorter segments of time, thus enhancing control over your temptation to procrastinate, and as a result, improving your concentration and efficiency while avoiding burnout. For instance, by dividing time into 25-minute blocks of intense study separated by five minutes breaks. After four work intervals, a longer break is taken.

The importance of time management

A time management mindset can provide numerous benefits with a life-changing potential as the core idea of time-related management techniques is to facilitate an individual to understand, identify, and apply adequate input factors to generate the desired output and in this way to change different aspects of his academic, professional, and personal life.

One of the first benefits to be mentioned is the property of time management learning and application to improve a person's motivation. Motivation is what makes a person

feel the need to chase a desired outcome or goal. In the process of working towards your goals and achievement of them, your brain releases dopamine, the hormone that makes you feel motivated. The dopamine release is subsequently directly proportional to the number of tasks accomplished. As time management techniques suggest, break your goals into smaller tasks to have an increased number of simple tasks to accomplish and thus more dopamine, which will lead to increased motivation. Making a habit of simplifying the goals into smaller simple tasks will make the individuals more confident and calmer as dealing with smaller tasks is more manageable and as a result, the stress level will be kept within acceptable margins. A low level of stress and increased motivation combined with systematic time management-directed work leads to better decision-making and subsequently enhanced productivity. Simplifying tasks, as time management suggests, also makes a person less susceptible to procrastination, consequently saving time for prioritized occupations or personal activities and improving a person's ability to focus due to an increased amount of time spent on task-solving thinking and out of distraction.

Conclusion

Time management is an academic skill that facilitates the cultivation of time-related good habits and subsequently increases a person's ability to achieve desired goals with less stress and in less time. A time management mindset provides enhanced efficiency that eventually leads to more free time that can be managed in the same manner by using time management techniques to maximize the benefits. By using techniques and tools provided for time management an individual can beneficially contribute not just to his performance as a student but also to his further professional development by having an evolved awareness of how to identify different types of factors that can affect or improve his field of activity. Last but not least, the contribution of time management skills to society is to be mentioned by providing time-related stress-free behavioral models, thus creating a vector to a calm community with a greater sense of patience.

Reference list

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The study skills handbook*. 5th edition. London: Red Globe Press.