

# MENTORING **SPARK**

Quick ideas to light up your doctoral conversations.

## ► TIME MANAGEMENT



### SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Good time management can improve a person's efficiency – and what person doesn't want to be more productive?

This **Spark** focuses on techniques and tools to help structure one's time, better control one's time, and recognize how full our time is (*or isn't*). This document is intended to support *individual* time management improvements while the other **Sparks** in the Time Management series move toward *collaborative* time management.

This **Spark** is also intended to help students see when they are headed from “*whelmed*” to “*overwhelmed*,” and to make purposeful adjustments.



LEVEL 1: BASIC STRATEGIES

LEVEL 2: SHIFTING SCHEDULES

LEVEL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES



### FACULTY FYI

This **Spark** is focused on basic tools and individual techniques for improving time management. Helping students to improve their time management can build confidence, earn trust from others, reduce stress, and improve performance. Thus, helping your graduate students improve their time management skills can benefit you and your entire research team.



### ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Help the student think about the advantages of good time management: improved focus, a positive reputation (*getting work done by deadlines*), decreased stress (*not missing deadlines*), increased productivity, and improved confidence (*they can do what they said they would do*).
- Help students understand that time management becomes more important as they move from a “structured” environment to a more nebulous/unstructured environment. For example, from juggling several classes and life (*with the class work assigned*) to primarily research and thesis writing (*when the students will be independently responsible for managing their time and outcomes*).

“Good time management can improve a person's efficiency – and what person doesn't want to be more productive?”

A RESOURCE FROM:



Use this QR code to access this and other Mentoring Spark tip sheets:



CONTINUED ...



## DIGGING DEEPER

- **Prioritization Techniques and Tools:**

- Eisenhower Matrix (*important/not important; urgent/not urgent*)
- High, medium, low method
- Impact over Time Ratio (*and focus on top 80%*)
- To Do lists and Action trackers: Asana, OneNote, Teams

- **Hardware/Software Suggestions:**

- Color coding for quick reference (*subject, person, priority*)
- Carry a notebook or other device to take notes
- Have a to do list – and look at your to do list. DO NOT overspend time developing your lists! It can be electronic or actual sticky notes – whatever works for you.
- Calendars & software: shared across devices such as Google calendar, OneNote, Teams

- **Planning and Scheduling:**

- Set daily and weekly goals
- Block time for the tasks related to the goals – be realistic with the time required
- Allow for unexpected delays
- Divide time based on urgent/not urgent – consider blocks of time for the not urgent

*Please visit the RDI Mentoring Sparks website for examples and links to these tools and resources!*



## EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

The below suggestions can be done with individual students or as a research group. If done as a research group, the students can discuss their time-wasters and schedules with each other.

- Have students identify their top three time-wasters.
- Have students group their requests and tasks for the next 2-3 months, and think about the time blocks needed to do the work. Consider what time of the day/day of week makes sense, and then schedule those tasks.
- Ask students if the remaining time is sufficient for a typical number of unexpected asks/tasks, and for work taking longer than expected: are you “*whelmed*,” or heading to *overwhelmed*?

*Time management is important from a holistic perspective...*

For more information: [www.therisingdoctoralinstitute.com/sparks/](http://www.therisingdoctoralinstitute.com/sparks/)



## ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Discuss with students the concept that the time it takes to develop tools that work for them will pay dividends moving forward. (Yes, students do have time to work on their time management skills!)
- **GOAL Setting:** Agree on a goal for the student related to improving time management. The tools below may help to establish that goal.



## REFLECTION & NEXT STEPS

- **Student:** Think about *and list* a few ways to keep yourself motivated to stick with your time management techniques. Keep what works, change what doesn't. Know that what works for a friend, peer, or advisor may not work for you, and that is OK.
- **Student and Faculty: Consider each of these key takeaways:**
  - Time management is important from a holistic perspective of a “*work/life*” balance perspective.
  - Time management relates to project planning – good project planning needs to have a realistic schedule, which requires people being able to manage their time to meet their commitments.
  - Individual time management skills are needed in order for a collaborative team to be able to establish time management practices.



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