

MENTORING **SPARK**

Quick ideas to light up your doctoral conversations.

► TIME MANAGEMENT



SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS

In today's environment, no one —not individual contributors, researchers, or students—works in a vacuum. Thus, it is important to discuss time management with collaborators to optimize the team's efficiency. Compromise, in order to mesh the time management preferences of team members, may be necessary. This document endeavors to provide suggestions and exercises to aid in an organization's or group's overall time management efforts.



FACULTY FYI

This **Spark** is intended for students who accept ownership of managing their time (*including flexibility to accommodate requested changes*) and focuses on skills to collaborate with others, enabling the organization to perform more time efficiently.

For this **Spark** to have real meaning for students, they need to understand the concept that what is good for the team is good for *them*.



LEVEL 1: BASIC STRATEGIES

LEVEL 2: SHIFTING SCHEDULES

LEVEL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES



ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Discuss with students why communication is the key to good organizational time management. (*Communication helps to ensure all tasks are completed acceptably and on time, which allows follow-on tasks to be started on time.*)
- Discuss the importance of having a meeting agenda and planned outcomes for each meeting, and NOT just a "meet to meet"! When meetings happen, ensure they have a purpose, agenda, and timeframe.
- Discuss and agree on communication channels, and if they vary depending on content. For example, when to use email, when to text, when to update shared action trackers.
- Visit/revisit the communication **Spark** series if necessary.

In today's environment, no one —not individual contributors, researchers, or students— works in a vacuum.

A RESOURCE FROM:



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



CONTINUED ...



DIGGING DEEPER

Explore SHARED Tools for a Collaborative Team

- Shared folders and a shared naming strategy allow the correct document to be worked on.
- Shared calendars, if reasonable, or having a central team calendar, can expedite scheduling and reduce emails.
- Shared action tracker, risk matrix, and other project management tools allow task owners to update their status and to see the statuses of other contributors.
- Pre-developed email headings.
- Color-coding different projects or tasks to visually help you know what you are (and will be) working on. The colors can also be associated with importance or other factors.
- Software such as: Asana, shared Gantt chart, Slack, Teams, etc.
- Collaborative time management includes planning tools such as:
1) Communication channels and when to use email, when to text, when to update shared action trackers. 2) Time blocking and/or knowing each person's time blocks, such as best times for meetings (*days of week/time of day*), when people are reading & responding to emails, writing times, etc.

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



EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

These exercises are intended to be done in a team setting.

1. Have a time management meeting with the core team (*possibly facilitated*).
 - Have each person write down their best practices and biggest time-wasters.
 - Discuss & decide how the team should share information and who will own setting up the tools.
 - Discuss any naming schemes, including revisions, needed. Discuss any file folder structures needed.
 - Discuss time blocks (*for meetings, emails, writing, quiet work [do not disturb]*).
 - Ensure people understand how their work is needed by others (*late inputs can result in wasting others' time*).
 - Determine a time to evaluate the team's efficiency and, if necessary, to make changes.
 - Discuss if a team action tracker or calendar might be used (*and if so, how*).
 - Meet with the team, or peers, and ask them to help you with ways to mitigate your biggest time-wasters (*you may be surprised that they have the same issue*) and swap information regarding your best practices. If the meeting is with collaborators, ask them what you can do to help them.



ACTIONS FOR FACULTY

- Understand how other people work, and their preference for knowing tasks, status, questions, etc. For example, do they prefer verbal, email, teams, texts, etc.
- **GOAL Setting:** Agree on a goal for the student related to group time management.

Remember that time management relates strongly to efficient communication, and good project management.



REFLECTION & NEXT STEPS

- **Student and Faculty:** Does the team seem to be working in concert relative to time efficiency? Are there "time wasters" occurring that should be addressed?
- Consider that time management relates strongly to efficient communication, good project management.



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