Campusweite Schreibwerkstatt

Time Management

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Time management is a central condition for a successful start into your writing process. If you do not allow yourself enough extra time and breaks, you will most likely be pressed for time, do careless mistakes – you eventually cannot finish your text in the given time. It is also important to limit the time for each necessary step so you will not get lost and still have enough capacities for all your activities.

In order to deal with your time in most efficiently, you should at first make up your mind about the conditions that help you work (e.g., via a daily protocol). In a second step, you can prioritize your aims and develop a schedule, then evaluate and modify it.

The following methods will present to you some strategies for reflecting and establishing your time plan. You should use only those tools that you consider appropriate and helpful.

Content

GEFÖRDERT VOM

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Analyzing working conditions

Aim:
- Getting to know and reflection your optimal working conditions

Procedure:
Think about which working conditions fit you most:
- In which place can you work best (at home, at your desk, in the library, on your sofa, in a café…)?
- How can you organize or design this place (order, silencec, light…)?
- By which time of the day do you work most efficently (in the morning, in the evening…)?
- How long is your maximum concentration span (half an hour, 3 hours…)?
- How long do your breaks need to be to regain power for working?
- What kind of break is best for restoring your energy (sports, meeting friends, watching TV…)?

Avoiding disturbing factors

Aims:
- identifying disturbing factors in your writing process
- eliminating disruptions

Procedure:
1. Identify your personal disturbing factors, such as:

• visitors/ phone calls/messages/mails	• too many appointments
• internet	• no concrete aims
• TV	• procrastination
• music/radio	• missing or too ambitious organization/schedule
• noise/background sounds	
• wanting to do eveerything at one time/ lack of priorization	• lack of self discipline
	• lack of motivation
• inability to refuse/to feel responsible of everything/to delegate too less	• untidy desk/room
	• research for data, sources, documents

2. Record your personal disturbing factors for one day's working time.

Analysis of		
Type of disruption	from… until…	comment (e.g. reason for disruption)

3. Think about these questions:
   - Which disturbing factors can you avoid? How can you do that?
   - Which disturbing factors are out of your control? How could you learn to manage them still?

Analyzing stressors

[after: Püschel, Edith: Selbstmanagement und Zeitplanung. Schöningh: Paderborn, 2010, S. 106.]

Aims:
- Identifying disturbing factors in your writing process
- Eliminating disruptions

Procedure:
1. Reflect: How often do sources of stress occur and how much do they influence your daily life?
2. Set a grade for the frequency of the disruption as well as for your evaluation of it:
   - Frequency: never (0), sometimes (1), often (2), very often (3)
   - Evalutation: not disturbing (0), hardly (1), quite (2), very disturbing (3)
3. Multiply the points for frequency by the points for evaluation to find out how much these stressors influence your daily life.

Possible stressors	Frequency	Evaluation	Stress
pressing time, e.g. due to other obligations			
shortage of time (imminent deadlines)			
unclear priorities			
pressure of competition			
criticism (e.g. through supervisor, fellow students)			
too much information			
new demands (e.g. after s shift in focus, new re-search)			
noise			
too high ambitions, perfectionism			
insufficient support (e.g. by supervisor)			
insufficient preparation			

Setting Priorities with the ABC analysis

Aim:

- Planning your time efficiently by prioritizing your tasks

Procedure:
- List your daily tasks and classify them according to their importance
  - Criteria:
    - A-Tasks: very important
    - B-Tasks: important
    - C-Tasks: routine
  - Ideal scheduling of an 8-hour working day:
    - A-Tasks: 3 hours
    - B-Tasks: 1 hour
    - C-Tasks: 45 minutes
    - remaining time: buffer

Setting Priorities with the Eisenhower Matrix

Aim:

- Planning your time efficiently by prioritizing your tasks

Procedure:
- Categorize your tasks according to their importance and adapt your schedule by trying to re-duce C- and D- tasks and to spend more time on A- and B- tasks.

	important, not urgent	**important**, **urgent**
	B-Tasks Create schedule and set deadlines (or else -> A)	**A-Tasks** *Do it now!* Allow for buffer time
	D-Tasks eliminate or reduce	**C-Tasks** check relevance, delegate if necessary
	not important, not urgent	not important, **urgent**

Daily Schedule

nach Mackenzie 1995 [vgl. Nünning, Vera (Hg.): Schlüsselkompetenzen. Qualifikationen für Studium und Beruf. Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler 2008, S. 23f.]

Aims:
- Plan and work off important tasks
- Reflect and optimize your own schedule

Procedure:
1. At the beginning of your working day, frame three or four important tasks, sort them by relevance and fix a time.
2. During your working day, protocol each of your activities and occupations (not only the important tasks fixed in step 1).
3. In the evening, complete the columns ‚priority' and ‚comment' for each of your activities. This helps you document and reflect on your working method and time management. Use the following questions for evaluation:

    Time and duration:
    - Did you choose a suitable time for your activites?
    - When did you carry out the most important activities?
    - When have there been phases of concentrated working? How long were they?
    - How much time did you spend on each activity and how does that correlate with their priority?

    Breaks:
    - Have there been breaks?
    - How did you spend time spans of transition/waiting?

    Kind and Priority of your tasks:
    - What routine tasks did you do and how much time did they cost you?
    - How many fixed dates does your schedule include?
    - How many percent of your daily aims have you achieved? Have you respected the deadlines?
    - Did urgent and important tasks correspond?

    Disturbances:
    - What kind of disturbances have occurred? Were they more important than your work?
    - Were there tasks that you did too quickly and thus had to be repeated?

    Conslusion:
    - Could you think of a better way to organize yourself and to save time?

Daily aims 1. 2. …		Deadlines 1. 2. …	Date
from… until…	Activity	Priority (Scale 1 to 4)	Comment/ evaluation

Pomodoro / Daily Schedule

nach Heister [vgl. Heister, Werner: Studieren mit Erfolg. Effizientes Lernen und Selbstmanagement in Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomstudiengängen. 2. Aufl. Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel 2009, S. 27.]

Aims:
- Splitting your tasks into small, manageable units
- Improving your performance through regular breaks
- Realistic self-assessment and estimation of your workload

Procedure:
- Set up your schedule with alternating phases of 25 minutes of work and 5 minutes of break. After every four work phases, plan a longer break.
- Specify your work phases and breaks individually.

Example:

Time span	Activity
08:00–08:25	1st work phase (research)
08:25–08:30	break (stretching)
08:30–08:55	2nd work phase (research)
08:55–09:00	break (snack)
09:00–09:25	3rd work phase (reading)
09:25–09:30	break
09:30–09:55	4th work phase
09:55–10:30	long break
…	…

Schedule for your global writing process

nach Esselborn-Krumbiegel [vgl. Esselborn-Krumbiegel, Helga: Von der Idee zum Text. Eine Anleitung zum wissenschaftlichen Schreiben. Paderborn: Schöningh 2002, S. 26.]

Aim:
- A rough plan for the structure of your writing project

Procedure:
- Think about the remaining time before your submission deadline. Also take into consideration time spans planned for other activities (e.g. work, meeting friends etc)
- Divide your available time by three following this structure:

1/3 of the time	1/3 of the time			1/3 of the time
developing ideas, fixing a topic and question, research, creating a structure	draft and first revision			revision and buffer time
	1st week x days with x hrs per day	2nd week x days with x hrs per day	3rd week x days with x hrs per day	