

Time Management

"You can't change the amount of time you have to do your job, you can only change the way you use it." (Unknown)

Planning and Prioritizing

Supervisors have requested TLC provide resources related to time management. As you look in the library, search the Internet and talk to colleagues about this topic you may quickly experience information overload! This month we address *prioritizing and planning* - both important foundations of efficient and effective time management.

Deciding what to do

Doing what first grabs our attention or what we're good at can be a pitfall. Basing the choice of activity solely on one's interest or abilities means that what is done is not determined in relation to overall program and project goals. One way to learn more about how you spend your work time is to keep a journal for a typical week. You may question the need to do this—but the results can give you insight into how you use your time and help you clarify your priorities. You might find it helpful to tape a large sheet of paper to your desk or workspace and label a column for each workday. At several points during each day, write down things you have just done with the amount of time you devoted to each task or activity.

At the end of the week, review how you spent your time. Was your activity related to overall program plans? Did you focus on areas in which your efforts could make a difference? How important, and how urgent were the tasks that earned your attention? As you look ahead, where do you need to make adjustments? The tables on the next page can help you through this analysis.

Staying focused

Are you a morning person or do you peak later in the day? Do you need to answer yesterday's questions or at least accomplish *something* today before you tackle that new or complex initiative? Determine when you are at your best each day—and then devote some of this time to high priority projects. This means no distractions. Limit the times you check your email or answer the phone so that you have an uninterrupted work period. Turn down the computer volume, or if you receive your email through Outlook, click on "File" and check "Work Off Line" so that you won't be interrupted by the ring that announces a new message has just arrived.

Changing Habits

According to the 21-day habit theory (Dr. Martin Maltz) a behavior needs to be repeated daily for 21 consecutive days in order to become a habit. Once you identify a positive strategy you want to implement - focus on using it everyday so that you have sufficient opportunities for practice.

What do you want to change? February is a great month to pick one or two new time management strategies that you will focus on for 21 days. If you get started right away, that leaves you the last week of February to celebrate your accomplishment!

Mary Muhlenhaupt



Idea of the Month

Teaching and Learning Collaborative
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Use this chart to help you develop or refine your priority goals.
 Be willing to recognize and say no to those things that are not an effective use of your time.

	Can be changed	Cannot be changed
Important	(Act on these)	(Accept these)
Not important	(Do these when there's time)	(Ignore these)

Once you've identified or reconfirmed priorities that are your focus, this matrix below (credited to Stephen Covey) can help you consider how you will approach the specific activities and tasks that lead to accomplishing your goals. Once you've laid out tasks and activities in this table, follow the numerical sequence as you plan your week/month and take action.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1	2
Not important	3	4

Full-page versions of these charts can be printed from the TLC website at
<http://jeffline.jefferson.edu/cfsrp/tlc/forms2.html>