

# Managing your University learning experience

## Talk 5



### Effective Study – Time Management



# We explore .....



Ideal structure of a study session



Overcoming procrastination



Distinguishing 'urgent' from  
'important'



Timetabling your physical exercise



Have we more time than imagined ?

**Study sessions: Ideal duration for effective study ?**

# Study sessions: Ideal duration ?

The choices:

- (a) 'Cramming' all day, every day, for a few weeks before the exams
- (b) Regular weekly routine of daily study sessions of 2 to 3 hours
- (c) Combination of both

# Study sessions: Ideal duration for effective study ?

- Daily study sessions are additional to all the other activities that time has to be reserved for – lectures, laboratories, tutorials, assignments, physical exercise, meeting friends etc. etc.
- It follows that our maximum time for a single block of study would be limited to 2 or 3 hours per day
- Can we find that time?
- Is it worth it?

# Study sessions: Ideal duration for effective study ?

'YES' and 'YES'

We can make the time

and

it is worth it !

# Ideal format for effective study – what do we already know?

???

What do we already know about the 'Active Learner' ?

???

???

How can we use that information to design an effective study pattern ?

???

# Ideal format for effective study – what do we already know?

- Talk #1: the most effective approach to learning is to concentrate on one or two specific questions, that we set for ourselves



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- Talk #1: the most effective approach to learning is to concentrate on one or two specific questions, that we set for ourselves
- Talk #2: our natural period of concentration is about 20 minutes


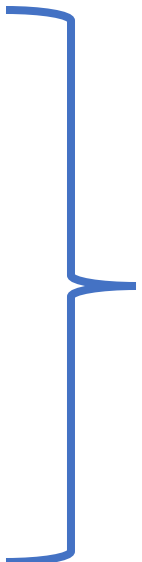
# Ideal format for effective study – what do we already know?

- Talk #1: the most effective approach to learning is to concentrate on one or two specific questions, that we set for ourselves
- Talk #2: our natural period of concentration is about 20 minutes
- Talk #4: a strategy for effective study is the technique of ‘deferred gratification’

# Ideal format for effective study – what do we already know?

- Talk #1: the most effective approach to learning is to concentrate on one or two specific questions, that we set for ourselves
- Talk #2: our natural period of concentration is about 20 minutes
- Talk #4: a strategy for effective study is the technique of ‘deferred gratification’
- Talk #4: another strategy for effective study is to have a regular weekly routine

# Ideal format for effective study – what do we already know?

- 
- Specific questions, set by/for ourselves
  - Sustained concentration of 20 minutes
  - Technique of 'deferred gratification'
    - Regular weekly routine
- 

We can combine these aspects to logically formulate the structure of an effective study pattern

# Study sessions: the effective pattern

- ✓ Regular weekly routine

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- ✓ Have a small number of specific research questions set up to guide your focus in each study slot



# Study sessions: the effective pattern

- ✓ Regular weekly routine
- ✓ Study block sessions of 2 - 3 hours total any one day
- ✓ Break the block session into a number of study slots, each of 50 minutes
- ✓ Have a small number of specific research questions set up to guide your focus in each study slot and help concentration beyond 20 minutes
- ✓ Take a 5 to 10 minute break between study slots, and give yourself a little 'reward'

# Overcoming Procrastination

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Why do we spend so much time on activity and inactivity that does not help us achieve our personal and academic goals?



We all waste time – why?



What stops us from getting down to start studying?

# Overcoming Procrastination



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We all waste time – why?



What stops us from getting down to start studying?



Procrastination: a word derived from the Latin language

*'crastinus'* = 'of tomorrow'

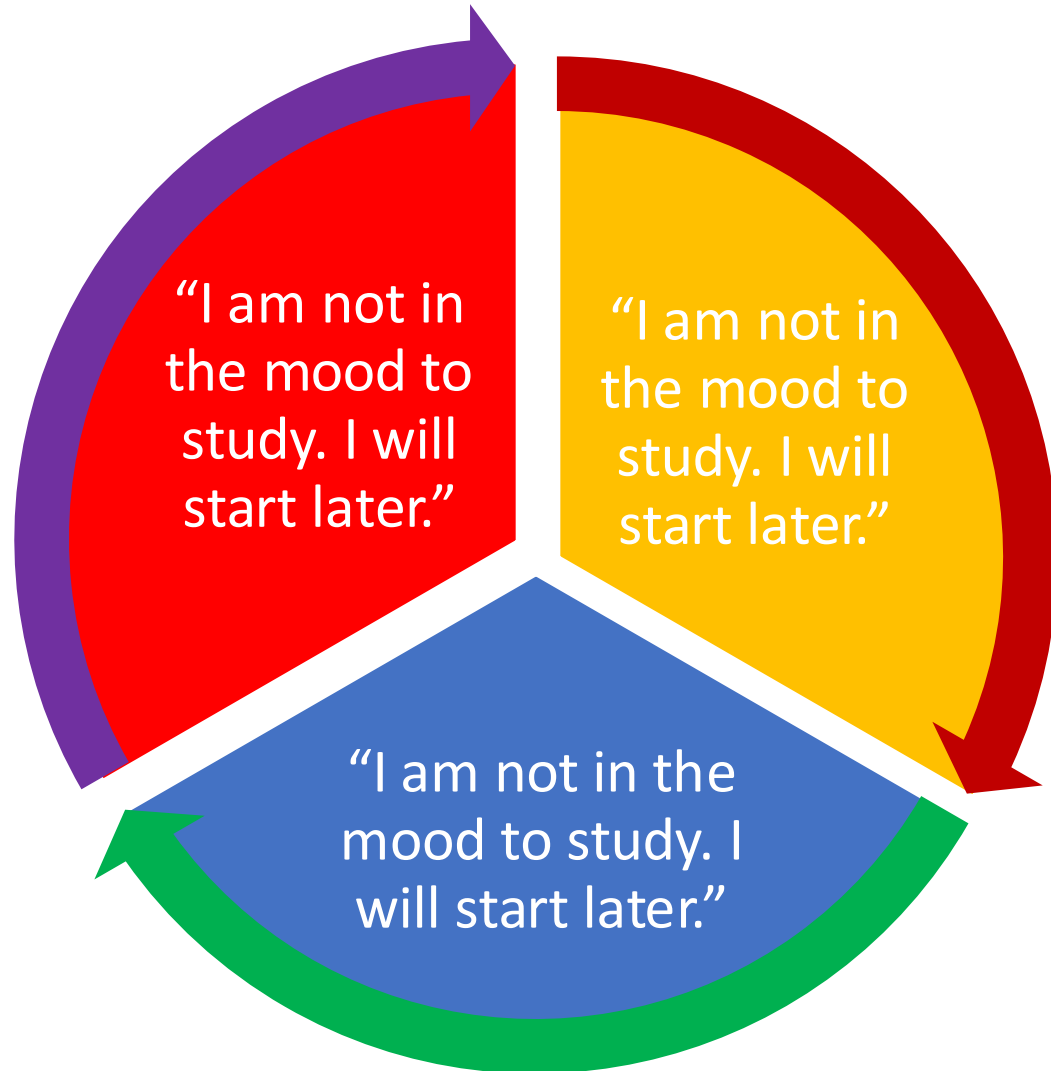
# What wastes our time?

- We allow displacement activities to stop us from getting started on our studies (tidy room, phone family, check e-mails *etc etc*)

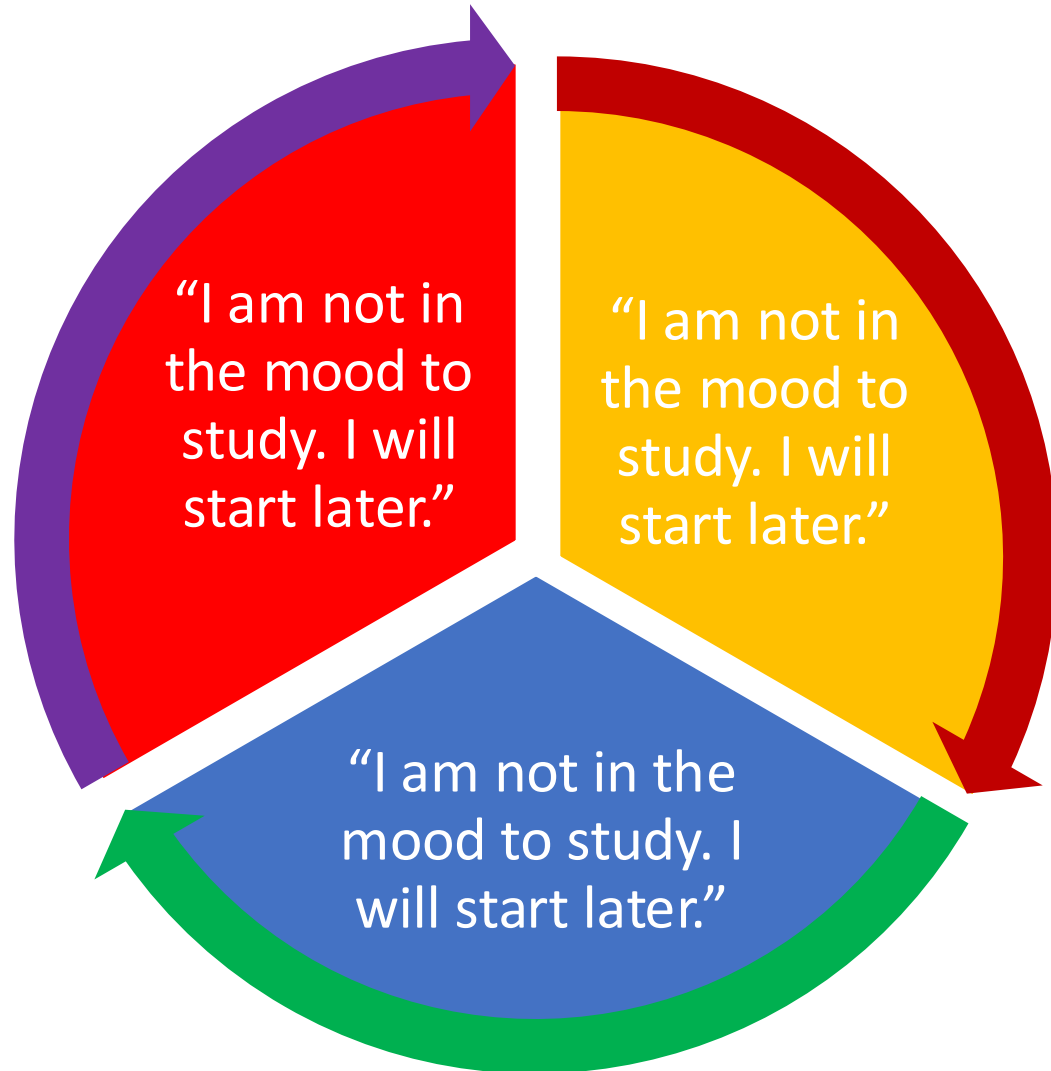
# What wastes our time?

- We allow displacement activities to stop us from getting started on our studies (tidy room, phone family, check e-mails *etc etc*)
- Assess if these displacement activities are *Urgent* or ***Important***
- If something is ~~*Not Urgent*~~ and ~~***Not Important***~~ why bother doing it?
- Make a start on your study – the hardest task

# Procrastination



# Procrastination



*“It is easier to act your way  
into a feeling than to feel  
your way into an action”*

William James,  
1890

Behaviour (action) often determines our mood, whereas mood does not always determine behaviour (action)



# Procrastination



*"It is easier to act your way  
into a feeling than to feel  
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# What wastes our study time?



Procrastination is natural !



..... do not blame yourself !



..... just make a start !



# Overcoming Procrastination

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- ✓ Do not wait to be in the right mood - make that first step on Task 1.
- ✓ Reward yourself after completing Task 1 and then move on to Task 2, etc.

# Overcoming Procrastination

- ✓ Tell yourself that the task is not as bad as you imagine
- ✓ Break each task into smaller steps, so you do not feel overwhelmed
- ✓ Do not wait to be in the right mood - make that first step on Task 1.
- ✓ Reward yourself after completing Task 1 and then move on to Task 2, etc.
- ✓ Persevere. Eventually the habit of procrastination is replaced by the habit of an effective and efficient study routine

# Overcoming Procrastination

*“Perseverance is not a long race;  
it is many short races one after the other.”*

Walter Elliot  
1888-1958



# Distinguish between 'urgent' and 'important' tasks

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- When we get behind schedule we tend to 'fire-fight', only dealing with 'urgent' tasks
- But does 'urgent' always mean 'important'?

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- When we get behind schedule we tend to 'fire-fight', only dealing with 'urgent' tasks
- But does 'urgent' always mean 'important'?
- How can we prioritise tasks?
- Can there be unexpected consequences?

# Distinguish between 'urgent' and 'important' tasks

- Take time to plan so that you prioritise on meeting your study goals
- Use the Eisenhower Decision Matrix to categorise each task.
- Then act by tackling the tasks in a planned chronological sequence.

# Eisenhower decision matrix

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	List ....	List ....
Not important	List ....	List ....

# Eisenhower decision matrix

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		

*“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”*

Dwight D. Eisenhower

# Eisenhower decision matrix

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	List ....	List ....
<b>Not important</b>	List ....	List ....

Make a list of all the tasks you plan to do next week

Divide the tasks across four lists, categorizing each task as:

- Urgent and important
- Urgent but not important
- Not urgent but important
- Not urgent and not important

# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

Our time in university is limited and so we must prioritise our tasks

What sequence should we do the tasks in?



# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>		
<b>Not important</b>		

# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		

Do first ?

# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		

Do first ?

Do next ?

# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
Not important		

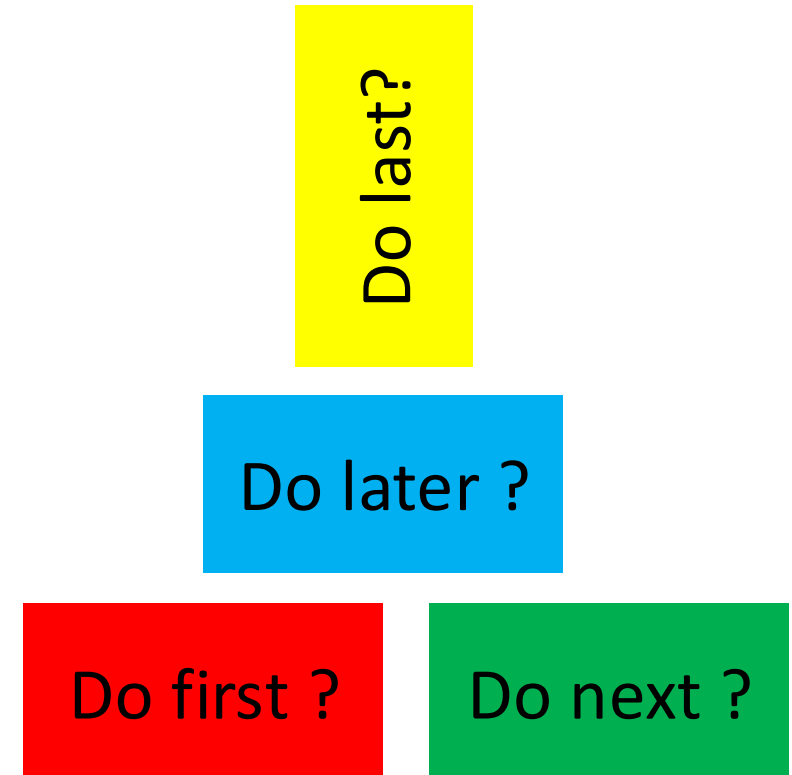
Do later ?

Do first ?

Do next ?

# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do first?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important		
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# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do next ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
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# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do later ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important		

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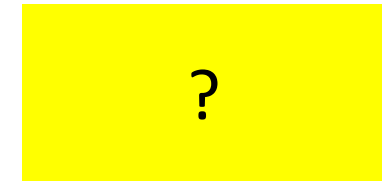
# Eisenhower decision matrix – what tasks do we do later ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	


**Eisenhower decision matrix – what about remaining tasks ?**

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	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	



# Eisenhower decision matrix – what about remaining tasks ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
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# Eisenhower decision matrix – what about remaining tasks ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	<del></del>



# Eisenhower decision matrix – what about remaining tasks ?

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	<del>Do never</del>

Delete these tasks from your to-do list !

# Eisenhower decision matrix

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	Delete these tasks from your to-do list

# Eisenhower decision matrix

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do first	Do next
Not important	Do later	

# Timetable your physical exercise

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Ensure that your time management plan includes physical exercise

Regular aerobic exercise is vital to improve brain function

# Timetable your physical exercise

Regular aerobic exercise

= one daily session of minimum 30 minutes

or

= three sessions of 10 minutes vigorous exercise

**Have we more time than imagined ?**

# Have we more time than imagined ?

If you have no planned activities in a day, notice how the day will fill itself  
with unplanned activities

and you find that

*“I am so busy I have no spare time”*



# How do you currently use your time during the semester?

How did you use your time during the last week?

Despite a busy lecture schedule, maybe you have more time for personal study than you think .....

# Analyse how you use your time in the coming week

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

# Analyse how you use your time in the coming week

Code	Dominant Activity
PA	Planned, academic
SA	Spontaneous, academic
PN	Planned, non-academic
U	Unplanned activity

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U	Unplanned activity	No advance plan






















# Example

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Tue			
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Thur			
Fri			
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# Example

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Is there a routine for personal study or is it just squeezed into empty spaces?

# Example

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Are you surprised at finding more unplanned time available than expected?

# Example

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon	Green, Red, Green	Blue, Red, Blue	Green
Tue	Green	Green	Red, Blue
Wed	Green, Red, Green	Red, Yellow, Red, Yellow	Red
Thur	Green	Green	Red
Fri	Green	Yellow, Red, Yellow	Yellow
Sat	Yellow, Red, Yellow	Red	Yellow
Sun	Red	Blue	Red

Can you reorganise your time to make more use of the unplanned time to create more distinct study blocks of 2 – 3 hours some days each week ?

**The active  
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making the  
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# The active learner's guide to making the most of study time

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4. Achieve your goals by always prioritising the 'important' above the 'urgent'
5. Take a break: schedule time slots for daily aerobic physical exercise
6. We really do have more time to do things than we think we have !