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Time Management
SAGEX

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SAGEX
Scattering Amplitudes: from Geometry to Experiment

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Session outline

- Importance of effective time management
- How you are managing your time?
- 22 Time management techniques
- Weekly time planning
- Time management in a SAGEX ESR context

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How long is a minute?

Before we start I would like everyone to stand up and then sit down **exactly** when you think a minute has passed

No looking at watches or clocks or phones!

Activity 1:

How are you using your time?

Activity 1: How are you using your time

Individually, spend **2 minutes** quickly jotting down

- **5 things** you did yesterday
- **5 things** you need to do to make the most of your SAGEX experience over the next three years

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Importance of effective time management

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What is time management?

- The process of organising your time between **specific activities**
- Good time management enables you to work smarter – **not harder/longer** – so that you get more done in less time

It may seem counter-intuitive to dedicate precious time to learning about time management, instead of using it to get on with your work, but the benefits can be enormous

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The cost of poor time management

Failing to manage your time effectively can have some very **undesirable consequences**:

- Missed deadlines
- Inefficient work flow
- Poor work quality
- A poor professional reputation and a stalled career
- Higher stress levels

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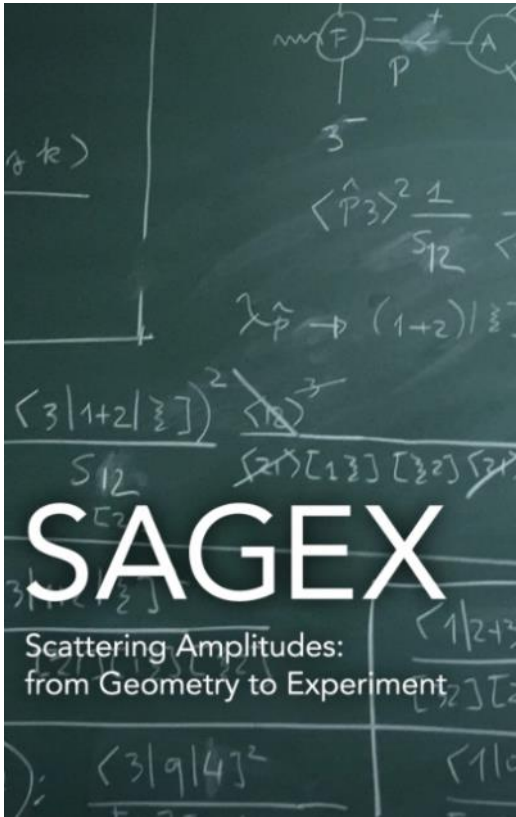
Managing your SAGEX workflow wisely

Learning how to organise your time efficiently will help you make the most from your SAGEX experience. And is likely to …

- Give supervisors, mentors and industry partners confidence in your ability to self-manage
- Help you to maximise the benefits of the SAGEX programme
- Decrease your stress levels!



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Time is the scarcest resource and unless it is managed nothing else can be managed

Peter Drucker

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Activity 2:

Identifying the barriers to productive research

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In groups of three or four spend **5 minutes** quickly jotting down as many of the things that stop you from being as productive a researcher as you want to be. Think about:

- Intrinsic dimensions (e.g. personal traits)
- Extrinsic dimensions (e.g. family commitments and responsibilities)

Be prepared to feedback to the whole group.

Do not confuse motion and progress. A rocking horse keeps moving

… but does not make any progress

Alfred A. Montapert

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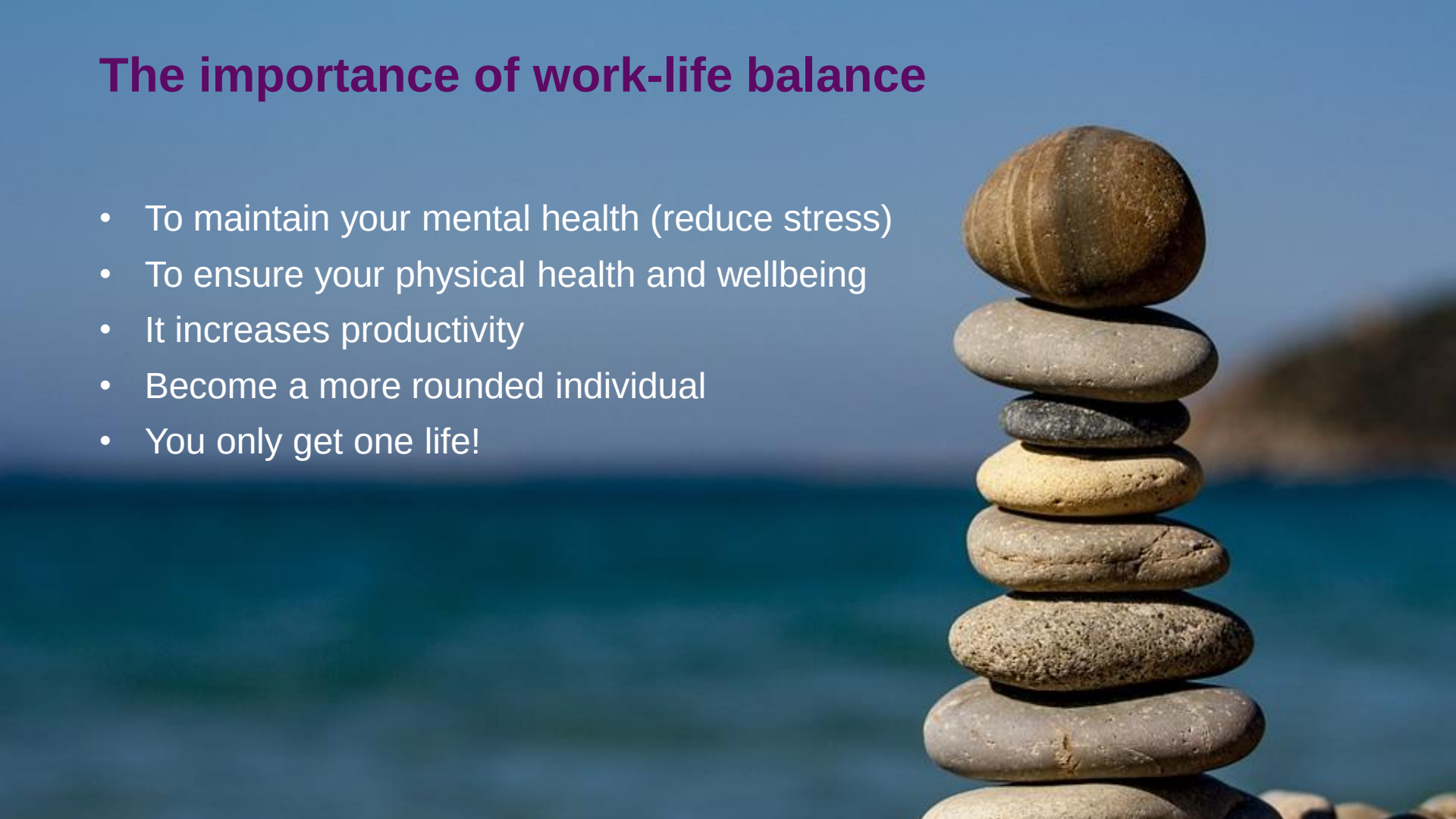
The importance of work-life balance

- To maintain your mental health (reduce stress)
- To ensure your physical health and wellbeing
- It increases productivity
- Become a more rounded individual
- You only get one life!



Activity 3:

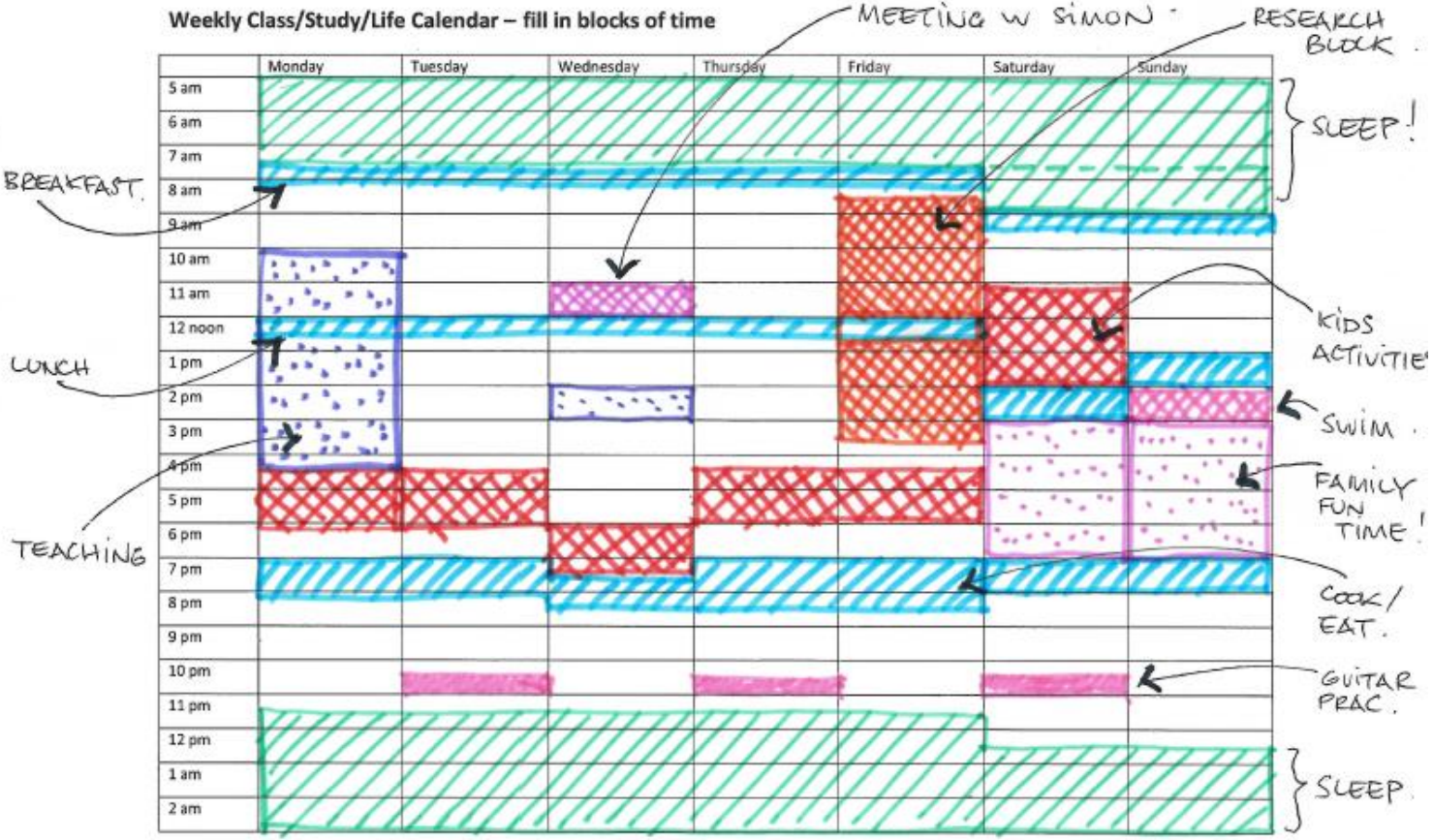
Planning your workflow (part 1)

Activity 3: Planning your workflow (part 1)

With the importance of work life balance in mind, use the weekly planning grid to block out all the time that you **are not available to do university work** you have 10 minutes**.** Think about:

- Sleep!
- Sports, recreation and pastimes
- Regular events
- Caring commitments
- Meals

Activity 3: Planning your workflow (part 1)



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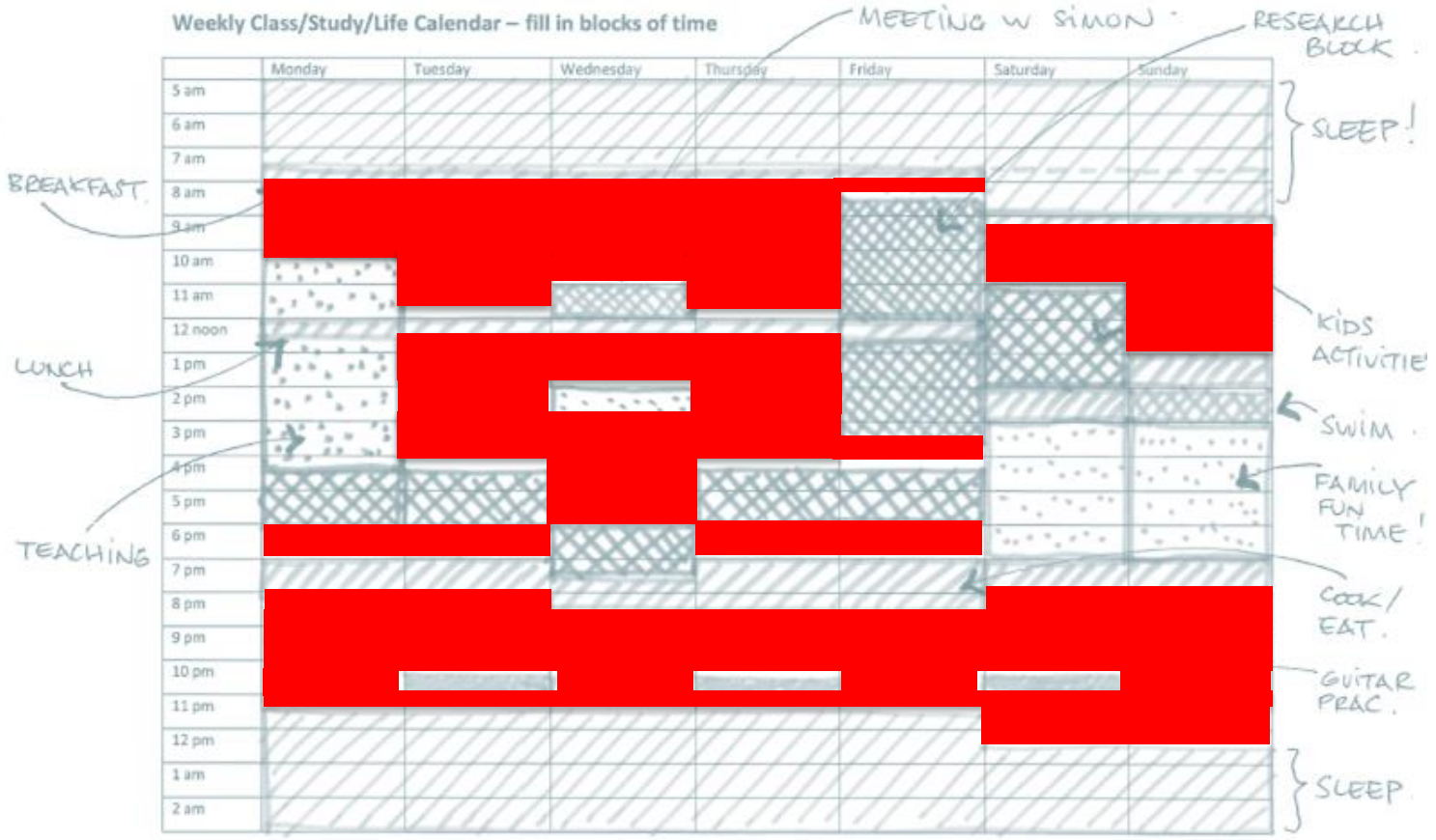
Activity 3: Planning your workflow (part 1)



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Time Management Ideas # 1-6

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Calendar synchronicity

#1

- Work from a single source of info. Synchronise research, personal and other appointments in a single place to identify clashes and conflicts.
- Synchronise devices (laptop, tablet, mobile phone)
- If it isn’t synchronised get rid of it

Set Goals

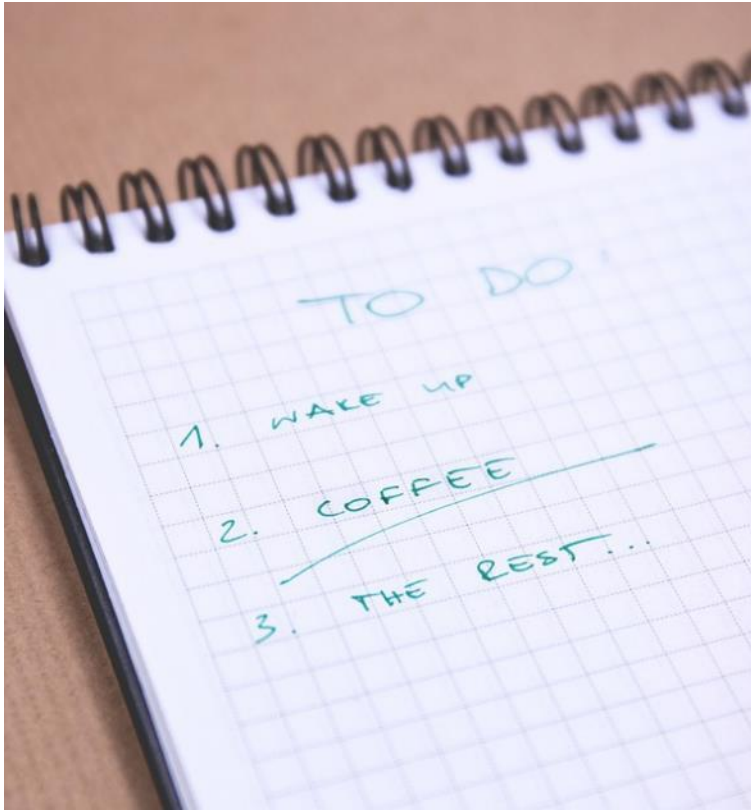
#2

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/28/SMART-goals.png
Dungdm93 [CC BY-SA 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0)]

Prioritise

#3 List activities to do the next day (every day)

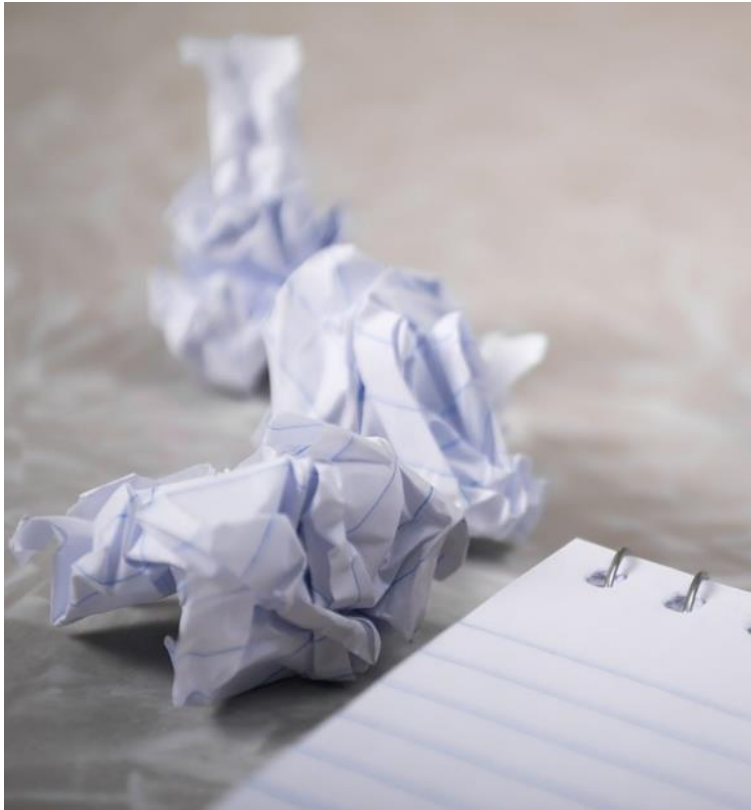
- Rank in order of importance
- Do most unpleasant task first
- Write down deadlines
- T planning – list time-sensitive tasks separately
- Estimate how long activity will take
- Context – what can you do where you are?
- Remove some tasks



The ~~five~~ six Ds

#4

1. Delete it
2. Defer it
3. Delegate it (or part of it)
4. Diminish it
5. Dissect it
6. Do now



Keep a time log

#5

For seven consecutive days, record **everything** you do …

- socialising
- interruptions
- work on thesis

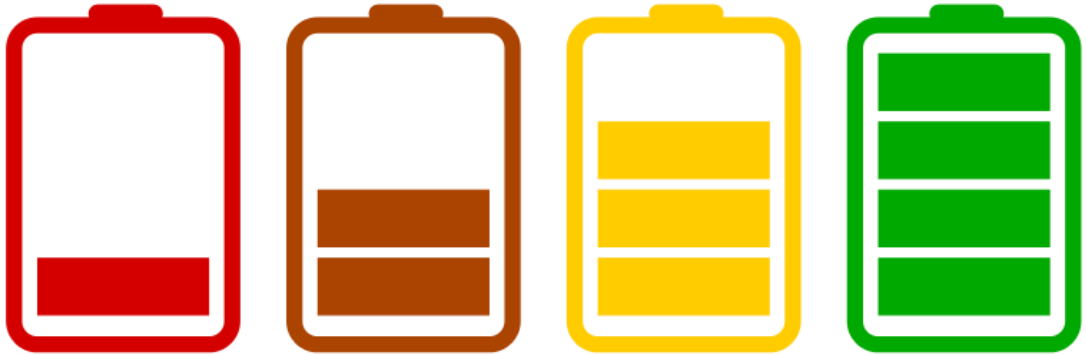
At the end, total up how you spend your time. Analyse:

- time spent on important things
- time wasting activities
- the extent to which you achieved your goals

Work with your energy levels

#6

- How could you change your routine to make better use of your periods of high energy?
- Which tasks could be carried out during your periods of low energy?



Activity 4:

Planning your workflow (part 2)

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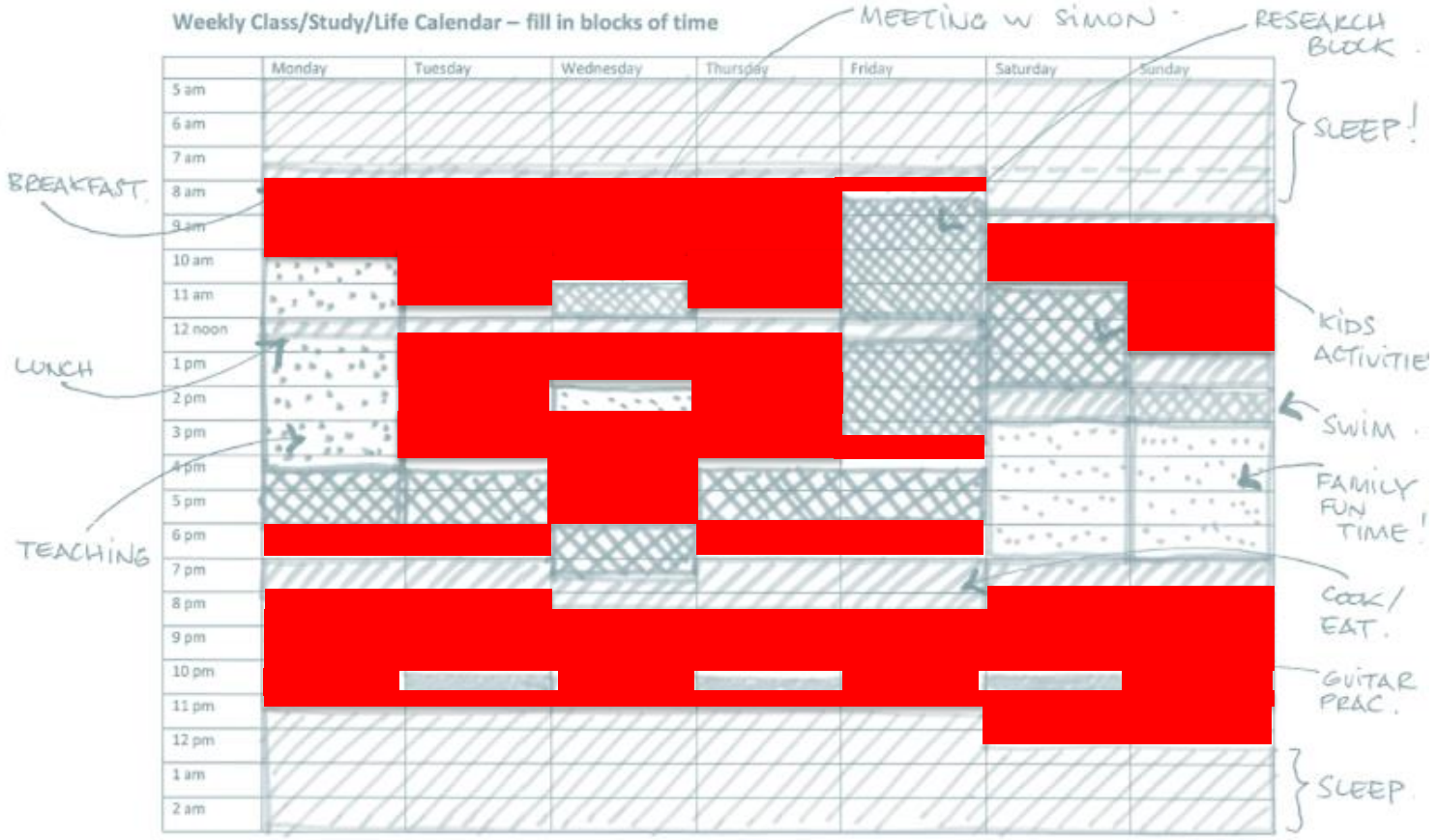

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Activity 4: Planning your workflow (part 2)

Returning to our calendar of productive time. Now that you have identified the times of the day that you may be able to work in …

- Think about your energy levels and productivity at different times of the day
- Identify on planner your low, medium and highly productive times of the day

Feel free to take another template. **You have 5 minutes**

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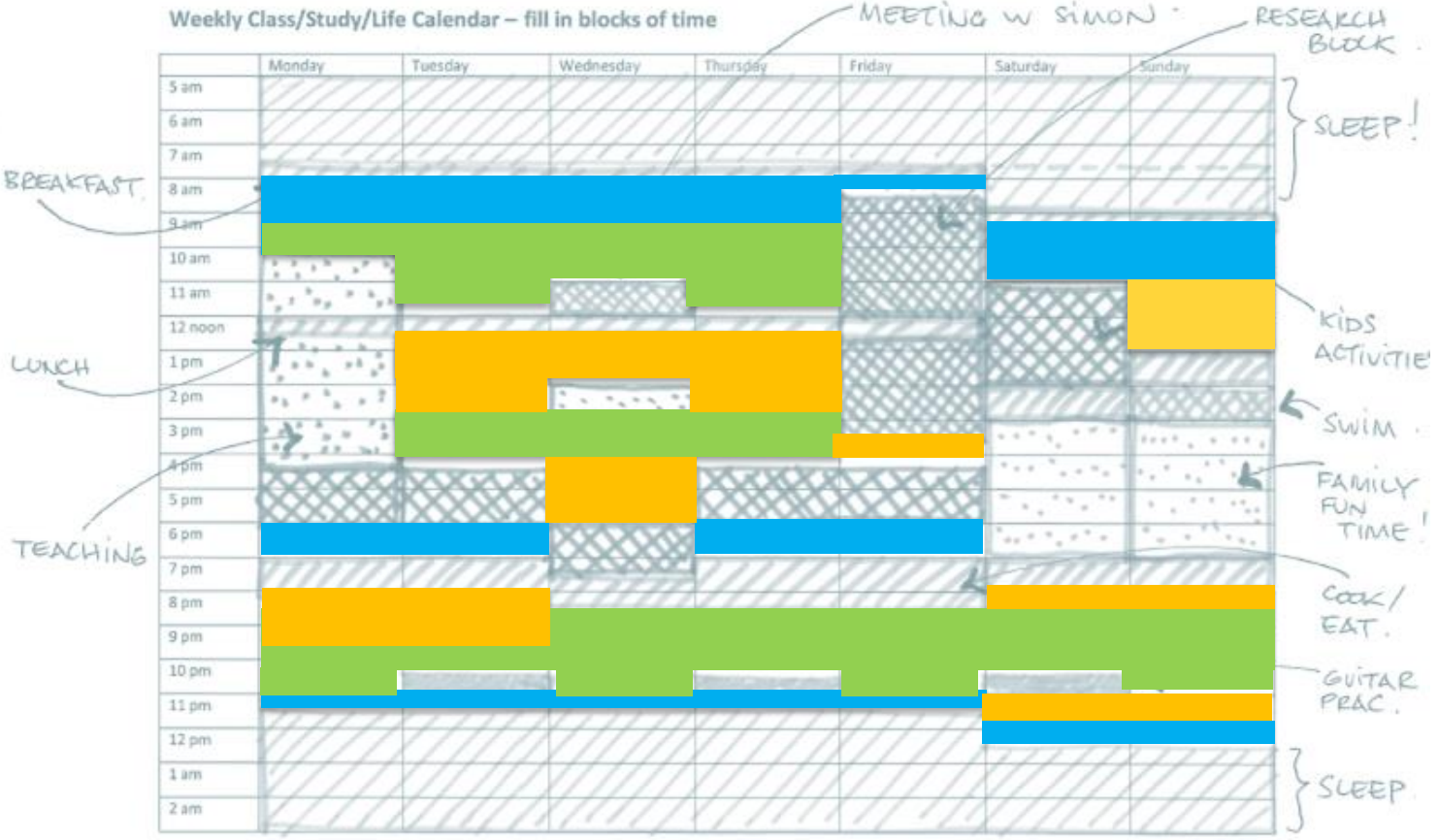
Activity 4: Planning your workflow (part 2)

- LOW
- MEDIUM
- HIGH



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Time Management Ideas # 7-14

Avoid interruptions

#7

Block off several hours every day when you:

- Turn off your mobile phone
- Turn off email notifications
- Turn off social media notifications
- Disconnect from the internet

Alton et al. (2014) found that interruptions as brief as 2.8 s disrupted participants' flow of concentration and led to increased errors on a sequence-based cognitive task.

Dealing with interruptions

#8

Do you ***need*** to deal with the task now?

- Keep your schedule close to hand, could you …
  - Do it later
  - OR review and reorganise after the interruption

Maintaining focus

#9

Website-blocking tools

- Freedom: https://freedom.to/
- StayFocusd: Chrome extension
- SelfControl: http://selfcontrolapp.com/

Music

- Soundrown: http://soundrown.com/

Say ‘no’

#10

- empathy
- explain
- short
- clear and direct
- offer alternatives?

Expect the unexpected

#11

Minimise your frustration:

- If you think a task will take 30 minutes, allocate 45 minutes.
- If there is spare time, rest or start the next task

Buffer time

#12

Be realistic – time management does not take place in a vacuum

External factors:

- Friends and family
- Colleagues
- Supervisors
- Fixed deadlines

Thinking time

#13

Research involves thinking, as well as reading and writing etc.

Factor thinking time into your schedule. Use it to:

- Write down the problems you have
  - What you do not understand
  - What you cannot solve

Have a routine

#14

Getting up

Nourishment

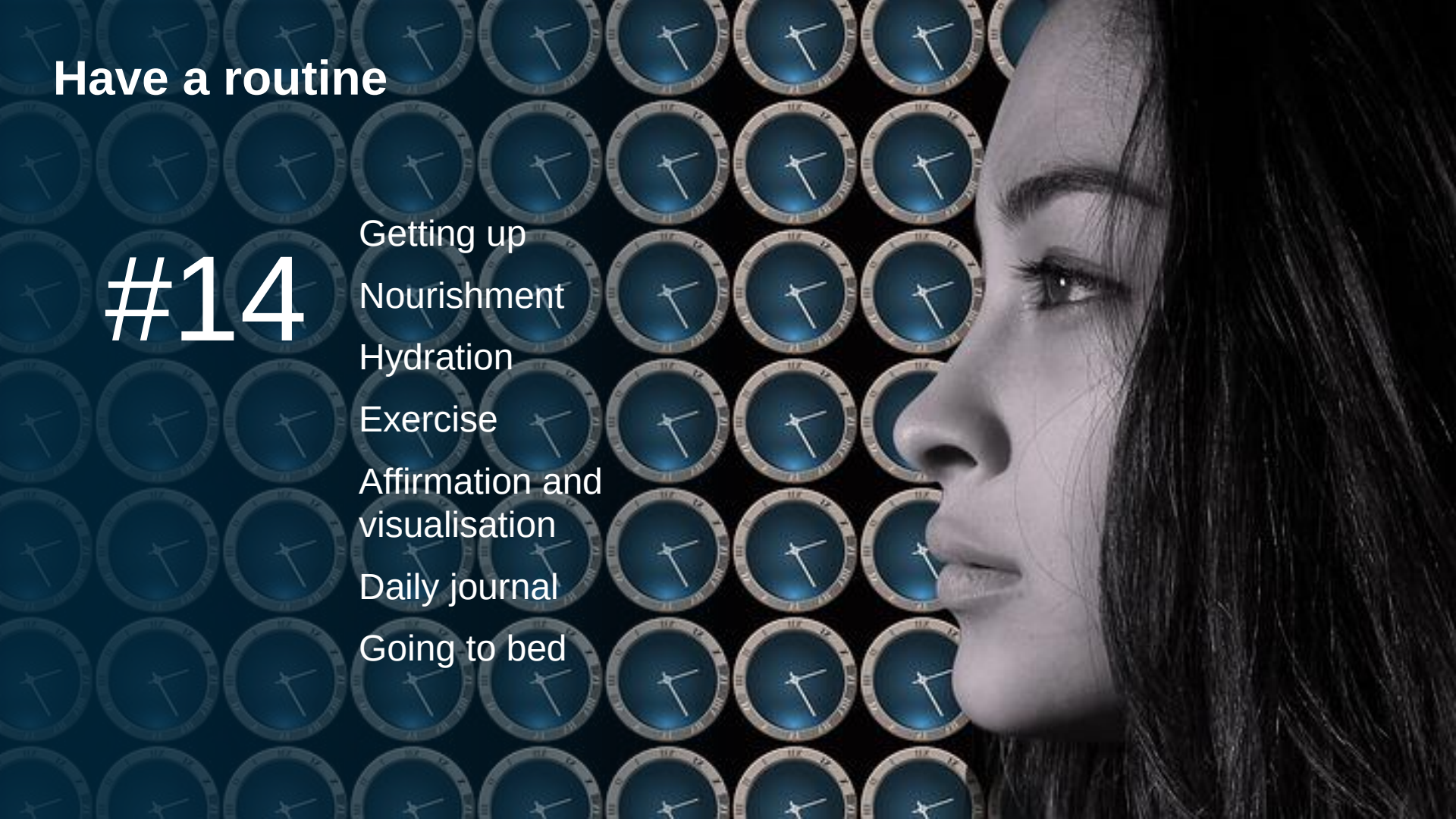
Hydration

Exercise

Affirmation and visualisation

Daily journal

Going to bed



Time Management Ideas # 15-22

Avoid multitasking

#15

- Work on one task at a time
- Give each task 100% (or 110% if you are fan of XFactor)

Multitasking makes us less productive. Multitasking makes most people worse at filtering information and task switching . Multitasking does not make people better at multitasking

Ophir, Nass, Wagner and Posner (2009)

Not-to-do list

#16

I am not going to:

- work through lunch
- work later than …
- go on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tinder …
- check my emails
- prioritise less important tasks
- get Michael Jackson tattoo

Mind map

#17

FAMILY EVENTS
SUNDAY
FAMILY
FUN
OUTING
MINDMAP
MONDAY
FATHER
BUSINESS
MEETING
CHILDREN
SWIMMING
TUESDAY
DAUGHTER
LESSON
PIANO
SON
EXAM
MOTHER
YOGA
WORK
PRESENTATION
WEDNESDAY
DOG
VET
DINNER
PARTY
8
GUESTS
THURSDAY
SON
HAIRCUT
DENTIST
FATHER
MATCH
TENNIS
DAUGHTER
LESSON
DANCE
FRIDAY
BABYSITTER
CHILDREN
SON
FOOTBALL
PARTY
PARENTS
SATURDAY
HORSERIDING
DAUGHTER
ARRIVE
GUESTS
SHOPPING
FOOD

Timeboxing

#18

- Allocate a set amount of time (a timebox) for each task
- Set timer and focus on that task only
- At deadline, analyse progress and move on to next task

Regular breaks

#19 A person can perform at optimal level for 45 minutes

Take a short break every **45 minutes** to refresh yourself

- Eat or drink something
- Go for a walk

Ariga and Lleras. (2011) Brief and rare mental 'breaks' keep you focused: Deactivation and reactivation of task goals pre-empt vigilance decrements.

Pomodoro technique

#20

- **25 minute blocks** (pomodoros)
- After 25 minutes, take a short break (3 – 5 mins)
- After 4 pomodoros, take a longer break (15 – 30 mins)

http://tomato-timer.com/

Kanban principles

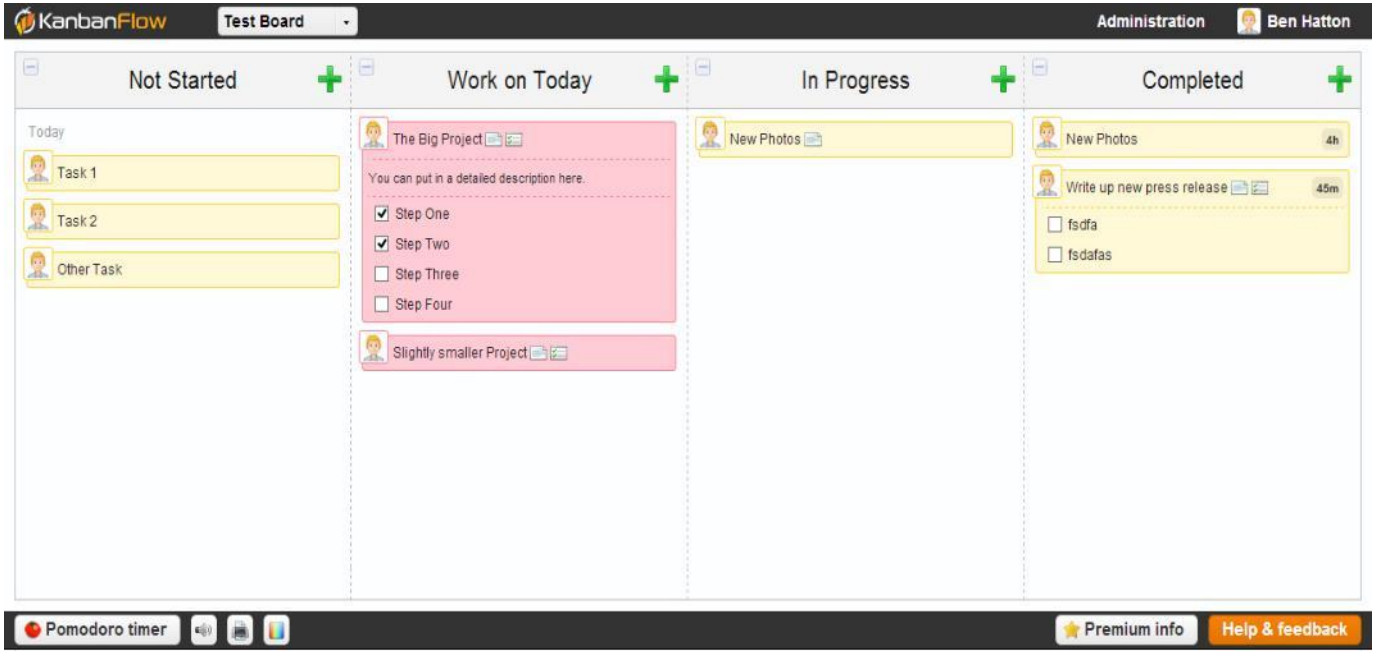
#21

- visualise work
- limit the number of tasks in progress
- pull work from column to column
- monitor, adapt, improve

Kanban tools

#22

KanbanFlow: https://kanbanflow.com/



Deadlines, I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they pass

Douglas Adams, Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy

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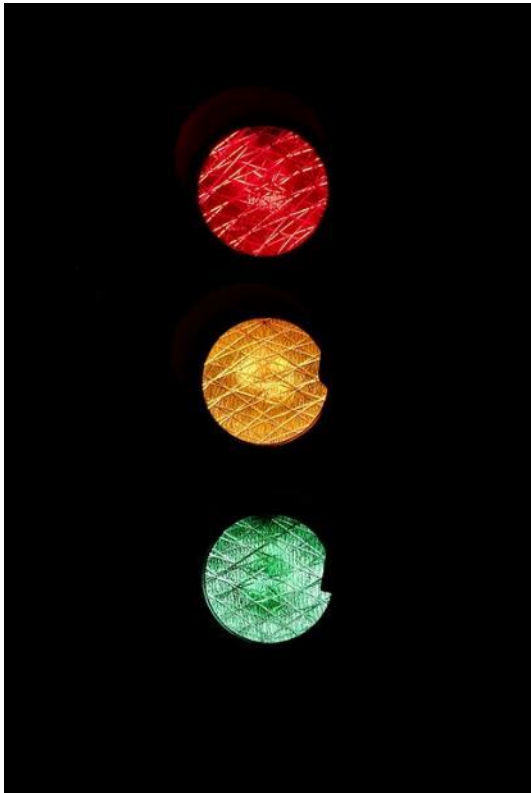
Activity 5:

Planning your workflow (part 3)

Activity 5: Planning your workflow (part 3)

Now that you have mapped out your most to least productive time of day. I want you to think about the kind of activities that you would ideally like to work on in these slots. For example …

LOW – answering emails, networking
MEDIUM – blogging, research journal
HIGH – writing academic papers, meeting supervisor



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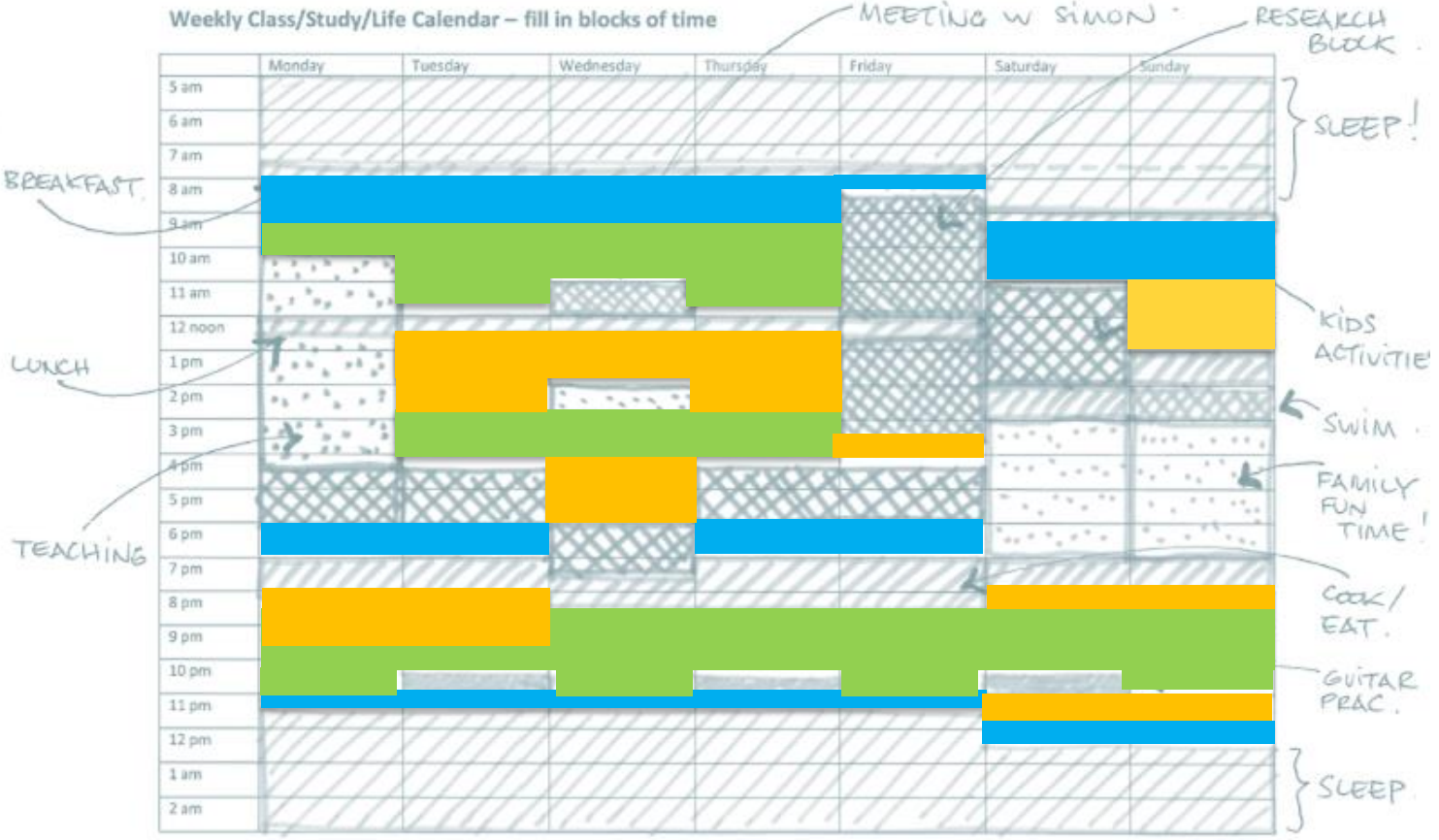
Activity 4: Planning your workflow (part 3)

- LOW
- MEDIUM
- HIGH



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Time Management:

SAGEX ESR context

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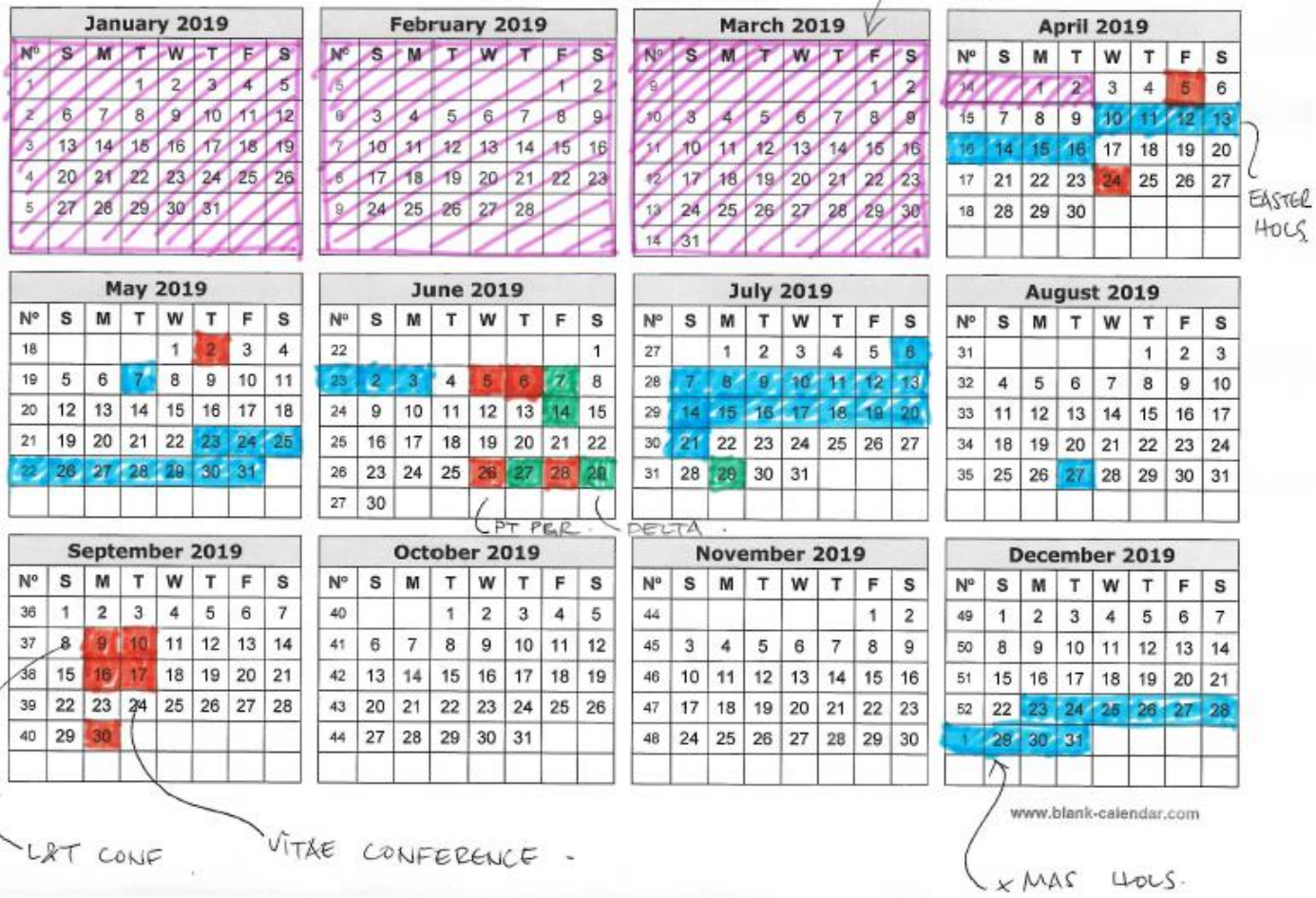
2019 Calendar



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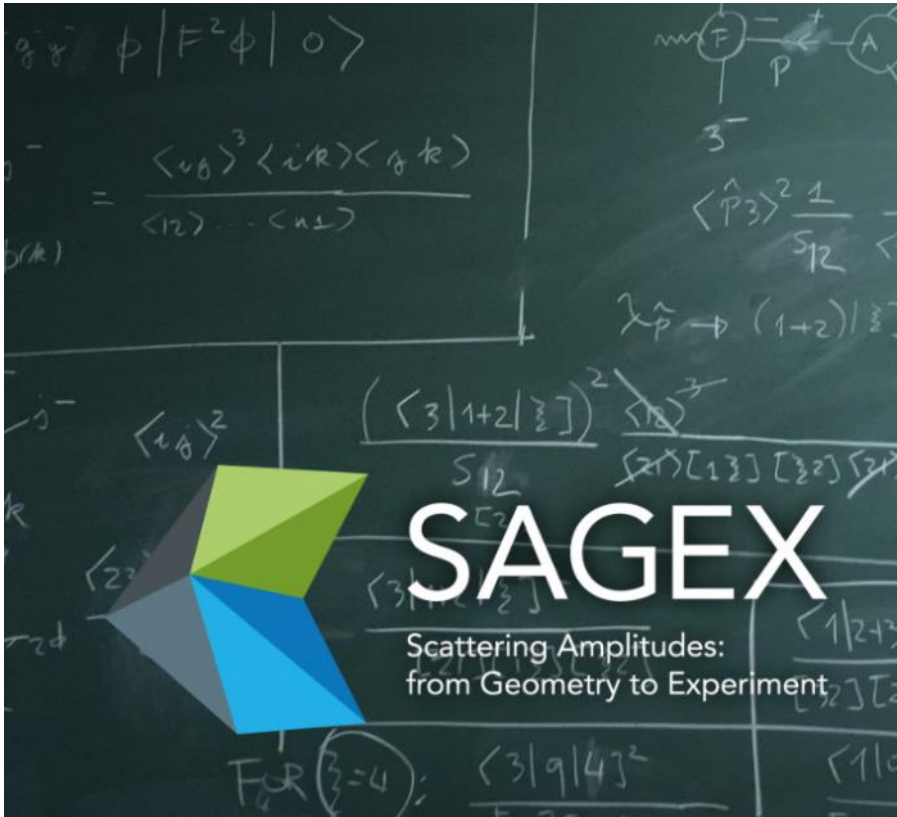
Time Management: SAGEX ESR context

- Reading
- Writing (doctorate, papers, informal)
- Experimental work
- Attending SAGEX events
- Mentor visits
- Industry secondments
- Outreach activities
- Dissemination activities (conferences, posters, talks)



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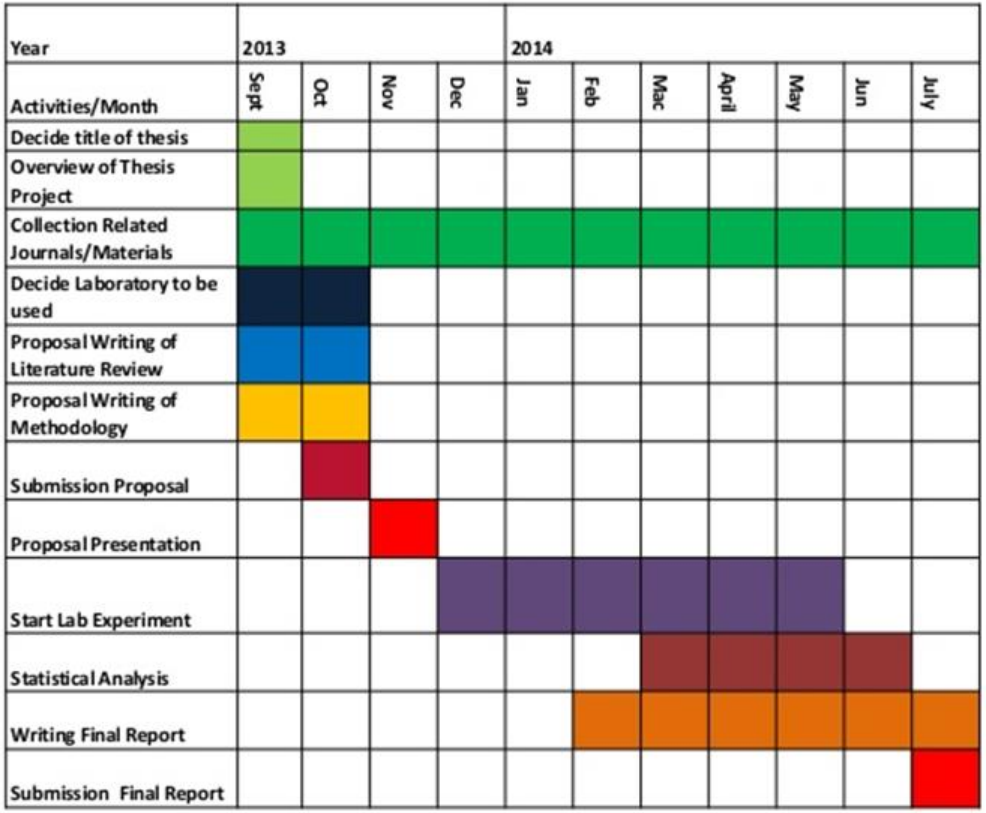
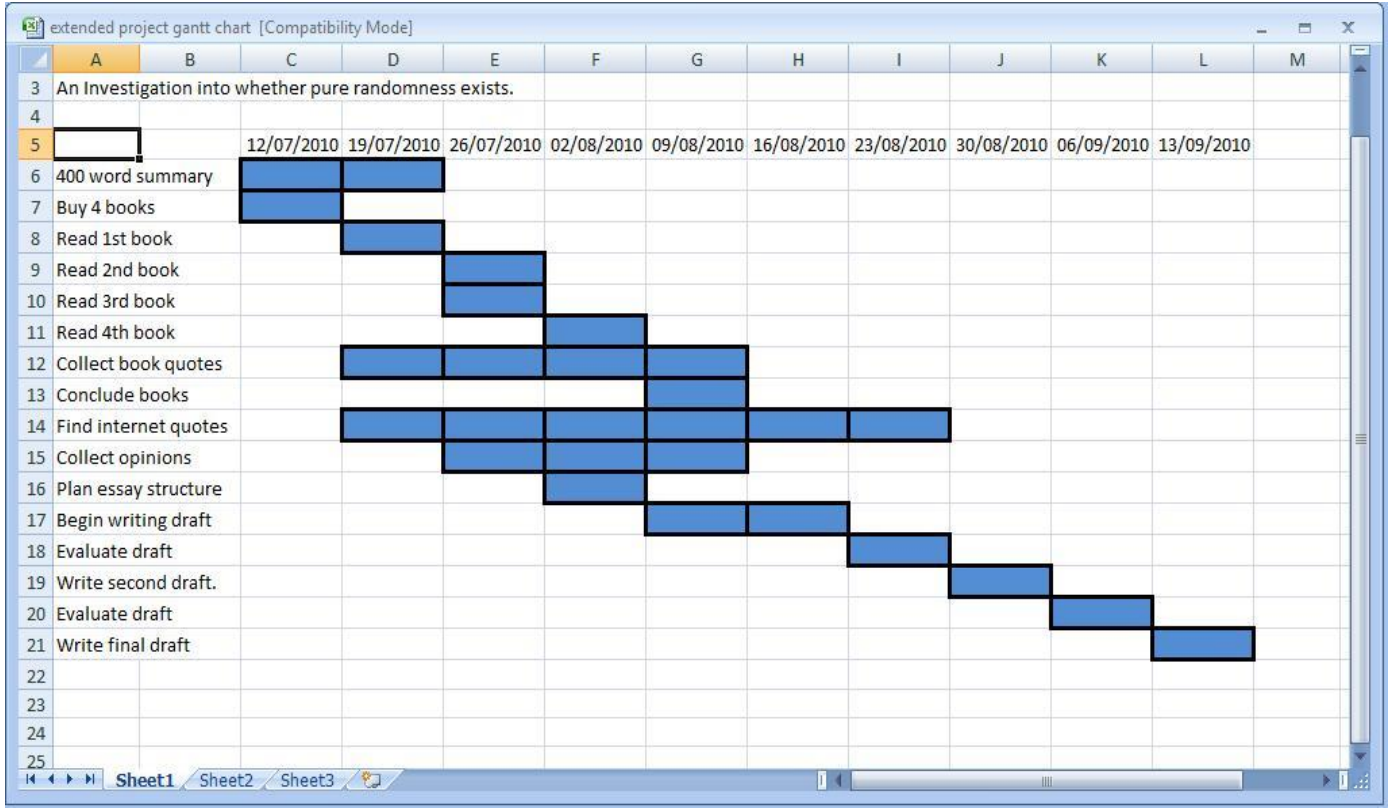
Simple Gantt Chart (MS Word)

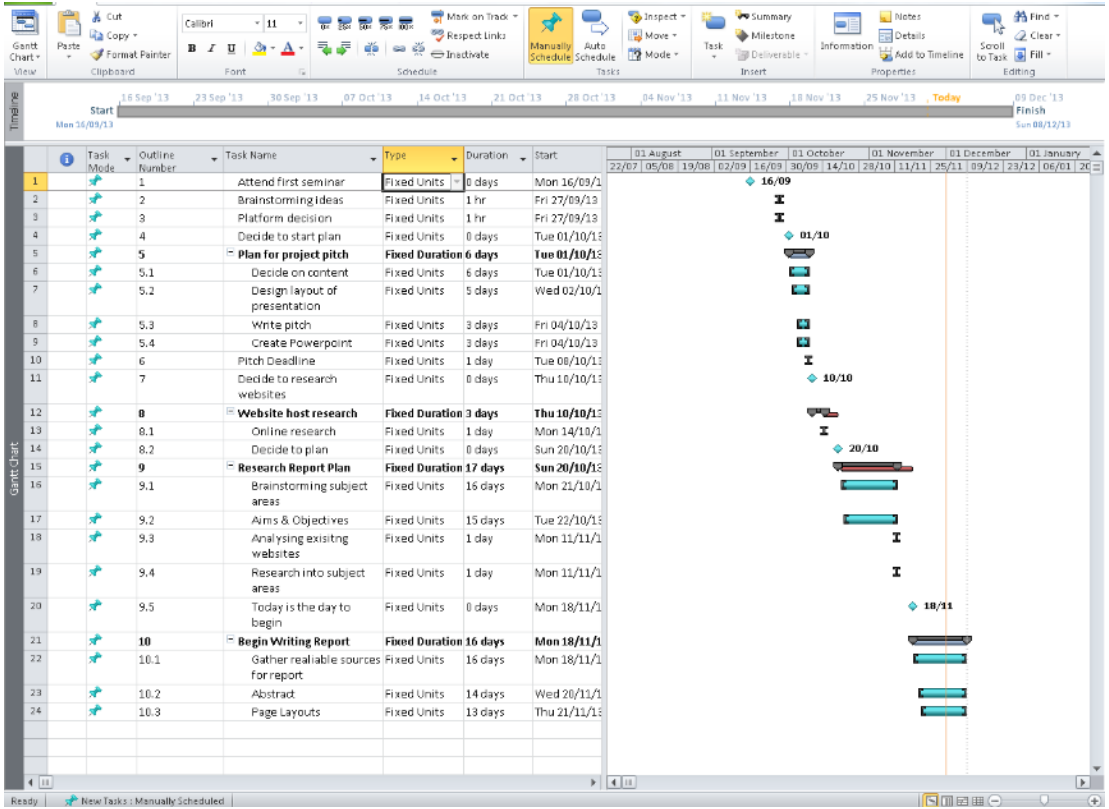


Year	2013				2014						
Activities/Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mac	April	May	Jun	July
Decide title of thesis											
Overview of Thesis Project											
Collection Related Journals/Materials											
Decide Laboratory to be used											
Proposal Writing of Literature Review											
Proposal Writing of Methodology											
Submission Proposal											
Proposal Presentation											
Start Lab Experiment											
Statistical Analysis											
Writing Final Report											
Submission Final Report											

Simple Gantt Chart (Excel)



Simple Gantt Chart (MS Projects)



teamgantt

Teamweek

Office Timeline

What we covered today:

Considered your own strengths and weaknesses as a time manager

Procrastinator

Perfectionist

Considered a number of time management techniques

Time blocking

Visualisation

Routine

Prioritising

Completed simple time-blocking exercise

Family

Friends

Interests and hobbies

Other commitments

Importance of work life balance

Productivity

Mental health

Physical health

General wellbeing

Thank you:

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