MULTITASKING on two sides

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Even before the COVID-19 pandemic strikes the whole world, many have already practiced human multitasking. Most people do this at the workplace, at school, and even at home. Yes, indeed multitasking is a good skill, but the questions are, "Does it work or not? Is it helpful or harmful?" Being able to perform multiple tasks at work is believed to be a strength, yet a study in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance (2001, Vol. 27, No. 4) reveals that multitasking is less efficient because it takes additional time to shift mental gears every time a person switches between tasks. Multitasking in this time is really in, therefore, it is interesting to know its effects on peoples' performance and general well-being and what could be done to counteract the negative effects of this habit.

Multitasking is doing two or more things simultaneously. It involves handling different tasks or shifting attention from one activity to another in a quick sequence. Some personal and professional examples of multitasking would include but are not limited to responding to emails or text messages while watching television; completing research work while reading; driving a vehicle while talking to someone; talking on the phone while greeting someone; babysitting while doing paper works on a computer; taking notes during a lecture; joining two concurrent online activities or webinars, and the like. These activities usually happen at work. Professionals today are having difficulty managing their time especially if they are looking after their kids at the same time or once they got home. Mostly, educational leaders, administrators, and teachers can relate much to this concern.

Does multitasking work or not? Is it helpful or harmful?

Starting with some good points about multitasking, in the case of a company, it can save time and money by allowing its employee to combine separate tasks. It may shorten the time to complete and give more time for other things. It can also help save money for example having employees who can multitask reduces organizational costs in salaries and other employee benefits.

Multitasking can also keep people active, allowing them to avoid distractions as their minds are busy with other activities. It is one way of keeping their brain active for it challenges the brain continuously which can develop their mental stamina. As one practices multitasking, the brain becomes more efficient in handling simultaneous tasks. In some ways, it also develops one's resiliency because working in a demanding environment improves one's ability to handle challenging situations. Having excellent

multitasking skills may even allow an employee to maintain his/her position in the organization.

In many ways, multitasking appears like a good habit by working on more than one task at once and multitaskers are proven to be more productive. However, even though multitaskers might seem better at their work, several studies reveal that multitasking harms productivity. In the research study by Jeong et. al (2016), it was revealed that human brains are not practically as good at carrying out multiple tasks as people like to think they are. They suggest that multitasking can slow down productivity by lowering one's comprehension, attention, and overall performance.

For instance, nowadays professionals like educational leaders, school heads, or teachers are being obliged to join concurrent webinars or online activities that usually end up with less learning and efficiency. Because it might seem like they are accomplishing multiple things at the same time, what they are doing is quickly shifting their attention and focus from one thing to the other. Switching from one task to another may make it difficult to tune out distractions and can cause mental blocks that ultimately slow down the pace at which work can be completed. Hence, focusing on a single task is a much more effective approach for various reasons for it reduces one's efficiency and performance. When trying to do two things at once, the brain cannot perform both tasks successfully. A study at the University of London found that in addition to slowing down, multitasking lowers one's IQ and increases health risks due to pressure and stress.

Multitasking may lower one's performance and make him/her more prone to making mistakes causing more frequent errors, likely due to a lack of attention. Why long for many tasks to accomplish if quality will suffer. Hence, still, quality over quantity matters. One more thing is that multitasking is not always polite. For example, texting, answering emails or typing a letter during staff meetings or while talking to others is rude. Unless one has permission to do other work, it is more polite to focus on the task at hand.

What one can do to counteract the negative effects of multitasking?

Sadly, even though multitasking is already a part of the culture and the workplace. So, what can be done to get rid of the negative effects of multitasking?

Make possible changes that will increase one's productivity and efficiency by making a quick assessment of the various things one is trying to accomplish. Then, determine which task is the most important that needs to focus on first. Assess things according to priority and urgency. One may limit the number of things he/she manages at any given time to just one task.

In addition, use the "20-minute rule." Instead of regularly shifting between tasks, try to fully give your attention to one task for 20 minutes before moving to the other tasks. One may also do scheduling or batching similar tasks together and set a time to handle them, to free the mind up to focus on something else. Also, lessen some distractions by working in a quiet place, switching the phone off, and turning off notifications and alarms while working. Most importantly, being mindful of one's daily routine. This can improve one's ability to focus and pay attention to one thing at a time and may help him/her become more productive while having the feeling of joy and satisfaction at the same time.

In conclusion, multitasking seems to be a good idea but, in some ways, it hinders one's productivity level. However, people may choose among the given tips on how to minimize their work inefficiencies when they multitask. So, it is interesting to note that if two or more tasks are done simultaneously little information will be stored. Hence, one must focus and give his/her full attention to a single task at a time, and he/she will find the quality of work and efficiency increase greatly.