The Truth on Multitasking

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**Identification of Key Principle/Content**  
 In todays’ world it can be rare that we are not interrupted from our daily lives from another stimulant. Multitasking seems harder to escape as technology expands and our attention spans become limited. While there may be little or no harm in texting a friend while doing homework, research shows that multitasking may not be as beneficial as we once thought. This is an important factor to define in our lives as future generations are quickly adapting to this mindset. In a fast-paced and instant gratification time period where multitasking may be a necessity, one must decide if it is worth it.

**Description of Communication Situation**

While I never was sold on the benefits of multitasking, I did partake occasionally. I put my phone on silent so that I will not be dissuaded from activities while I am focused. However, I also will use my phone to text and listen to music while I clean or do homework. I will watch television and then check my emails on my phone. While these particular actions do not cause disruptions for me, I do find that it takes me time to adjust to the new task and get back into the mindset of what I am doing. For this reason, I stopped multitasking for the most part when doing homework as I find it just takes me longer to complete and by switching tasks, I lose motivation. While it does appear to give me a “break” from my task, it could be just as helpful to take an actual break and walk around to stimulate my body and get my blood flowing. Through many lessons of technology, I have learned that while it can be useful as a tool, it only works if it is used properly. Using devices to distract and force our attention elsewhere will only result in a longer process according to my own experiences.   
  
  
**Analysis of Communication Situation**  
 My personal experiences can be supported by a couple of research articles that have been created in the past few years. But first, what is multitasking and how does it work? Multitasking, or the action of partaking in more than one activity at a time, has two parts. The first part, “goal shifting”, is what one experiences when they choose one activity over another. The second part, is role activation. “Role activation” is when the pervious tasks’ rules need to change in order to complete the new task. Because of these two components to multitasking, productivity can be reduced by as much as 40 percent” (Taylor, J., 2011). This is a high percentage of compromise just to feel as if we are accomplishing more at once. This is a current issue as it has been found that the “younger generations tend to engage in more multitasking and perceive multitasking less difficult than elder generations.” (Zhang, Y., & Rau, P. P., 2016). This means that unless there is significant evidence and a push for an increase in singularly focused skills, that multitasking will expand in in our near future. This is almost certain as the existence and spread of various devices that pertain to the media can create dependency and negative outcomes for those who use it (Zhang, Y., & Rau, P. P., 2016). Additionally, what I found to be intriguing in my studies is that people who have a higher polychromic time orientation, are more likely to excessively use multitasking, as well as increasing their ability to do so (Zhang, Y., & Rau, P. P., 2016). This is significant as it these behaviors can result in possible permanent behavior changes that affect neural connections. While adults may have easier time stopping multitasking, teens who are excessive become dependent and can harm their developing brains (Taylor, J., 2011) Studies done by Clifford Nass in 2009 found that those who used multitasking heavily were not only worse at sorting relevant from irrelevant information, but also continued to be after they were no longer multitasking (G., 2013) “So basically, they are worse at most of the kinds of thinking not only required for multitasking but what we generally think of as involving deep thought” (Taylor, J., 2011). These findings have created a foundation of questions to be answered in the future when more data is collected. I am hopeful that these statistics will get an increase in publicity so that there is hope in deterring future generations from acquire this skill that may ultimately will lead to problems.

**References**

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