

FAST
forward.



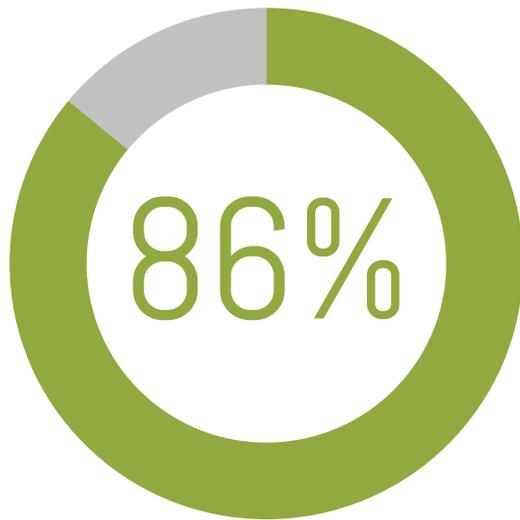
COURSE STATISTICS & FEEDBACK

Class October 2022

86% of participants of the October 2022 class were awarded a course certificate

PROGRAM COMPLETION RATE

Percentage of participants¹



BEST PRACTICES FOR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

The following best practices during the sign-up process and during the class supported high completion rate:

1. Sharing of participant information presentation as part of the course announcement and directing participant to the FAQ on the course website
2. Informal information session with interested participants to allow them to ask questions before signing up
3. Submission of a motivational statement as part of registration
4. Selection of participants with good track record of attending trainings and workshops they signed up for
5. Immediate follow-up by coordination office if participants miss sessions or fall behind
6. Missing Q&A sessions requires note from doctor or supervisor to qualify for credits



Participants already implemented the majority of tools and techniques during the course of the program

85

percent of Fast Forward tools and techniques were implemented by participants over the course of the program compared with 16% in traditional workshop formats

40

contributions by participants and tutors on average each week across in the two Live Q&A sessions – no open questions remained at the end of each session

“ I’m most proud of that I got started on stuff that I really have been procrastinating for a while. I always feel really good when I can check things off the procrastination list, and now I also gained some more insights in why I keep doing it!”

“ I am super proud that I started this. I thought that I am productive but I was not as I thought. This helped me to see that I have so much more potential and need to learn and be open for new learnings!”

“ I have learned the most critical skills of productivity and applied them in my projects. I have accomplished a lot in my project since I started this training”

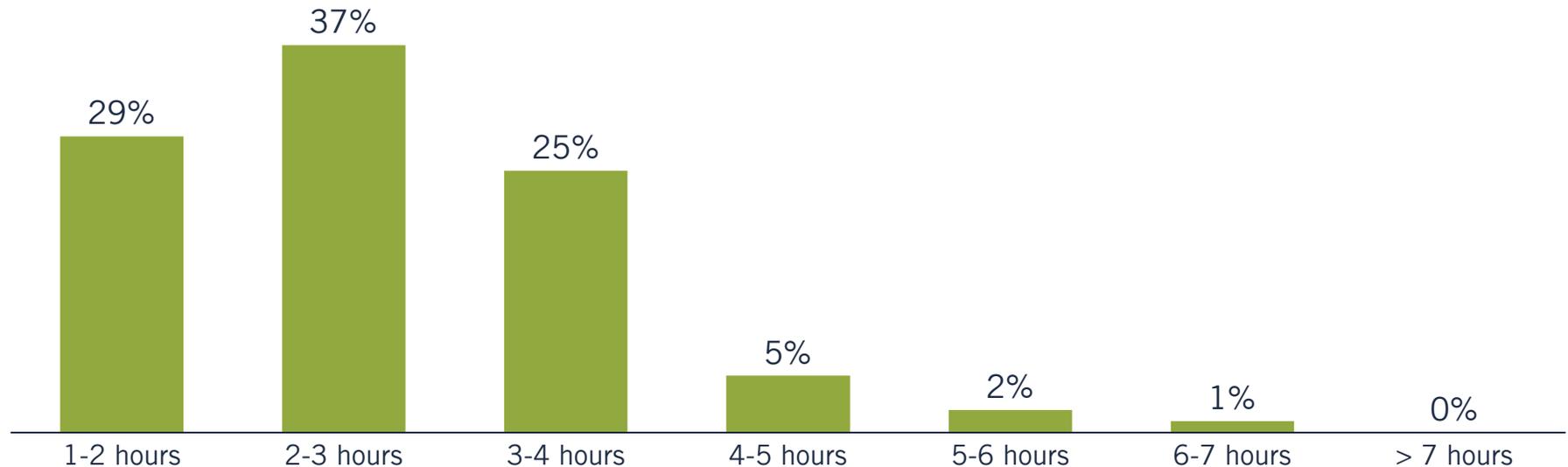
“ For the first time in my academic career, I have clear stepping stones towards and theorem.”



On average participants invested 2.6 hours per week to complete the program – 91% required less than 4 hours a week

WEEKLY TIME COMMITMENT

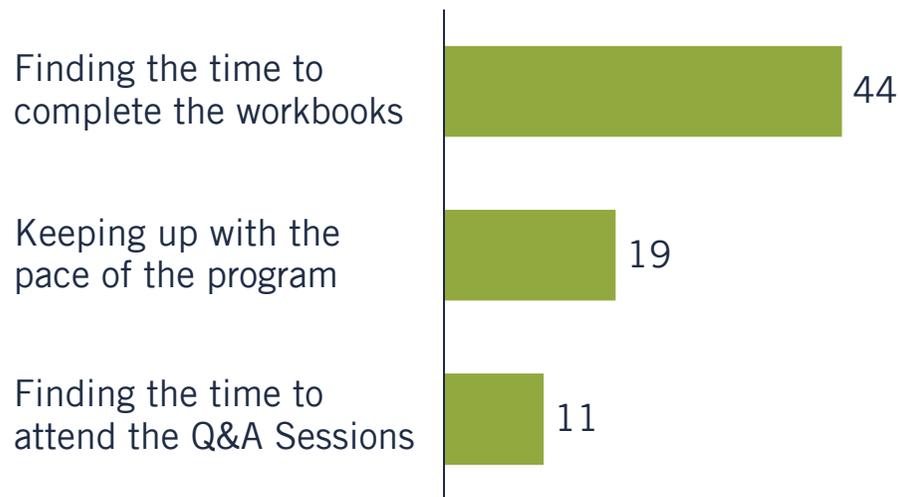
Percentage of participants



Participants found it most challenging to find the time to complete the workbooks – and used the tools to address the challenge

TOP 3 CHALLENGES

Percentage of participants



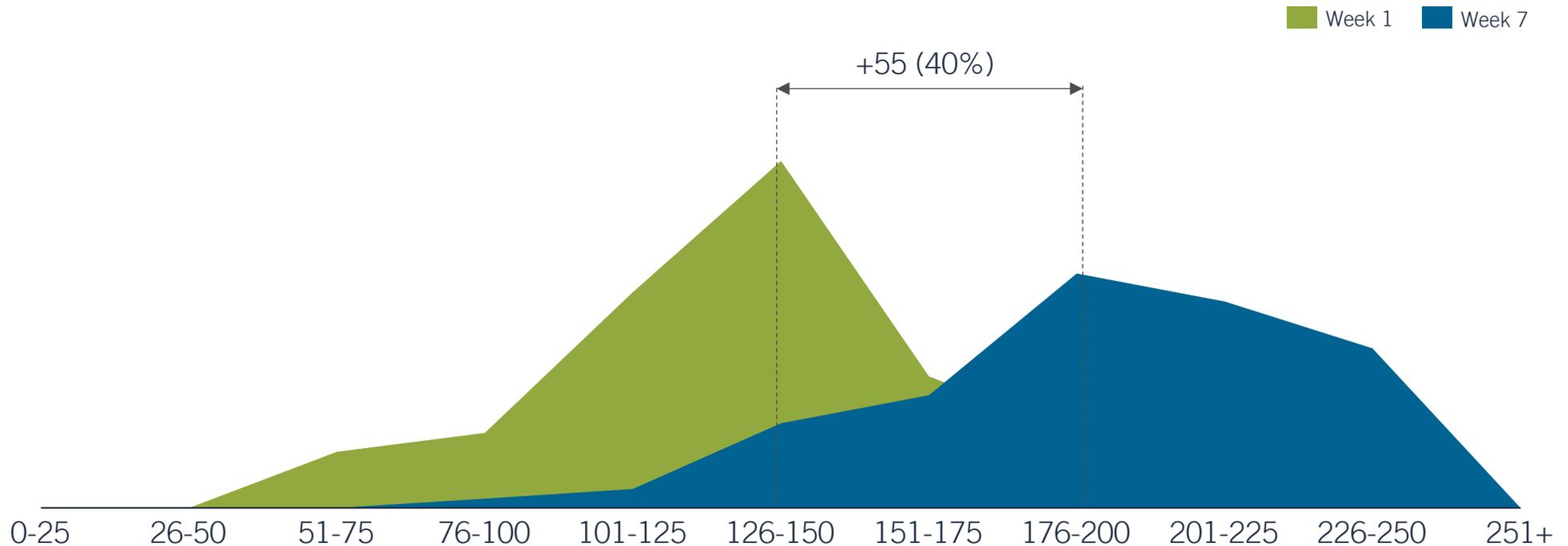
“ Over the time that I took the Fast Forward course, I made a conscious effort to incorporate at least 1 tool suggested per module to help organize myself better. I have spent time fitting it in my schedule, reflecting timely on what worked and how to improve.

“ I found at the beginning very challenging to keep the routine to going the sessions and to complete the workbook, but with time I could go into the routine.

“ It would be less challenging to complete the workbooks/templates if I booked a specific time slot each week to do it as recommended in the modules.

Participants' Personal Productivity Scores improved by an average of 38% during the course

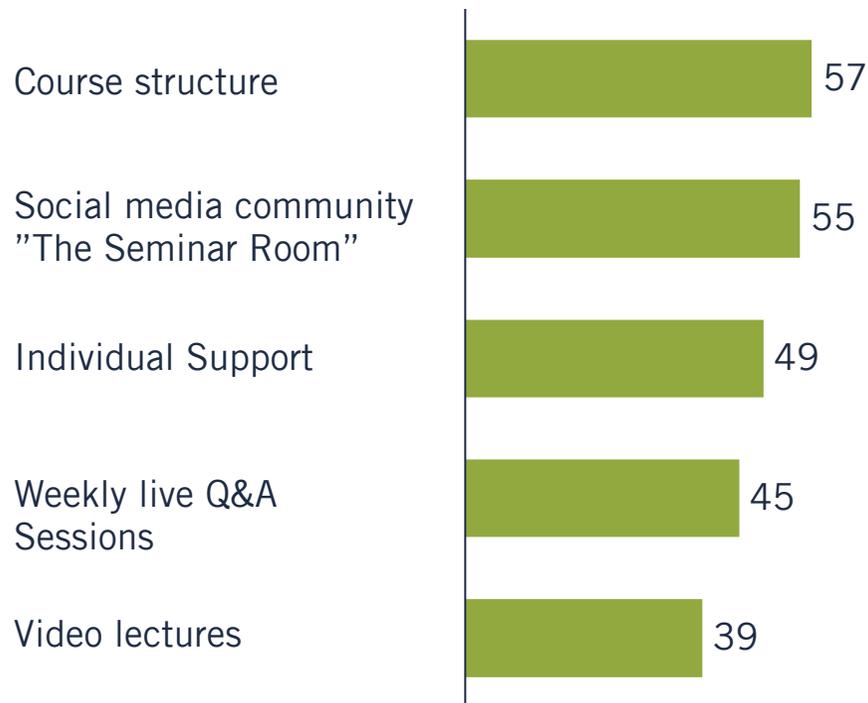
Personal Productivity Score before and after the course



Participants valued the course structure the most, followed by the community, individual support and the weekly Q&A sessions

FAVOURITE PROGRAM ASPECTS

Percentage of participants



“Fast Forward is a very well structured course; the provided videos are nice and easy to follow. The best aspect is that we can practice the presented techniques and tools right away and with our own project.”

“I like the fact that there were people from a wide range of career stages, this made the discussions very interesting. I also liked that we could implement tools at our own pace, and learn from easier examples in the workbook.”

“Nadine and the Tutors were super helpful and supportive! I really liked the videos as well. The Q&A sessions were very well organized and essential to understand, apply and hopefully stick to the habits and tools.”

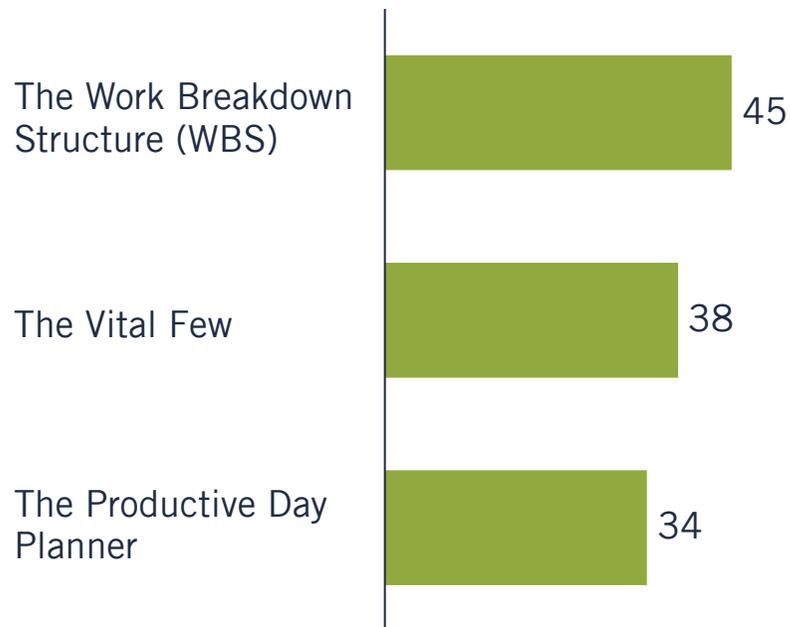
“I think Nadine was excellent with her engagement through the Live sessions, comments, advice and all the additional information (e.g. articles) that she shared. I was really impressed with the answers to questions given in live sessions and the overall structure of the course - which was a great model for the project management (and all the tools) that we were trying to achieve.”



The favourite tools of this class were Work Breakdown Structure, the Vital Few and the Productive Day Planner

TOP 3 TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Percentage of participants



“ *The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS): Getting a better overview of my project and a better feeling for what is in it and what aspects need to be considered. Having this overview significantly decreased my stress level by giving more of a feeling of control.* ”

“ *The Vital Few helped me to prioritize and to sort out distractions instead of just working down a long to-do list without getting the most important stuff out of the way first. It even helped me to say “no” to other things, because I was aware of my important tasks which require the focus of my work.* ”

“ *The Productive Day Planner helped me to stay on track and observe myself. I realised earlier I had wasted so much of time, just because of not planning well in advance. Now I can really not stress at the end of the day seeing incomplete tasks, but be proud of what I have been able to achieve.* ”

Straight from The Seminar Room – The Fast Forward Community



My three SMART goals for the week:

- To clarify the project's design/functional and operational requirements to the stakeholders, tomorrow (in the morning 8:30-12:30) and Wednesday (all day long, 8:30-17:30) I will prepare a detailed presentation of about 20 slides reporting the material researched last week.

Done, the presentation went quite well.

- On Thursday afternoon, to have the material for the paper ready I will test the new encoder with no magnetic field and, if working I will ask for time with the magnet.

Done, an issue in the experimental set-up has been found and correct

- To have the paper ready for the submission deadline, I will write at least 1 column of the introduction on Friday (all day long) reporting the primary motivation of the projects and the literature review.

Done

The thing that changed my productivity the most has been the full adoption of the principle 'Done is better than perfect. Before I lost a lot of time in doing a single task super-well, while not working on the following tasks, I first have a roughly finished product and then refine this. I do not think that the total amount of working time has changed, however the feeling that I have while working has.

Indeed, having ready a rough prototype gives you a sort of parachute for which you know that even if you are not going to make everything perfect you have a finite solution to show and discuss.

♥ 1



Hi everyone,

-What's your new score and what did you do to make it happen?

My personal productivity score went from 138 to 158! I am quite happy about that. One of the first changes was to intentionally schedule in my chores into my week. I had never thought about it before, but it has definitely helped me to stay on top of my personal life. I also got better at defining weekly goals and sticking to them. Still, the most significant change from the class was in how I connect with my stakeholders and manage the expectations of others. During these past weeks, I actively worked on being able to ask for help and delegate to others as well as saying 'no' or saying 'not right now' when someone comes to me for help. I definitely have to keep developing these skills, but it was great to start making some first improvements.



I just wanted to support what @Nadine Sinclair cited. I love your post @Panagiota Chatzidaki, especially because you didn't just identify some tools that might help you with your To Do's (already cool enough!), but you found something that changed your entire attitude!

Also, I see this very often in people's faces when I talk about productivity (...):

Before the course, I thought all productivity talk was mumbo-jumbo 😞

So I am happy FF was able to change that! :D

♥ 1



Hi everyone, it was a great time with you!

1. I changed the way I am organizing my tasks completely - I switched from daily to do-lists, which left me sometimes clueless about what the whole week was about, to trello and got a better overview over all remaining tasks. Furthermore, I am now using the Eisenhower-Matrix and Timeboxing to be clearer about my time potential and focus on the important things.
2. While all of the above worked great, my greatest win and learning experience was to actually celebrate my achievements - I have always dropped this part in my life so far and it just feels amazing!
3. Contentwise: I handed in my thesis and delivered a huge an extensive report to all Helmholtz centers across Germany (this was my very first own project to manage, which included quite a lot of people and got me interested in project management)
Processwise: My procrastination went down and I started to adapt a new way of structuring my tasks, which I believe will be very helpful in the long run.

Overall, a great course and I really enjoyed the High-Five Fridays!



Hello,

I accomplished all my tasks this week. I now take more in consideration the energy that I require for the tasks, instead of the time. This helped a lot because I felt less anxious all week about doing the tasks.

Also, I used the "better done than perfect" idea to approach my coding tasks. This was really nice because I remembered that you don't have to know everything about a task in order to start doing some progress.

I will celebrate my self with some boba tea :)

♥ 1



Hello everyone!

So I had a very interesting week.

It actually went well and I ended up ticking most of my goals but because some deadlines are approaching I had a constant stressful feeling of not doing enough.

Implementing the productive day template worked very well for me and I actually managed to do a lot of things in the early mornings! Probably, this is also the reason I was feeling that I am not doing enough.. In my mind staying until late is in some twisted way is still connected with working more and being more productive.

But looking back at what I did this week I can prove myself wrong and see how many things can be done if my day is well structured!

I also noted that I felt much better after having a meeting this morning with my supervisor where he acknowledged my work and was very optimistic... It was for sure very motivating to get good feedback - but made me also think why couldn't I just see it as well and be nicer to myself?

After all this reflection... I will go celebrate the birthday of a colleague :)

♥ 1



Thank you so much for all your input throughout the course, @Nadine Sinclair, and for the excellent course content. I can't believe how much was packed into the seven weeks!! ...and yet it was structured in such an 'easy-to-follow' way that it was always clear to see what the next step was, and how to progress. You really modelled the kind of project management that you are helping us all to achieve :D
I will be learning and benefitting from this course for a long time :D Thank you!!

♥ 1



Last day today!

1. Yesterday, I finished up one last project, which would have been in the "Avoid" category but I had time left and leaving work today with everything finished or handed over is a great feeling.
2. Today is my last day - apart from cleaning up everything, there is really not much to do anymore, so I will just enjoy it :)
3. Nothing anymore - Dobby is a free elf!

Thank you all for the nice time during this course - it gave me a lot of great insights, which I will hopefully manage to use further!

♥ 1

Straight from The Seminar Room – The Fast Forward Community

TK

What did I accomplish yesterday? what didn't I? (Focus on your vital few from yesterday)

1. I got a poster template which indeed saved me several of working hours.
2. I have prepared two expected results for the poster.
3. I checked in with a student who I supervise and specified a task for him.

What are my vital few for today?

Finish the poster as much as I can and discuss it with a group leader at 6pm today.

What is holding me back (if anything)?

I am usually held back when I encounter several deadlines and my mind often went stalled. Now if I only need to focus on ONE vital few, the loads are removed and I can move fast forwards again.

♥ 1



Hello everyone,

I am making good progress with my sprint. I really enjoy to have a list of defined tasks, that I can choose from and that have a clear definition of done. Daily planning with time boxes also worked very well for me this week. I finished all three of my weekly goals and most of my daily vital fews, here I still need to improve my daily planning, e.g., plan the vital few for the morning, not the afternoon.

♥ 1



Hey @Nadine Sinclair

First one done. Second one: so far so good.
Third one: on track.

The first sprint week, although only three days in, is going pretty good. I'm trying to use the tools from the lectures and assignments, but actually the 'principles' are working out best for me. Before this course I would not have believed that 'simple' practices like 'done is better than perfect' or 'eating frogs for breakfast' would have a beneficial effect on how I fill my days, but as it turns out, they do!

Thanks for checking in!

♥ 1



Hi Everyone also from my side :-)

normally, I would think that my week was not as good as I would like to have it, but by setting out the 3 goals which are achievable my feedback is more friendly to myself.

I achieved all three goals this week, which makes me really happy :-).

Enjoy your Weekend

♥ 1



1. finish the introduction of my thesis completely i.e.: the microscopy part and give to Daniel

YES :)

2. analyze sequencing data

not yet, but I figured out a way today to speed up things which was very helpful

3. finish FF tasks from this week, and also the WBS from last week

YES :)

Aaaand: I am already out of the office now to meet a friend and celebrate, thank you for reaching this point, I would not have seen it that way a couple of weeks before. Have a nice weekend everybody

♥ 2



Hello all,

I have had a great week so far. Besides accomplishing all my goals for the week, I also managed to achieve some personal goals. Time to celebrate!

Wish you all a great weekend!



Hi, everyone!

This was my WEEK to really dive into all the FF work and get the most out of the tools we have learned about so far(-: and, not surprisingly, it also helped me make some real progress on my projects!

I have shifted my focus from my review paper to my fieldwork planning, since this should really be the priority. But, since I am moving so fast here, I think I can put some time back into the paper. Let's see.



Buenas tardes a todos :)

I realized yesterday in the Q&A that I still don't celebrate my achievements enough: instead of being proud of how far I've come, I tend to focus on what didn't get done and thereby miss a crucial opportunity to reflect and recharge. To change this pattern, I will do my best to not miss a Friday post again :)

Here are my 3 goals from the week:

- 1.) Finish completing the thesis intro (ca. 10 pages of text) by Wednesday evening.

-> I wrote 12 pages of text, but ended up sending only 7 finished pages to my supervisor today - the remaining pages still need some edits but it felt good to have a sense of completion and know that the first part of my thesis intro is done :)

- 2.) Create two figures for thesis intro based on the sketches I made by Thursday evening.

-> Writing took longer than expected, so I'm taking this goal into the next week with me.

- 3.) Cut 5 brains from cfos mice and start cfos + DCX staining by the end of Friday.

-> The brains are cut and I am starting the staining this weekend.

Overall, I didn't get everything done but I am extremely proud of myself. I got into a very good writing flow this week, started the focus sessions for thesis writing and also found this little illustration very relatable :D

Wishing all of you a good weekend, I hope you can rest, reflect and recharge! :)



I'm very happy to have achieved everything on my list in time, including the one goal I had to move over from last week. The meeting preparation helped to have a productive work meeting yesterday and get a clear idea what everyone stakeholders opinion and goals are for the project and to define the minimal and the better set of experiments to do to conclude the project and publish it

I now have to rebuild my WBS with the new input and it will change quite a bit, but I'll happily do that one the next weeks with a clear vision in mind.

Even though the weeks are terribly full, structuring my weeks by defining SMART goals and allocate fixed time slots for essential tasks has helped so much to reduce the stress and the feeling of getting lost in too much work.

Thanks a lot to the Fast Forward team!

Have a good weekend!

♥ 2

BL

- What did you learn from the exercise?

Taking the time to create a WBS can really help to get a better grip on the project. It makes it so much more concrete to break it down into little packages and to really see the different tasks you need to do. It also helps to not feel so overwhelmed

Straight from The Seminar Room – The Fast Forward Community

 Hi all and happy Friday!

I managed to tick off all my assignments for this week (probably a first!). I think it was a combination of being more productive during the week (by following the 7 productivity principles introduced in week 5), but also being more realistic about what is feasible (after having a look on my calendar and roughly estimating how much time I really have for working on my project).

As I also mentioned in yesterday's check in, this week I didn't need to work outside working hours even though I had to prepare a presentation, which was also a first! This is a big shock for me that happily welcome :)

Overall, only good feelings about this week, and looking forward to a work-less weekend and my second sprint week! :)

♥ 2

 Wow – I managed to accomplish a lot this week. It's nice to take time to reflect. I ran multiple meetings with my team and made great progress on my PhD, I prepared for an upcoming exam, and I took care of all of the details for my flight back to Germany this weekend (finalizing my rental contract, packing, making the most of my last days home).

I learned a lot this week, and this class sparked it! I opened the door on so many ways to improve my productivity and my communication with my team. I've committed to some simple changes (making my weekly goals, reflecting at the end of the week, always sending follow up emails after a meeting) and started the process on some of the harder changes (learning how to ask for help and say no). Many thanks to Nadine and the amazing tutors for all of your guidance.

 Hello everyone!

I managed to complete all three goals this week. It was not as easy as I expected, so maybe I finally managed to set realistic goals. Let's see if this works out next week as well.

My biggest learning from FF so far is: keep the bigger picture in mind but don't let it scare you! The bigger picture/vision is important to prioritize correctly (e.g. Project charter, weekly goals), but breaking the tasks down in feasible and specific chunks helps to actually advance (e.g. WBS, relative sizing, SMART goals).

Enjoy your weekend!

♥ 1

 Thank you, @Nadine Sinclair ! I am really in awe of you and your team and mission that you promote (-: it's more than productivity – it's about creating the life you want to live and doing the work that excites you. Thanks for passing on that knowledge. All the best in your next endeavors!

♥ 1

 Hi everyone!

even though this week became way more packed than expected, I managed to finish all my goals and I think this is due to the fact that I constantly break down my larger tasks into smaller packages, so I can estimate way better what is fitting into breaks that I have in my schedule and what doesn't. I also prioritize and focus more on essential things instead of becoming distracted by smaller, but time consuming tasks. I am even a bit proud of myself, that I was able to complete everything without the need of working in night shifts and am now able to start relaxed into my vacation.

Have a great weekend and I am looking forward to hearing from you on Manic Monday!

♥ 1

 Hi all,

my first week started off fantastic, I was full of energy and then got slowed down by a cold (and a teenager at home with cold as well). The advise "manage your energy" helped me a lot as it allowed me to acknowledge that I will not be able to stick to the original plan and have to focus on personal wellbeing instead. Nevertheless I got things accomplished and all vital fews done. I will celebrate with a coffee with my dear sister at a knitting-cafe (btw I just discovered knitting is perfect to come down :)

♥ 1

 I check my emails every morning and answer immediately, which are urgent and important.

I have improved my concentration in what I do by sticking to my WHY. I have learned that losing the WHY is losing the way.

I am proud that I managed to finish my task in my planned time. I am also grateful to be part of the course. It is an energy boost to me.

 I finished all my three tasks this week despite all odds, they were also time sensitive, but I went with done is better than perfect and made a lot of progress! I will celebrate now with some pizza!

Lessons learned: I already did something kind of like a WBS for my project, which I can build upon, and I like the mind mapping software and will dig a bit deeper into it.

♥ 0

 Hello,

this week I managed to do all I had in mind on Monday. I realized that in the past weeks I tended to overwhelm myself and this left me stressed out. Now I feel like I have found my rhythm. Have a nice weekend :)

♥ 2

 Hi everyone,

It was such a transformative journey with all of you! I have really enjoyed our interactions and learned so much from the comments by Nadine, the tutors and the rest of the community.

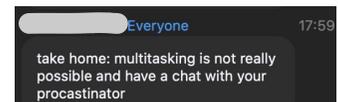
What did you change in the way you worked?

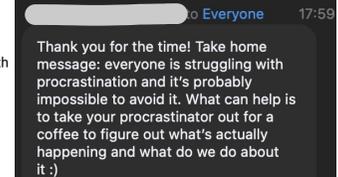
I think my most important change over the last 7 weeks was the change in my attitude towards my project and life in general.

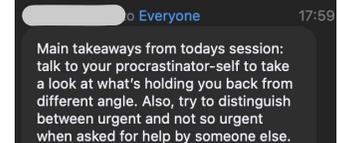
- Strangely, the simple question "why do you care about your project?" at the beginning of the programme reminded me that my PhD is actually a *choice*, and a choice I should be supporting by my actions. Thinking that no one is forcing me to be here, that if it wasn't me doing this PhD it would be someone else, means that I should make this PhD matter, not for anyone else, but for myself.
- At the same time, being used to work extremely long hours in my past projects as a physicist (although not very productively), I only now came to the realisation that I actually deserve to have free time, to be more mindful an happier.

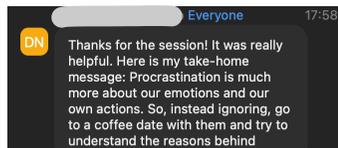
In a nutshell, my PhD project shouldn't be just a "job" for me - I should get energy and purpose out of it, but also allow for energy and purpose outside of it.

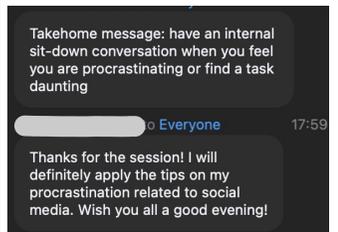
So once my mindset started to change (still a long way to go...), implementing the rest of the tools made so much sense. I think without the attitude change, implementing all these tools would have been like a chore, while now it felt like a very natural and logical step.

 Everyone 17:59
take home: multitasking is not really possible and have a chat with your procrastinator

 Everyone 17:59
Thank you for the time! Take home message: everyone is struggling with procrastination and it's probably impossible to avoid it. What can help is to take your procrastinator out for a coffee to figure out what's actually happening and what do we do about it :)

 Everyone 17:59
Main takeaways from today's session: talk to your procrastinator-self to take a look at what's holding you back from different angle. Also, try to distinguish between urgent and not so urgent when asked for help by someone else.

 Everyone 17:58
DN Thanks for the session! It was really helpful. Here is my take-home message: Procrastination is much more about our emotions and our own actions. So, instead ignoring, go to a coffee date with them and try to understand the reasons behind

 Everyone 17:59
Takehome message: have an internal sit-down conversation when you feel you are procrastinating or find a task daunting
Thanks for the session! I will definitely apply the tips on my procrastination related to social media. Wish you all a good evening!