

Learning Tip:
On Multitasking

Dr. Gary Au
au@math.usask.ca

University of Saskatchewan

On Multitasking

- ▶ Multitasking takes two main forms:
 - ▶ Serial tasking: Switching back and forth between multiple tasks.
 - ▶ Dual tasking: Devoting continuous partial attention to multiple tasks.
- ▶ Our brains are generally not good at multitasking due to limited working memory capacity.
- ▶ Task switching incurs a cost to focus and significantly reduces cognitive ability; procrastination can also creep in between tasks.
- ▶ Dual tasking can be effective if the tasks require different sets of neuro-resources and do not both demand high-level cognitive processing (e.g., listening to music while driving).
- ▶ Some forms of dual tasking (e.g., writing with background noise in a coffee shop) can reduce cognitive fixation and enhance creativity.