Chapter 8. Academic Productivity and Tools for Time Management

Part I: Crossing the Threshold

Academic productivity is often measured in a very straightforward way: lines on your CV. These CV lines are typically the "golden ticket" to your career success: job market success, securing better positions or opportunities, prestige, and for academic jobs, tenure and promotion. And yet, "If I only had more time" is probably the most common lament among emerging and expert scholars for making progress in writing for publication. Because of the results-oriented nature of writing productivity, much of the labor that we do in order to achieve these lines on a CV is hidden, meaning that you aren't actually sure how long things will take. What publications on a CV don't tell you is the story of how the piece was written: setbacks, challenges, time investment, and regular writing practices needed to achieve success. Publication is an investment of months or years and thus requires regular time and attention. And as we've explored throughout this book, you must invest time for initial drafting as well as for substantive revisions—all of which require larger blocks of time where you can focus, get into the flow state, and wrestle with deep ideas to produce new human knowledge.

Thus, a key to academic productivity is through the mastery of yourself and your time, as described through our threshold concept for this chapter:

> ***Threshold Concept:*** *Expert writers engage in sophisticated time management, space management, and goal setting strategies to make regular progress on writing for publication.*

Managing your time and achieving your goals is one of the most formidable challenges in writing for publication, and these challenges grow more and more apparent as university budgets shrink, class sizes expand, and more obligations are added to existing positions (Berg & Seeber, 2016). These time management challenges are even more pronounced for those juggling multiple part-time adjunct jobs, family obligations, and more. Jaclyn M. Wells and Lars Söderlund (2018) found that many faculty who are publishing struggle with balancing the demands of family, administration, teaching, and service. Post-pandemic, shrinking budgets and less hiring also mean that more people are strained with less resources in their work.

The key to this threshold concept is in exploring sophisticated time management and academic productivity strategies—which often have to be adapted to different times of year, teaching schedules, and other circumstances. What is clear from the existing research as well as the stories presented in this chapter is

that time does not magically appear so that you can write. Time must be carved out and ruthlessly defended in this age of increased stress and responsibility for academic jobs. Table 8.1 describes the transitions that emerging scholars must make to shift from coursework into independent writing and successfully cross the threshold.

Table 8.1 Crossing the Threshold

Extrinsically Motivated Time and Goals		**Independently Motivated Time and Goals**
Time management and accountability are often externally motivated by deadlines in coursework or other external factors. Student writers often binge write or write under short deadlines to meet the demands of multiple competing coursework deadlines.	THRESHOLD	Experts develop sophisticated methods for managing their time that shift as academic schedules shift and are only partially or not motivated by external forces (publication deadlines, tenure clocks, etc.).
Goals may be externally driven by faculty mentors, courses, or degree programs.		Goals are shaped by an expert scholars' commitment to a research agenda and the work they want to do in the world.
Accountability is often externally driven by grades, feedback, or others' expectations.		Experts leverage a range of accountability strategies including writing groups, internal deadlines, setting goals, blocking out calendar time and more.
Students are in the process of learning what works best for them in terms of space, writing rituals, or where, how, and when to write.		With limited time, experts learn to maximize their time with setting goals, creating writing rituals, and ensuring they have space free of distractions. These spaces may change as life circumstances, workloads, or semesters change.

In this chapter, we explore exactly how to do this: carving out time for research and writing, setting clear and achievable goals, establishing a distraction-free space for yourself to write, and developing systems of accountability. Specifically, we will examine four aspects that lead to higher levels of academic productivity:

- **Time management:** Providing information for you to make decisions about scheduling writing time, maximizing limited writing time, and working to protect your time from outside incursions.
- **Goal setting:** Understanding useful methods for goal setting and performance tracking to make regular progress on publications.
- **Accountability:** Building external and internal accountability and reward systems into your writing process to keep yourself on track.
- **Space:** Strategizing to create a writing space that is distraction-free and conducive to deep thinking and writing.

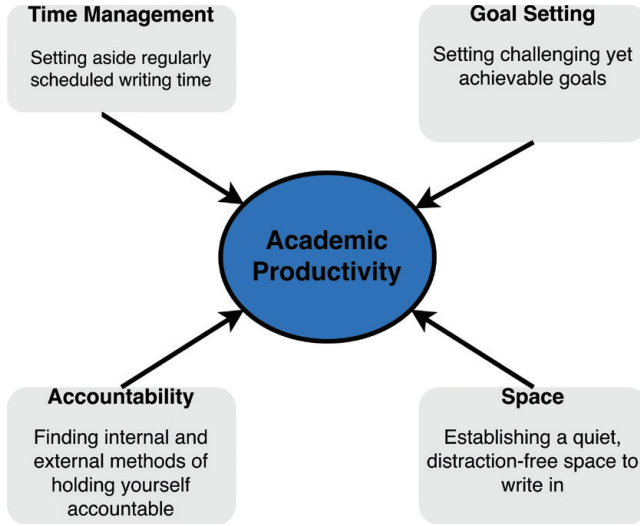

Figure 8.1 Four aspects of academic productivity.

Part II: Expert and Emerging Scholars' Challenges with Time Management

Time management is a continual challenge for both expert and emerging scholars, but in the studies for this book, time management looks different depending on where one is in one's career. We now consider each group in turn.

Emerging Scholars: Three Challenges in Transitioning from Coursework to Independent Writing

A key academic productivity challenge faced by emerging scholars is moving from extrinsic time management, where course deadlines and grades determine their time, to intrinsic time management, including creating their own accountability, setting aside writing time, and setting goals. In other words, while one is still in coursework, their time and goals are largely determined by the faculty teaching the courses, their program structure, and other external factors they don't have a lot of control over. Failure to meet these deadlines has immediate consequences. Further, in most school settings, these kinds of deadlines have been a regular part of your life since you began school—thus, we are all fully socialized into meeting other people's deadlines on tight schedules.

But with the end of coursework or the completion of your degree, the short-term deadlines vanish, and you may be left trying to figure out how to proceed without other people's deadlines or a structure. We can see this shift to independent schedule management as a struggle for many emerging scholars. Gina explains her

independent schedule shift as she describes the difference she sees between writing in coursework and writing for publication: "Because of imposed deadlines versus self-imposed deadlines, I think that the imposed deadlines are much easier for me to adhere to and plan for, because then I can know I need to start this far out. Self-imposed deadlines or deadlines that are semi-wishy-washy are easier for me to schedule over or to not take as seriously. I wasn't going to be graded for this." Yet Gina has a great first experience publishing and that really affirms her commitment to publishing more in line with her identity and values (Chapter 6):

> I think that I like the idea of publishing articles and having those have a wider reach than maybe a book, for example. I think I'm comfortable in this genre. It's changed the way that I've thought about what I want to do or how I want my writing to be out in the world. … Then the thing about intrinsic deadlines. I think that the idea that I want my writing to put forth my values and my commitments, helps motivate me to write. I don't need the deadline from [my advisor] or from a class or anything like that. … it does make me want to sit down and write.

As she describes, Gina's success impacts her time and motivation to take on intrinsic deadlines to continue to publish. Four of the 11 participants specifically articulated that their successful first publication helped motivate them to carve out time to publish more.

A second challenge faced by emerging scholars has to do with the binge writing strategies that graduate student writers often develop in their work (Kellogg, 2006). Coursework has firm time limits and is often done in conjunction with other pressing concerns (teaching, family, etc.). Further, coursework does not always require the deep thought and engagement of professional publications. Binge writing is where projects are written close to the deadline, including the dreaded "all nighter" writing session where the writer stays up all or most of the night to finish before the deadline. Unfortunately, binge writing strategies are not helpful with the kinds of long-term, sustained writing and thinking activity required to transition to a professional scholar. As Silvia (2007) notes, when binge writing is used for professional academic work, it leads to a cycle of procrastination, anxiety and guilt, and an unhealthy relationship with writing.

Emerging scholars in my study rarely used binge writing and reported that they generally avoid it. Only two emerging scholars reported binge writing on early drafts but abandoned the practice later in their publication process when it failed to work for them. In order to publish successfully, all 11 emerging scholars eventually established regular writing practices, set goals, and managed their time effectively. Part of this, of course, is that expert writing processes require the best writing possible, as Emilio describes,

> When I'm a graduate student I can get away with being unlearned in some fashion … I felt like if I was really wrong

> [faculty] would help me and they would correct me and I would be better. But now I feel like I have to really represent and do my full good work upfront. Maybe that yields me dividends that [this article] came accepted first round instead of revision, like R&R. But I feel everything is more stretched, and [the article] would go through processes of feedback and revision.

This "stretched" out nature of the writing for publication process required scholars to regularly engage with their work over a period of months and often years through the techniques described in this chapter: time management, goal setting, space setting, and accountability.

A third challenge for emerging scholars is that nearly all professional academic writing is about adhering to a "long game" strategy rather than achieving more immediate rewards based on shorter timelines in coursework. Emerging scholars often were surprised by how long their publication process took, how much feedback and sustained effort was required to be successful, and the amount of time they had to spend to see their work in print. Wells and Söderlund's (2018) faculty participants talked about the years it often took to see a piece through, and this data is certainly borne out in our discussion of revision trajectories in Chapter 5. Writing a dissertation, book chapter, article, or other scholarly work can often take several years of regular progress and usually has long periods of downtime while you are waiting for someone else to respond. Sustained effort and perseverance are the only way to achieve success. Thus, to successfully transition from extrinsic motivations to intrinsic motivations, developing effective time management strategies for independent work and setting goals is key.

Expert Scholars: Challenges with Carving Out Time

Expert scholars have made the successful transition from graduate students and into full-time working professionals and often with extensive demands on their time: high teaching loads, administrative demands that span beyond the traditional semesters, endless piles of student grading, service obligations, and much more. For these scholars, finding time to write, especially during the regular semester, can be the biggest challenge to their scholarly agenda. All six expert scholars discussed challenges with time management. Only expert scholar Alice, who was now retired, noted that she had ample time in retirement, but never had ample time prior to her retirement.

For example, expert scholar Dan describes how his heavy administrative load in the writing center adds to his time challenges. He oversees the writing center which includes a staff of about 50 people, he also oversees one-credit courses run through the writing center, and he teaches his own courses each term. He notes that he must be focused when he manages to carve away time, "My days are very busy, but I have to be very responsible with the time that I have … so if I get an hour and a half for Pomodoro method, a few times a week, I'm generally pretty focused when I do …

There are some days or some semesters where I've been able to squirrel a whole Thursday." Ryan, who also has substantial administrative work on top of teaching at a 4/4 institution notes that "When I sit down to write … I am putting off grading papers and writing administrative emails and whatever. So, I'm actually writing when I carve out the time to write, it allows me to do the sort of focus."

How Do Successful Scholars Manage Their Writing Time and Schedules?

Given the above challenges, what do expert and emerging scholars do to manage their time and carve out time to write? To examine successful time management, I asked emerging and expert scholars in interviews how they manage their time to be able to publish successfully. For expert scholars, I also reviewed their writing journals and the time they logged in their articles on Google Docs and spoke to them about specific writing sessions and their time management. Both groups identified a wide range of effective techniques in order to manage their time, with emerging scholars employing a wider range of approaches (writing short amounts of time each day, having wordcount goals) while most expert scholars used a writing day or scheduled writing approach and also making use of breaks and times when they did not have as many teaching or administrative obligations. Expert scholars also more frequently described goal setting and using goals as a productivity method. Accountability was often built into the process: setting goals, working under deadlines from special issues or edited collections, working with a co-author or writer's group all allowed scholars to ensure that they continued to write. Some emerging scholars also had the benefit of a writing for publication course, which allowed them to have writing time during coursework and a more structured setting.

Many of the lists in Table 8.2 are self-explanatory. Some follow the conventional wisdom espoused by writing productivity books for regularly scheduled writing time (Silvia, 2007) or writing every day for 15 minutes (Belcher, 2019). We will now consider some of the approaches that warrant more explanation.

Table 8.2 Time Management and Accountability Approaches Employed by Emerging and Expert Scholars

Area	Emerging Scholar	Expert Scholar
Daily Writing: Setting a daily writing goal, usually 15 or 30 minutes a day.	6 / 54%	0
Word Count Goals: Setting a daily or weekly word count goal (anywhere from 500–2500 words). Note that experts used these goals only as a productivity strategy when they needed to return revisions quickly under a deadline. It was otherwise not part of experts' processes.	3 / 27%	2 / 33%

Area	Emerging Scholar	Expert Scholar
Pursuing multiple publication projects: An approach used only by participants (emerging and expert) who were in tenure-track or tenured positions.	3 / 27%	2 / 33%
Writing Retreat: Use of an intensive time away (cabin in the woods, beach); may be tied to family vacation or with other scholars also on a writing retreat.	1 / 9%	1 / 16%
Summer / Break Writing: Intensive periods of writing time without obligations, often daily or multiple times a week spanning several hours.	4 / 36%	6 / 100%
Scheduled Writing Day: One day scheduled during the regular semester each week that is set aside for writing.	1 / 9%	2 / 33%
Scheduled Writing Sessions: Blocks of 1–3 hours scheduled multiple times a week to write.	3 / 27%	6 / 100%
Managing Flexible Schedule: Used by participants with self-disclosed disabilities and/or neurodivergence to make use of hyperfocus and/or disability that impinges upon everyday life.	2 / 18%	0
Co-authorship: Regular meetings and/or writing times scheduled with co-authors for accountability and support.	3 / 27%	1 / 16%
Silent Writing Group: Group of scholars who meet weekly and write together in silence.	2 / 18%	4 / 50%
Writing Support Group: Group of scholars who meet to share goals, offer peer feedback, and provide emotional support.	4 / 36%	3 / 33%
Goal Setting: Setting clear goals for writing sessions or writing projects.	5 / 45%	5 / 83%

Neurodiversity and Time Management

Two emerging scholars who identified as disabled (1) and neurodivergent (1) had a different take on time management. In both of their cases, regularly scheduled writing time was not a strategy that worked for them due to the unpredictability of their conditions. Instead, they developed a flexible schedule with a list of things they had to get done in a week's time. Then as they were having a hyperfocus day or "good" health day, they would use those days to their advantage to write a lot, recognizing things could be shifted to accommodate days that were less focused or problematic in other ways. For example, Sara, with a registered disability and mood disorder, describes her approach:

> I have a registered disability. I have a mood disorder and it makes my energy levels, my energy, my focus, all of those things vary. … I can go from being very hyper-focused and getting just a ton done, where if I tried to stop myself after one or two hours I would lose all that productive energy. There are other days when it's just absolutely a wasted day … I just move stuff around. If I'm having a day where I'm really on it and I'm feeling it, and whoo-hoo, I move stuff from future days. … In my calendar I'll put an F by it for "flexible." That means that if I don't get it done by the seventh, it's not a big deal. I could get it done by the ninth, I could get it done by the 15th.

As Sara shares, being flexible rather than rigid allows her to accomplish the things she needs to accomplish and make progress on publications. Thus, for individuals that are working towards writing for publication who may be neurodiverse, experience periods of hyperfocus, or have chronic illnesses, the flexible schedule approach may be more effective.

Time Management and Parenting/Family Obligations

A number of participants noted the challenges in managing to have small children or other family obligations, and how they had to work to manage their time even more carefully to ensure that their families were also taken care of. For example, expert scholar Heather notes,

> I'll be quite honest; it wasn't until I became a parent that the necessity of understanding how to use your time productively really sunk in. … I get to campus at 6:45 in the morning and I have to be off campus by 2:20 if I'm going to get my son to school on time and then I have teaching and I have meetings. So, I have very specific blocks of time often that are only 45 minutes or an hour long and I had to train myself a long time ago to shut the door, shut out the rest of the world and just focus on that one thing … that's the only way I could get the work done.

For these participants, in addition to making their time productive and counting when they are able to have it, they also mention creating spaces where they can be uninterrupted by children or family. Participants often work around family or children's schedules, which may involve writing very early or late.

Deadlines and Accountability

A key for many scholars is building in external accountability systems to continue to meet writing goals. These same kind of accountability structures are used by many expert writers—with all of them getting support from readers, peers,

editors, and/or writing groups. Thus, accountability is a big part of how many emerging scholars transition from being graduate students in coursework—with built in accountability—to holding oneself accountable. Table 8.1 offers several methods of accountability including co-authorship, writing groups, and word-count goals. We cover accountability more in goal setting, below.

Cultivating the Right Space for Writing Productivity

Another common discussion surrounding time focuses on space. Even if one sets aside the time to write, if the space they are writing in includes ongoing disruption, they cannot get deeply embedded in the writing process or flow state (Chapter 4) and will make little progress.

Cultivating the right space for writing is particularly critical for people who have family obligations, such as emerging scholar Emilio, who is an assistant professor and writing center director. He describes juggling his writing spaces with a family and several young children and his desire to work in an office or coffee shop setting to bolster his productivity,

> As far as allocating space, I think about writing process is it is a space time thing, it's not just what hours or what times can you do it, but in what situation works best … I couldn't work at home because if I worked at home or I worked anywhere near my kids, it was just chaos. … I need to be in a space where I have enough freedom to not have to answer to anybody but I have enough people around me where I feel like if I'm not being productive it feels bad. … But when I'm at least in a situation where there's other people working with me or I can feel pressure from some outside source that say you need to be working, it motivates me at least a little bit.

Expert scholar Stephanie also notes how a change in space at her house once one of her grown children moved out allowed her to have a better space for writing and increased her productivity,

> But we changed his room into a guest room and a third of it, it's a really big room, is my study now. … My writing space before this has been different places. But I knew that if I could just get this space it would help me. I did start writing this article, really start writing it in this dedicated space, and it really helped. I have to say it really helped.

Emilio's comments about writing processes being as much about spaces as they are time and seeing Stephanie's increase in productivity with the change in her space helps illustrate the importance of setting up a conducive space for productive writing.

Setting and Meeting Goals

A critical strategy for productivity that both emerging and expert scholars used was using goal setting in conjunction with setting aside regular writing time. Emerging scholars typically framed goals in terms of individual writing sessions or deadlines, while expert scholars considered their immediate goals in line with their larger research agenda and motivation (Chapter 6).

Brita describes how she uses individual goals in combination with a writing support group to track goals for individual writing sessions:

> I have a spreadsheet. I started a writing group—or we call it an accountability group—with a couple other PhDs in my program. We have our Google spreadsheet that we log in every day and write our different goals and then track whether we met them and how much time we spent or words we wrote or whatever, and then comment on each other, support each other's thing. We've been doing this for a few years now.

Thus, Brita combines goal setting with accountability in her writing group—a combination used by many emerging scholars.

Carrie uses a combination of goals and word counts to manage larger writing tasks, including articles and her dissertation, "I always schedule out my writing. I might do 100 words today, 500 words today, but I set goals with the writing. Week one would be 500 words, week two would be 1,000, three—so, any time if I know I'm reaching 5,000 I'll work backwards and do it in chunks, I guess I'd say, as far as the writing is concerned. …" These kinds of goal setting can help all aspects of the writing process, but especially help when revisions are overwhelming, and you need a step-by-step process.

The Shutdown Ritual: Notes to Your Future Self

A notable technique is described by several writers in the study which involves managing the beginning and end of writing sessions so that you can pick right back up where you left off. This avoids a writer starting at the beginning and excessively re-reading and allows them to jump in immediately. I also noticed this ritual in two of the experts' documents: they would leave notes to themselves at the end of the writing session describing the work that they did that day and what was left to do next. When they opened up the document for the next writing session, they were ablet to immediately dive back in and make good progress.

Emerging scholar Brita calls this her "shutdown ritual." She describes this as follows "I usually also mark in the draft where I want to pick up for the next day, just make a note 'pick up here next time' or that sort of thing. So that I can go immediately to that place the next day." When I ask her why she uses the shutdown ritual, she says, "I feel like it lets my brain shut down … I found it's helpful in letting

me put work aside or that type of work and then be able to think about teaching or whatever else it is that I'm working on without having my brain constantly trying to remind me that I need to do x and to not waste time the next day getting started because I know exactly where I left off or what section I want to pick up on."

Thus, the notes to your future self can be placed in the document itself. Typically, it includes: a short summary of the work that was accomplished in that writing session, a note of where to begin, and a note of what to do in the next writing session.

Building Up Writing Stamina

One of the notable differences between emerging and expert scholars in the list above was that novices often focused on outcomes (500 words, 15 minutes a day) where experts set time aside to make progress on their writing and only two used word counts when working under very tight revision deadlines. The differences might have to do with building up to being an effective and focused writer which is a product, in part, of strained schedules as discussed above—as Ryan described, when he's writing, he's writing because he can't afford to waste that time. This distinction is borne out in interview data. For example, in talking about summer and having potentially more writing time, Gina noted, "I think I thought that I could write more in the days because I had more time, but I recognized after that experience that I just don't have enough gas in the tank, I don't have enough endurance because I haven't worked that way in a very long time, so, I just need to stick with that process. Be slow and steady and I can't do it another way."

Likewise, Wade describes his evolving understanding of writing as being less about wordcount and more about quality content:

> I thought that all I was going to have to do is go one, two, three, four, five, six, and write a thousand words every day and now I got an article and then I send it. Then all I got to do is I send that one and then Monday, I start on the next one. I was like whatever, I can write four articles in a month if I write a thousand words a day, right? … I thought that the process of writing journal articles for publication was 100 percent sitting in the chair at the computer, writing the words and that's all it is.

He then describes that part of it is that you have to do a lot of reading and thinking, which is not accounted for in simple metrics of counting words. He notes,

> But that's not how it works. It's like if you lift weights. If you lift weights, you are going to get up in the morning, you're going to eat eggs or whatever, go to the gym, and you're going to lift weights for maybe an hour and a half. Then you're going to wait two days, go back, and do it again for another hour and a half and you're maybe going to do that three times a week. Then if

> you do that, you'll get really strong … It's the same thing with writing, where if I write 500 words, I know that I can write something thoughtful and focused, and coherent, and clear.

For these scholars, realizing that there are diminishing returns after a set number of hours is important.

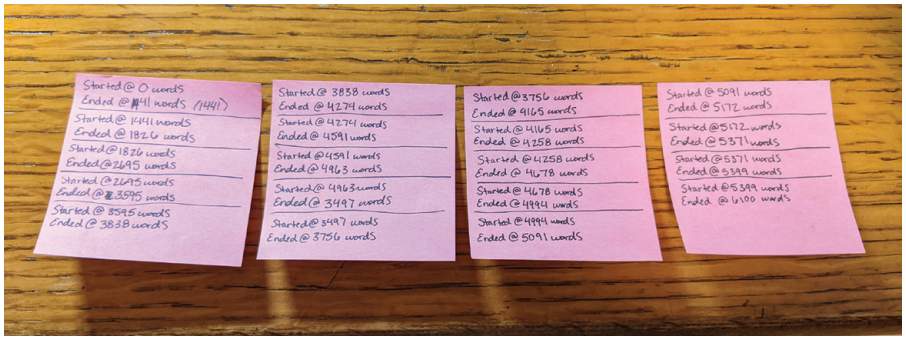

Figure 8.2 Brita's word count sheets for each writing session

Part III: Concepts and Activities for Academic Productivity

Every scholar must create time management strategies that are based on the lived realities of everyday life—navigating complex work, family, and personal demands to carve out time, space, and energy to write. Scholars also describe shifting their time management plans based on life changes such as illnesses, new jobs, or new family members. This leads us to our threshold concept for this chapter:

> ***Threshold Concept:*** *Expert writers engage in sophisticated time management, space management, and goal setting strategies to make regular progress on writing for publication.*

These sophisticated strategies are illustrated through the following key takeaways that help you cross the threshold.

- Emerging scholars struggle with time management especially as they are leaving more structured environments of coursework or graduate school. They need to make a dedicated effort to develop novel time management strategies that are intrinsic and goal-directed.
- Scholars avoid binge writing strategies and find these largely to be unproductive and run counter to effective writing for publication.
- Time management strategies vary based on the scholar and their life and work circumstances. The most common methods used by emerging scholars include committing to daily writing, setting word count goals, an accountability writing group, and reaching out to mentors. Both

emerging and expert scholars employed intensive writing on breaks or during summer, scheduling writing sessions, writing groups, goal setting, and pursuing multiple publication projects.

- Scholars who are neurodivergent or have disabilities often worked with more flexible schedules and movable time blocks to accommodate challenges.
- Those with substantial family obligations found it necessary to create time blocks that were separate, or distraction-free, from family spaces.
- Developing new methods of accountability (such as self-imposed deadlines, co-authorship, wordcount goals, or writing groups) is one of the methods that emerging scholars use to transition from coursework into independent writing.
- All scholars indicated a need to find spaces that were comfortable and disruption-free and managing space is a critical part of academic writing productivity. These spaces varied widely based on the specific life of a scholar. Some found offices and/or homes very conducive to writing while others found them full of external distractions.
- All scholars tracked goals, some individually through tasks lists and using reward systems and some as part of writing accountability groups or other methods.
- An accountability method that is very useful is a "shutdown ritual" where the scholar takes time to make notes on where to start writing to one's future self—this allows a writer to pick back up immediately to save time.
- All scholars recognize that they have certain amounts of time that are the most productive and certain "writing stamina." Even if one has days on end in the summer months, it's not feasible to write ten hours a day productively. Thus, time management is also about managing one's focus and stamina.

Time Management Strategies

A good place to start with developing an academic productivity plan to cross the threshold is to carefully consider—and collect data on—your time and your relationship to time. When you think about your time in a given day, what comes to mind? In one of my co-authored studies of doctoral education (Driscoll et al., 2020), we found that academics were not only overworked and burned out, but they framed their overwork often in terms that indicated a lack of control over their own schedules and lives. In other words, their jobs and commitments were managing them, rather than them managing how they spend their time. While all of us have unavoidable work or school responsibilities, we often have more flexibility than we perceive.

To begin to manage our time successfully, we can begin by understanding our own relationship to time, reframing our relationship to time, and establishing

regular writing time. In this sequence of activities, you can explore your own relationship to time, develop a time management plan, and set goals for yourself.

Activities 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3, later in this chapter, are a sequence of time auditing and planning activities that I teach regularly in my Writing for Publication and Dissertation Writing classes as well as in faculty writing groups that I offer on our campus to help scholars better understand their relationship to time: where they are saving it, where they are wasting it, and how they might carve out time for publication.

Developing a Writing and Accountability Plan

Once you have spent time understanding how you currently spend your time, including examining your attitudes (8.1) and auditing your time (8.2), you are ready to set a plan for your writing. For many people, an important part of carving out the time is to develop a regular writing schedule and create accountability to keep yourself to your schedule. The underlying psychology is simple: when you schedule time to write you get more writing accomplished (Boice, 1990; Kellogg, 2006). This time slot is no different than time set aside to teach, or go to a department meeting, a doctors' appointment, or anything else.

Scheduled writing time is the single most important thing for writing productivity. As you continue to create space for regular writing time, the writing becomes habituated and something you just do regularly. You sit down at your allotted time and write, just like you come to your class at the allotted time and teach or attend meetings at the allotted time they are scheduled. And you protect that time at all costs; you are unavailable during your writing time just as you would be unavailable during your teaching time.

As we've also explored, this approach is less helpful for people who are neurodiverse, have a disability, have a chronic health condition where they may have good or bad days, or others who have significant and ongoing life disruptions. For these individuals, creating a flexible set of slots each week (using the process Sara described above) that can be moved around based on good or bad days may be more effective.

Here are a few approaches that expert writers in my study have found that work. I also supplement these approaches with that of Tulley (2018) who interviewed writing experts. As you are developing your own regularly scheduled writing time, you might want to try a few different approaches until you find the one that works for you, your schedule, and allows for optimal productivity.

Write every day. The approach advocated by Belcher (2019) is to write for at least 15 minutes a day, and many scholars use this successfully. Advocates of this practice often cite waking up early and getting in regularly scheduled writing time before going to campus, not scheduling meetings before 10 a.m., or writing each evening after family goes to sleep.

Schedule two (or more) writing sessions each week. Scheduling at least two weekly writing periods is another approach that works for many. Some people

choose to use their nights and weekends for this work, while others prefer to schedule writing time while on campus (with their door shut). In my study with expert writers, as well as teaching graduate level publishing classes, most writers find that for complex writing tasks (such as engaging in drafting, building arguments, complex data analysis, revision from peer review) a larger chunk of time is helpful, around two to four hours. With that said, small bits of progress can be made even in shorter amounts of time, especially when using goal setting strategies (see the second part of this chapter).

Schedule a writing day. A writing day is one day a week that is dedicated to your writing. On writing days, you don't regularly check your email, schedule meetings, or schedule any other obligations—you simply write. This is the approach that many of the writers in my study used—they found a non-teaching day where they did not have to be on campus, and where they could dedicate at least five hours to dedicated writing time. This is also the approach that I've used successfully throughout my entire career—and it was how this book was written and how I've published over 60 peer-reviewed articles.

S**et daily or weekly goals.** Setting daily or weekly goals for time spent (recommended) or wordcount can also help you make regular progress, particularly as an emerging scholar working to build a longer-term writing practice. Some writers use a program to track their wordcount or other apps to track their progress.

The above approaches except the last one assume that you are working to make progress on writing during regular semesters. If you find that you are most productive on breaks, it is likely that you could develop two writing schedules: a less time-intensive schedule during the regular term and a more intensive schedule for writing on breaks. Once you have developed your writing schedule, test it out for a few weeks. See what works and adjust accordingly.

The final thing is to build accountability and rewards into your schedule: how will you keep to your schedule, and what social supports (writing groups, readers, deadlines, etc.) will you use to keep you on track? Accountability is different for everyone—some people need a much stronger external accountability while others need less accountability and focus more on the intrinsic rewards of writing. External accountability may come in the form of writing partners, writing groups, or co-authors–someone who you can check in regularly with and set deadlines (Chapter 9). Internal accountability can be setting up rewards for yourself when you've completed tasks. These can be small things: the joy of crossing out all of the goals on your list, treats, a short break when you finish a task, or even larger rewards for completing larger projects.

Why Writing Schedules Work

Why is carving out writing time each week the most effective way for most people to be successful as professional academic writers? The following are four benefits that you get by using the writing schedule approach:

Avoiding binge writing. Binge writing (Kellogg, 2006) is when short deadlines, being overwhelmed, and procrastination lead to intensive, long, and sometimes overnight writing sessions before deadlines. The only time I saw binge writing with expert writers was for two "quick turnaround" pieces where experts already had a full draft and needed to make revisions in a short period of weeks to meet a deadline of an edited collection, but noted that this approach was largely unhealthy and could create an adversarial relationship with writing. Hence, I do not recommend this approach. Most importantly, binge writing does not lead to a happy or productive writing life. It can take time for you to establish a new pattern if this has been something you have done often, but you can make this change successfully—and many emerging scholars in this study did!

Developing new ideas. Discussion of composing styles and writing to learn (Chapter 2), combined with Robert Boice's (1990) research clearly illustrates why regularly scheduled writing time works. Boice asked academic writers to write under one of three conditions: 1) to regularly schedule time; 2) to write "spontaneously" as they felt inspired; 3) and finally, to not write unless they had to. He looked at these writers' productivity after a month and found that those who regularly scheduled writing had more creative ideas and wrote more pages per day than those who either waited for inspiration to strike or that didn't actively write. From Chapter 2, we know that many writers need writing itself to develop ideas and thinking. This research is clear: regularly scheduled writing not only leads to more productivity; it also leads to the generation of more new ideas. Since novelty is such a critical factor of academic publishing, this finding should not be lightly disregarded. Regularly scheduled writing time not only leads to more productive writing but better ideas about writing, which will lead to higher quality publications.

Productivity. Further, Boice's (1990) research on writing practices of faculty demonstrates that people who schedule writing time write more pages per day than those who wait for inspiration to strike (or don't actively write at all). This is supported by my study of expert writers; those who scheduled writing time, particularly when combined with other forms of accountability such as co-authors or writing groups (see Chapter 9) finished their work months or years before those who did not use scheduled writing time or other accountability strategies.

Cultivating a healthy relationship with writing. A final reason that writing schedules work was expressed by the expert writers in my study: regular writing schedules allow for a reduction of binge writing, guilt, and stress associated with not writing or not writing regularly. Tulley (2018) notes the importance of enjoyment of both the process of writing and the works that are produced for senior scholars who write. By funding our own way into a process that we can enjoy and be successful with, we can cultivate lifelong writing habits.

Overcoming Time Management Challenges

At this point, if you've worked through activities 8.1, 8.2, and/or 8.3, you should

not only understand yourself but also have a great plan for your time management—these are fantastic steps. What can go wrong? More than you might think! Life has a tendency to get into the way. We'll now explore some of the challenges that you may face with regards to time management and meeting your writing goals—and what to do about it.

Saying no and protecting writing time. Protecting your writing time is a very serious challenge that you will always face—and one that can be quite formidable, especially if you are in an administrative position or have family or other responsibilities. Damon Zahariades (2017) notes that saying "yes" always is an ingrained habit that we learn to please others, to avoid offending others, to avoid disappointing others, or to appear helpful, valuable, or likeable. Zahariades argues that saying yes constantly means that we cannot carve out time for our own projects and interests—or our own writing time. Learning to say no is empowering in that it allows us to reserve the time we need to meet our goals.

Habituated practice. The goal of regularly scheduled writing time is creating productive writing habits. You should keep your regularly scheduled writing time as routine as you can. Habits are actions that are performed repeatedly, automatically, and consistently (Lally & Gardner, 2013). Research on habit formation has four steps: a decision to act, acting, repeating the action over time, and engaging in repeated actions in a way to encourage the habit to become automatic (Lally & Gardner, 2013). Research demonstrates that it can take anywhere from 18–254 days to successfully "automate" habits (not the 21 days that is commonly assumed) (Lally et al., 2010). One issue to watch out for is what researchers call the "intention-behavior gap," where you decide to act but never take action (or fail to continue to act) over time. Some suggestions to habituate your writing schedule over time include setting up your writing schedule for the entire semester, writing always on the same day and time, building in rewards for your regularly scheduled writing time, and building in contingencies if you fail.

Starting small. One of the reasons that many of the emerging scholars use word count or time goals (e.g., 15 minutes a day) is because this approach takes some of the intimidation out of writing. Thus, if the idea of a whole writing day or even a few hours of writing time in a block seems intimidating, start small and work your way into larger chunks of writing time. Amal, who is a multilingual scholar with dyslexia and identifies as neurodiverse, describes how helpful this 15 minute a day process was for her:

> I used to be a procrastinator, not anymore, because of the organization, penning everything down, making lists … my dissertation director gave me a really good tip. It's the 15 minutes a day. Sometimes it works, sometimes I find myself writing or working on something for three hours. But if I get myself to think 15 minutes a day is nothing and I can do it, it's very easy. It's not 20 minutes, it's not 30 minutes, it's just 15 minutes. I can

do it. I find myself sitting there and working for 45 minutes or 50 minutes. This helps.

Avoiding spinning your wheels. Effective bridging between writing sessions. One of the challenges that people face with any writing approach is keeping the writing fresh in your mind. Scholars employed a range of strategies for keeping things fresh:

- Writing on the project a small amount each day, even if it's only for a short amount of time
- Re-reading previous drafts (although some note this is dangerous if they begin revising and never getting to new work)
- Reviewing previous goals and tasks at the beginning of the session, making progress, and then developing a new task list for next session. Often, this involves a "shutdown ritual" where a writer makes brief or extensive notes to oneself during the last five to 10 minutes of a writing session. Then, the next time the writer has a writing session, they can read those notes of previous progress, they can immediately dive back into where they were.

These are, in essence, the "quick focus" strategies described by Tulley's (2018) senior scholars in writing in short chunks.

Managing Your Energy Levels for Writing and Pacing Yourself

Managing energy levels was a major theme among many emerging scholars—because these writers were grappling with unique problems and creating new human knowledge, doing their writing when they were at peak mental energy was critical. This included both exploring the "macro" aspects of this—when are you at your peak in terms of writing? But also employing various productivity techniques (like the Pomodoro method) and eliminating distractions to ensure that writing sessions were as productive as possible.

Deciding when to write. To make the most of your own energy levels and writing time, it is best to schedule your writing sessions when you are at "peak" timing when possible. Everyone has hours that are most focused and productive—and writers in the study were very aware of exactly when they could be the most productive. For some people, that might be in the morning, for others midday, or others, late at night or on a weekend. Still others worked around the demands of family and children, making time when they were at school, or sleeping late at night.

Even if you schedule your writing day at your peak time, invariably, some writing sessions you may find yourself with more energy and focus than others. Even if you are not at your peak, you should still sit down to write. But in this session, rather than tackling revisions, drafting, data analysis, or other writing

activities that require peak performance, shift your focus to things that you can successfully do to still make your session productive: checking and updating your references, reading and summarizing texts, or copyediting a manuscript.

Further, because our lives also follow academic calendars, it's also important to recognize the cycle of peak time and burnout time likely ebb and flow around how close you are to finals week. For most academics, the beginning of the semester is less hectic and demanding than the end, so as you are working on your goal setting and time management plans for the semester, you might prioritize tasks that require more focus and energy towards the beginning of the term when you are fresh and have more energy than at the end. This is also why many people find that their most productive writing time is on breaks or near the beginning of the semester.

Using the Pomodoro method. Another method mentioned by four writers in the study was employing the standard Pomodoro technique or a modified version of the Pomodoro method). The Pomodoro method (Cirillo, 2018), in its standard form, uses a 25-minute intensive work session with a five-minute break, and then after four "Pomodoro's," one takes a longer 15–30-minute break. Dan describes using a modified Pomodoro method where he does a 45-minute block with a five to 10-minute break and then does another Pomodoro round. If you find yourself tiring easily, try building in more breaks (including those where you allow for mind wandering and incubation time, see Chapter 2).

Setting Up Your Writing Space

A final aspect of writing time is figuring out where to write to be successful and free of distractions. Here are some considerations:

- **Find a space where people are not going to bother you or where you will not be physically distracted.** This may be your home, your office, a library, a coffee shop, and so forth. Many busy academics may not be able to write in their offices as people constantly stop by. Others may be unable to write at home because of family. Thus, they go elsewhere—a local library, a coffee shop, etc. One writer even discussed finding a spot between work and home, setting up a hammock, and writing for two hours in the woods on warm days. Do whatever it takes for you to have a distraction free space!
- **Manage your virtual and e-distractions.** Once you have your physical space setup, do whatever it takes to eliminate virtual distractions. This can mean turning off your internet and phone, turning off your email client, and so forth.
- **Getting others to support your writing time.** Writing space and time may be a negotiation between other members of your family, your students, or your colleagues. If you are writing at home, have conversations and/or negotiate with your family to ensure that they respect your time.

- **Establish and explore writing rituals.** Another thing that many writers do to support their writing space, which we explored extensively in Chapter 4, is to have various rituals that help get them into the mood to write. As I am writing this, I am listening to my favorite instrumental post-rock soundtrack that I use for revision. Consider what writing rituals will help you to get into the flow and focus but also that may make your writing experience more enjoyable.
- **Set up your space to your liking.** Consider having things on your walls that may encourage you, a task board, encouraging sayings, or the like. Even if you write at a coffee shop, you can have a piece of paper or small figure you bring with you that helps you focus and helps set your writing vibe. These are small things, but they can make a difference—and many writers swear by them!

Developing Your Goals and Tasks

Now that we have an understanding of time management and have a solid writing plan, we can turn to the other major part of academic productivity management: setting and meeting goals. Setting and meeting goals helps you make the most of your regularly scheduled writing time and keeps you on track, especially for activities that take extended time, like writing for publication. Nearly all writers worked with goals in some fashion, depending on the writer and their expertise, goals may have been more explicit and specific or more general. Part of this is based on their working style and part on their level of expertise—so you may find that your goals and tasks will shift as you gain expertise.

Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham (1990) synthesized over 400 studies on goals and goal setting, focusing specifically on what helped people achieve their goals vs. what made them fail at meeting their goals. Their research suggests that goals have a few key features, and understanding these features can help you set realistic and meetable goals.

Setting specific goals. What do I want to accomplish? According to Locke and Latham (1990), vague goals which do not clearly specify success are less useful than specific goals which specify clearly what is to be accomplished. A vague academic five-year goal might be: "build my reputation as a scholar." While this is a worthy goal, it doesn't necessarily give you a clear trajectory to meet the goal and it doesn't really have clear outcomes. More specific goals might instead be, "publish two articles" or "give a research presentation on my campus."

Assessing the intensity of goals. Can I do this? The second feature that Locke and Latham (1990) describe about goals is their intensity—how difficult it is to meet your goal. It is very demoralizing if you are continually setting goals that you cannot meet. It's also important to note that an easy goal for one person may be difficult or impossible for another. They indicate that the harder a specific goal is, the higher the performance, so setting challenging or difficult goals for

yourself can increase your performance. If you do not set goals, or you set vague goals, performance doesn't increase, however. The key here is setting goals that are both challenging and attainable.

Setting goals based on time. When do I write next? Another way to think about goals in line with Wells and Söderlund's (2018) study is using time as your main goal. In other words, once you have some experience with writing, you might set aside regular writing time and then select projects to work on based on deadlines or other interests. This is what expert scholars in my study largely did—they set time goals and then allowed the work to flow into those goals. For emerging scholars, however, more specific goals can be extremely motivating; this practice was typically used by more experienced scholars with years of publication experience.

Setting goals based on word count. How much can I write? Over half of the emerging scholars used word count goals, which were also used by expert scholars during intensive revision processes. Goals for word count may be a useful productivity strategy, but, given the amount of people who engage in discovery processes, I would use this strategy with the caveat that you may need to write your way into understanding, and thus, much of the original word count you produce may end up being heavily revised and/or saved for other projects.

Differentiating between goals, objectives, and tasks. Finally, goals, objectives, and tasks differ. Goals are long-term achievements, or the big accomplishments listed on your CV. For most academics, goals would include things like completing chapters of one's dissertation, having a publication in print, or successfully completing teaching a new class. Objectives are smaller accomplishments that help us achieve a goal. You might think about these like milestones—if your goal is to publish an article, getting a section of that article done is an objective towards that goal. Finally, tasks are specific small things we can do to help us meet objectives—these might be tasks that we can accomplish within a single writing session or day.

Estimating time. Time can be really difficult to estimate, and we can see from Carrie's description above that a lot of her time management comes from estimating how long it will take her to write. This is a critical thing for success in writing: both in being able to somewhat constrain certain tasks to certain time and being able to estimate the time tasks will take. A level of experience is necessary to start being able to estimate how long it will take you to do certain tasks. Part of this is your own writing style and pace, but part of this just comes with experience. Keep good notes and you'll see in time that your ability to estimate and budget time effectively can keep you on track. Working to constrain time spent also allows you not to veer too far off course of your goal (such as the common problem where someone may spend 12 months reading articles and not writing).

Planning on a weekly basis. Weekly planning here is also critical. After seeing what you have accomplished, you can take time to revisit the tasks, goals, and objectives each week. Expect to spend about ten minutes a week on this, which is

time extremely well spent. By placing constraints upon your work and time, you will make progress because you will be forced to make progress.

While goal, objective, and task setting does take some time, it allows you to stay extremely focused on your work and make good progress with writing. The other reason it works is that it gives you clear direction and helps to prevent you from being overwhelmed with the number of things you must do—such that you may not do anything at all. This kind of planning eliminates the "wheel spinning" activity that can suck away precious hours of research time each day that plague many emerging scholars.

Making goals visible. The goal board and task list. A final thing that is helpful for emerging scholars is to put your goals somewhere where you can regularly see them, interact with them, and revise them. Some have found it helpful to use a whiteboard. Others find that a digital file is a better choice. Still others build them directly into a calendar or place them as sticky notes around their writing space. The important thing is that you make your goal board visible and integrate it into your workspace. Additionally, you will want to develop a way to manage your tasks, goals, and objectives so that you can interact with them and revise them regularly. Some writers prefer to use an app or calendar program, while others prefer written lists. Develop something that is easy to maintain and that keeps you accountable.

When Time Management and Goal Setting Fail: Getting Back on the Horse

The best laid plans can be disrupted by life. Family emergencies, additional administrative or teaching responsibilities, and unforeseen events can arise, putting your plans in jeopardy. Of course, there's also major disruptions like hurricanes, pandemics, and other major catastrophes that radically shift many people's daily work and family lives and add considerable professional responsibilities. All of the writers in my study experienced a considerable drop in their writing due to the emotional, cognitive, and physical challenges present during the pandemic. Because I collected data both before and during the global pandemic, I was able to see people functioning both in terms of "normal" semesters and trying to make progress during a globally disrupted time. But disruptions don't have to be global; they can be local, specific to you or your family. Participants offered a range of options for how they were addressing disruptions:

Recognizing that disruptions happen and that they are OK. A big part of getting back to regularly scheduled writing was saying "this happened, and it is OK" rather than beating oneself up over guilt. Guilt about what you think you should be doing or haven't done doesn't serve you. Let go of the guilt, shrug your shoulders and move on. This practice works for both small and larger disruptions. Participants who were most successful were able to say, "it is OK" and move on when they were ready. One of my colleagues likes to say we need to "give ourselves grace" and I think that applies here.

Finding a new pattern. When life circumstances change, sometimes our goals and time management plans must necessarily change as well. Develop a new writing plan based on your current reality, even if it is reduced from what you had hoped you'd achieve. It might help to go back to the earlier exercises in this chapter.

Finding support and accountability. Take on a co-author on a project, form a writing group, or find some external support to help you stay accountable, particularly in difficult circumstances.

Starting small. For significant life disruptions, particularly when there is considerable emotional challenge, getting back to your work all at once might be too big of a leap. One of the writers in my study took her writing day by day, carving out time when she could, and eventually was able to establish a regular writing practice again. What helped her was staying "in the moment" and not feeling like she had the pressure to accomplish too much.

Activity 8.1: Your Relationship with Time

How do you currently frame your relationship with time? Consider the following questions and how you respond individually (or discuss in small groups or with a partner).

- What is my current relationship to time?
- Do I feel like I have enough time?
- Is my relationship to time positive or negative?
- How do I talk about my time and schedule with others?
- Do I feel I have agency with regards to how I spend my time?

Paying attention to how you talk about time can be a very positive first step. Some people feel like they are out of control of their time, and they often speak of time or schedule issues about things that always happen to them (and certainly, there are times in our lives where this is true, but not always). By taking control of your time and claiming agency over your own time, you can break through this and begin to form a healthier relationship with time. If you find yourself framing your relationship with time in negative terms or indicate a lack of agency, the next activity might be very useful to you.

Activity 8.2: Self-Study and Time Audit

The second activity asks you to do a self-study of your time and how you spend it, monitoring your time management for two weeks of a regular semester. When I teach writing for publication, this is one of the single most helpful activities students say they do in the course.

For this activity you will create a log—an accurate portrayal down to the minute if possible—of how you spend your time. I recommend you log your time for

at least one week during the regular semester, although two weeks is often a more complete picture. For this activity, it is best to choose one or two typical weeks (e.g., somewhere around the mid-point of the semester). You can also repeat this activity when you are on break to see the difference. See the Digital Resources on this book's home page (https://wacclearinghouse.org/books/practice/expert) for a time log that you can use as part of this activity.

1. *Keep detailed track of how you spend your time.* Keep notes as carefully as you can, accounting not only for planned blocks of time, but for the five minutes you jump on social media or other distractions.
2. *Keep track of how you spend your time on your computer.* Select a productivity application that will track how you spend your time on your computer.[10] One of the most important things to track is your time on your computer and phone, as that time can be where we have many "invisible" time drains. Thus, you want this activity to offer as complete and accurate of a picture as possible, so take the extra step to log your time on your phone and computer.
3. *Keep track of how you spend your time on your phone or other handheld devices.* Many newer models of phones will automatically log and report your time. If not, use one of many apps to do so.[11]
4. *After two weeks, use the summary chart, phone logger, and computer logger to see how you've spent your time.* Calculate this in minutes and hours.
5. *Reflect on the time audit and consider:*
    a. Where are the areas where you are wasting the most time? What can be condensed and/or eliminated?
    b. What are your best hours of productivity?
    c. How much writing time did you have this week? Is that sufficient? Is it at "peak" hours for your performance?
    d. How are you managing work-life balance?
    e. Where are the time sinks, or time wastes, that you might want to limit?

In the years that I've used this activity in teaching Writing for Publication and dissertation writing courses at the doctoral level, writers learn a great deal about themselves. They often learn that their "work" hours are full of distractions, from social media or other time sucks, adding up to hours of wasted time per week. They often learn that administrative or teaching work is often not well contained and even when they try to contain it, it bleeds outward. And they often learn that they have unconscious rituals or time sinks (like 45 minutes of news reading in the morning)—that can be co-opted for more productive writing time. They may

10. At the time of writing, a good program was RescueTime: www.rescuetime.com.

11. At the time of writing, TimeDoctor was a good app for IOS and Android: https://www.timedoctor.com/

learn that although they are putting many hours in, the distractions are preventing them from being deeply focused (e.g., checking email and responding in the middle of writing time, family distractions, etc.).

Another thing that sometimes comes up with this activity is our relationship with self-care and non-academic time spent. Writers may also be tempted to think that self-care activities (hygiene, sleep) or time with family, are not "productive" time, but we are most productive when we are rested, not stressed, and energized—this allows us to be creative and generate good ideas (Chapter 2) and enter flow states (Chapter 4). I will stress here—it is ok to have a life, to take care of yourself, to get eight hours of sleep, and to spend time with your family. The idea that you should always be working (academic guilt) is closely tied to imposter syndrome, anxiety, and other issues that we explored in Chapter 7. Allowing yourself time, space, and meaningful time away from academic pursuits allows you to be a happier, healthier, and more functional academic. I can't stress this enough—you should not, and do not, need to be working all the time. This leads to burnout.

As you do this activity, consider not only what you learned about yourself and how you spend your time, but also your attitudes towards time and work-life balance.

The next step in this process is to create a time management plan for yourself. In this time management plan, you should include where and when you will regularly write, how you will handle incursions upon your writing time, and any other goals or behaviors you might want to address with the time management plan. We'll now consider how to do this in depth.

Activity 8.3: Setting Your Writing Schedule and Plan

Now that you understand your time, your relationship with time, and why a writing schedule matters, spend some time scheduling out for at least the next two months:

1. Schedule regular writing time each week and/or make a to-do list for a more flexible schedule. Put this into your schedule, just like teaching or other appointments.
2. Develop some form of accountability for your writing plan (e.g., check in with a friend or yourself, writing group, goals (see below).
3. Develop rewards for yourself as part of your regular writing time.

Activity 8.4: Writing Focus Experiments

Over the next few writing sessions you have, experiment with various kinds of writing focus experiments to see what may be most useful to you. Don't assume you know what will work already but give yourself a chance to explore. You might consider:

- **Different locations**. How does certain locations (your office, your bedroom, a coffee shop) impact your ability to write and focus? What works best?
- **Different music or silence.** Try some different kinds of music—for most people it needs to be something repetitive, familiar, or instrumental. Some favorites include classical instrumental music, video game music, lo-fi, ambient music, or post-rock. You can create your own soundtracks or build playlists.
- **Different writing rituals.** Try a range of rituals around writing—things that make you comfortable and look forward to your writing time. You might even get special treats, rewards, or foods to bring in.
- **Different times of day.** Try writing late or early and see how that may change your focus.
- **Try Pomodoro.** Give the Pomodoro method (or modified Pomodoro) a try and see how it works for you. Set your timer for 45 minutes, eliminate distractions, and then take a 15-minute break.

Once you've done some experimenting, consider building in whatever permanent changes for things that are working.

Activity 8.5: Setting Your Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

Take some time to develop goals for yourself for an immediate writing project. What do you want to accomplish? What is the timeline that you might accomplish this? Let your goals "rest" for a day or a few hours and return to them and review. Once you are satisfied, break those goals down into objectives and then, setup your tasks for your regularly scheduled writing days for the next two weeks. Make sure you integrate plenty of ways of rewarding yourself as part of this process.