# Academic Time Management

Jason Scott, Associate Professor

Kinesiology, Recreation & Sport Studies, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

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# Stretch!



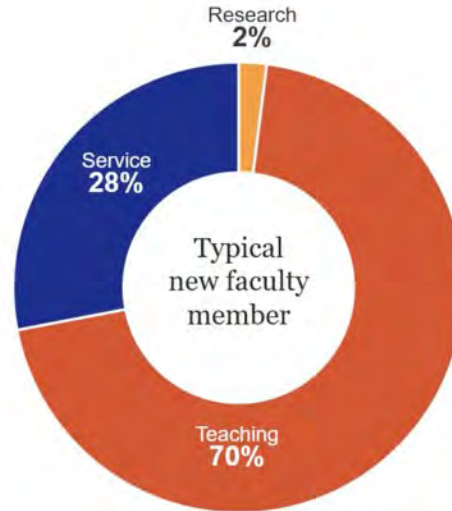Movement and
Time Management

# Tabletop Discussion

- What are your biggest challenges with time management?
- What strategies have you tried to better manage your time?

# Agenda

1. Aligning time and expectations
2. Clarifying your inner game
3. Understanding what's holding you back

# Aligning Time and Expectations



Criteria for tenure & promotion:
- Service 10%
- Teaching 20%
- Research 70%

Typical new faculty member:
- Research 2%
- Service 28%
- Teaching 70%

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For TTF, the most important activity related to your promotion, professional reputation, and future mobility has no built-in accountability.

**Activity**: Take a couple of minutes to draw your own ring of responsibilities for your role.

**Homework**: Talk with your mentor and/or department head about what your ring of responsibilities should look like.

# Clarify your Inner Game



**Ask yourself:**

**Who am I?
What do I want?**

**Where do I want to be in 5 years?**

*Everything else flows from here…*

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# Inner Game Drives Outer Game

| INNER GAME | OUTER GAME |
|---|---|
| I'm operating in a political environment where decisions are not entirely objective | I *invest* time each week in cultivating positive relationships with my colleagues |
| I must be highly productive AND well-respected by my colleagues | I *create* a strategic plan, *discuss* it with mentors, and *seek* their ongoing support and feedback |
| Publishing my research is my top professional priority | I *write* for at least 30 minutes every day, first thing in the morning – no excuses |
| In order to play at the next level, I have to step up my game | I *learn* and *implement* best practices for new faculty productivity |
| I am clear what activities are (and are not) part of my priorities | I *say "no"* often, without guilt, and with tremendous grace and clarity |

# Inner Game Drives Outer Game

| INNER GAME | | OUTER GAME |
|---|---|---|
| I'm operating in a political environment where decisions are not entirely objective | ≠ | I *hope* that if I just do good work everything will turn out okay |
| I must be highly productive AND well-respected by my colleagues | ≠ | I *self-isolate* and *assume* that my annual review will speak for itself |
| Publishing my research is my top professional priority | ≠ | I *hope* that I'll find the time to write during breaks and over the summer |
| In order to play at the next level, I have to step up my game | ≠ | I *cling* to the idea that the habits that got me through grad school will continue to work on the tenure track |
| I am clear what activities are (and are not) part of my priorities | ≠ | I *over-function* on service and teaching |

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# Understanding What's Holding You Back

| Technical Errors | Psychological Blocks | External Realities |
|---|---|---|
| When you are missing some relevant skill or technique (these are the easiest to fix!). | The deeper issues that underlie our resistance to writing. | Situations or environmental factors that are beyond your control. |
| For example:<br><br>haven't set aside time to write or set aside the wrong time, underestimate the time writing tasks take, disorganization, lack of planning time, etc. | For example:<br><br>perfectionism, fear of failure/success, imposter syndrome, unclear goals, disempowerment around writing, etc. | For example:<br><br>moving, birth, illness, death, unexpected caregiving, health problem limits energy, etc. |

# Technical Errors

## E-MAIL IS MAKING US MISERABLE

*In an attempt to work more effectively, we've accidentally deployed an inhumane way to collaborate.*

Cal Newport

- The longer one spends on email in a given hour the higher is one's stress for that hour.
- People answered emails more quickly when under stress but with less care.
- High information and communication technology demands were associated with suboptimal health outcomes.

- A frenetic approach to professional collaboration generates messages faster than you can keep up—you finish one response only to find that three more have arrived in the interim, and, while you are at home at night, or over the weekend, or when you are on vacation, you cannot escape the awareness that the missives in your in-box are piling up ever thicker in your absence.

Improvisational vs. Deep Work

# Technical Errors



How long does it really take to do something?
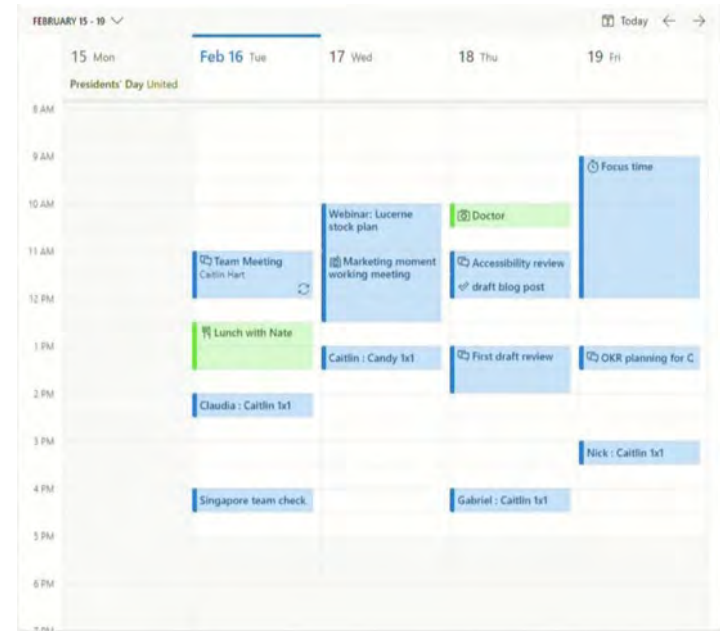


How do we describe and label our work?
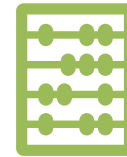
# Technical and Psychological

**No clearly formulated plan**
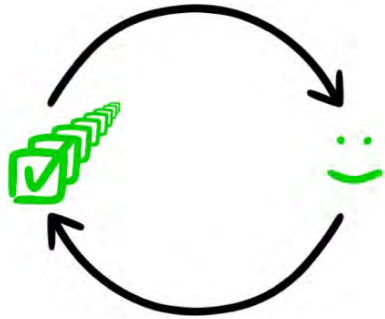
Consider: Research syllabus for the semester

**No accountability**

Consider: Weekly goals and checks, accountability groups

**More is not Better**

# Psychological

- Feedback loops and positive reinforcement
- Cognitive dissonance and staying true to your values
- Other (psychological and emotional) needs driving our decisions and capturing our attention
  - Gratification: What am I getting out of procrastination?
  - Constant comparison: Is that person doing better than me?

# External Realities

# Tabletop Discussion



- How do you relate to what you just heard?

- What are some possibilities?

# Conclusion (Reality)

- Academic time management is hard!

- Your ability to do this is one of the key elements to success in your role.

- Never give-up:  Keep trying until you find what works for you.

# Work hard, play hard

Exploring the relationships among work-life balance, conflict, enrichment, and family leisure

# Thank you!

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