

JAN. 17-21, 2022

TA INSTITUTE


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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology


institute.cltl.ubc.ca

Time Management for TAs



Feel free to reach out if you
have questions or would
like to chat more about
time management!

Tiera Naber (she/hers)
tnaber@eoas.ubc.ca
2022 TA Institute
January 19th, 3:00 - 4:30 PM



Agenda

- Introductions and disclaimers
- Review session goals
- Set up our personal worksheet
- Discuss SMART goals
- Prioritization activity
- Procrastination activity
- Guide to scheduling
- Create personal actionable goals
- Question and answer session
- Summary and feedback survey



Welcome!

Your facilitator:

Tiera Naber (she/hers), MSc Student, EOAS Department, Lead Grad Facilitator at CTLT

Yourself:

- Introduce yourself to your peers in the chat (name, pronouns, department).
- Feel free to share your pronouns on your Zoom name. Simply right-click your display, and click “Rename”.

Mental Health Resources from UBC

- [Counselling Services](#)
- [Student Health Service](#)
- [UBC Centre for Accessibility](#)
- [MindHealthBC](#)
- [IBPOC Wellness Mentors](#)
- [Sexual Violence Prevention Response Office](#)
- Enroll in [Wellness Centre: Online Canvas Course](#)



TA Union

- We are offering advice from the perspective of graduate students at UBC, and are not interpreting the TA Collective Agreement in this session.
- If you have any questions about the [CUPE 2278](#) Collective Agreement as a TA, please contact your department Union Representative. If you're unsure who your Union Rep is, please contact CUPE 2278 directly (president@cupe2278.ca).

WHAT YOU WANT

feel more in control

less procrastination

have more free time

Have some leisure time

to be more intentional with my time management

better strategies

stronger motivation to achieve the goal
Learn priorities

Office hours/
marking exams

Designing assignments

leading labs, marking, office hours

Grading assignments, attending lectures, office hours, replying to students

Doing my assignments
doing the housework

handling my job-related tasks office hours

help students with their problems

Marking, office hours, attending lectures

TA DUTIES

preparing course materials

research

CURRENT TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

daily to do lists

Liberal use of Google Calendar

Time blocking for specific tasks
Prioritize thesis work as it can be done in less time

Google calendar Phone and fit bit
using reminders with iCalendar reminder

don't procrastinate
setti

Calendar/to do list

to do lists organized by day

Roam Research
Overall priority list to be reviewed weekly
check list for different 'departments'

Go to counselling

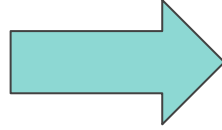


Goals for this session

- Set goals for TA work during the semester according to “SMART” guidelines
- Apply prioritization decision techniques in planning and balancing your TA and research work
- Apply scheduling techniques and resources to plan your TA work
- Manage your own expectations of yourself and others’ expectations of you

Managing expectations!

Download the [provided Google Doc](#) sheet OR grab a piece of paper and a writing utensil.



At the top of your page, answer the following questions:

- How many hours per week are you allotted for your TA/RA position?
- What tasks are involved in your regular weekly TA/RA duties and approximately how long does each take?

TA work - 12 hours/week

Marking - 4 hours

Attending lecture - 3 hours

Office hours - 1 hour

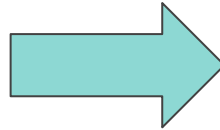
Leading tutorial - 2 hours

Uploading Canvas materials - 2 hours

Reflect on your ability to do these tasks and balance them within your other commitments (research, personal, social, health, etc.)

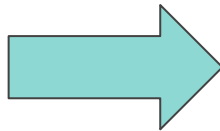
Identify:

- Your time management strengths
- Your time management weaknesses



<i>TA work - 12 hours/week</i>		<i>Marking - 4 hours</i>
<i>Attending lecture - 3 hours</i>		<i>Office hours - 1 hour</i>
<i>Leading tutorial - 2 hours</i>		<i>Uploading Canvas materials - 2 hours</i>
<i>Time Management Strengths:</i>		<i>Time Management Weaknesses:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Multi-tasking (can mark assignments and watch Netflix at the same time)</i>- <i>I make tutorial lesson plans in advance</i>- <i>I am organized and colour-coded</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>I procrastinate</i>- <i>Attending lecture and leading tutorial conflicts with my in-lab research time</i>- <i>Most of my TA work is done around midnight</i>

Use this space as we move through the workshop to take notes for yourself, highlight techniques and strategies that might work for you, and record any outstanding questions you may have



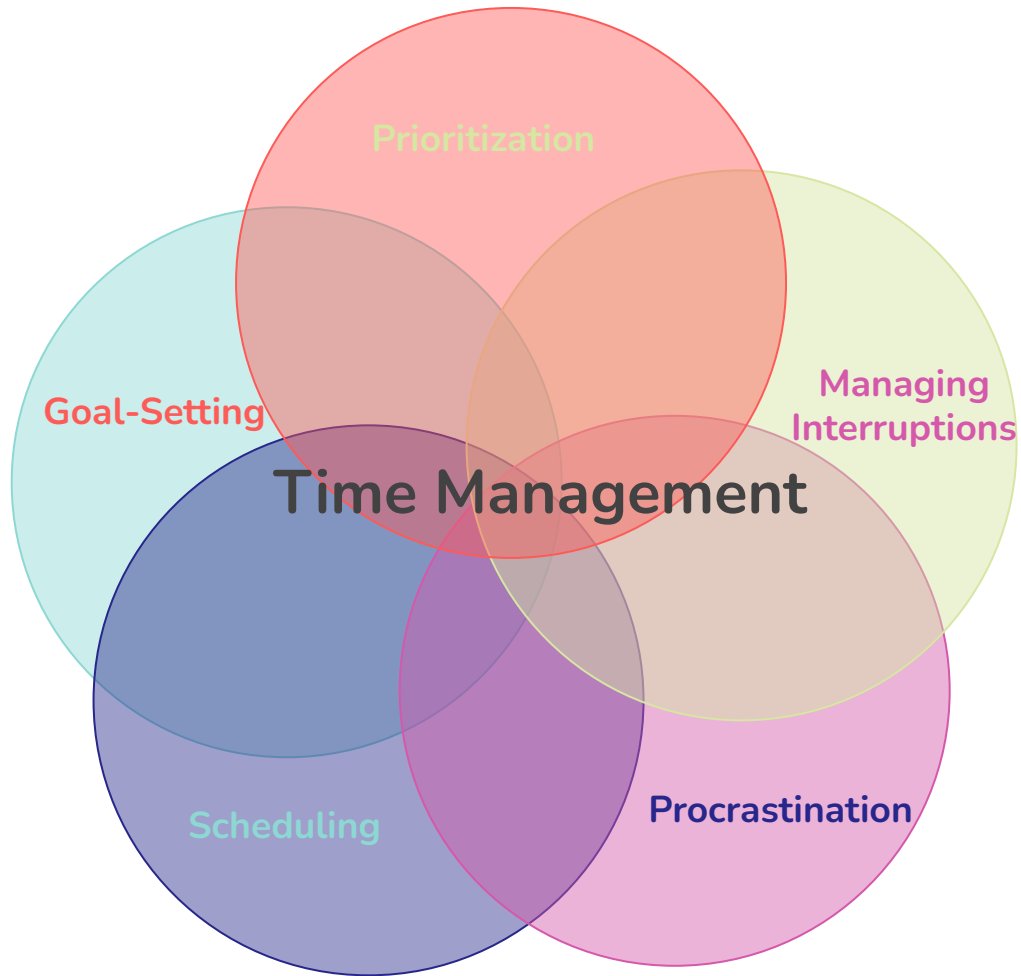
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<i>Time Management Strengths:</i>	<i>Time Management Weaknesses:</i>
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SMART Goals:

<i>Strategies I want to try</i>	 <i>But what about...? I want to know more about... I don't quite understand...</i>
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Actionable strategies I will use to change my time management habits in my TA work:





Goals are SMART

How often do you set goals for your TA work?

Why should we make goals?

- To break down large tasks into manageable chunks.
- Help us to hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
- They help you actively think and plan out what needs to be done.

The thing is, many of us do not know HOW to make goals or do not consciously make goals.

Goal-Setting



Goals are SMART

	Good Example	Bad Example
Specific - <i>objective</i>	Mark papers according to marking rubric that I have made	Mark papers
Measurable - <i>how?</i>	5 papers	Some papers
Attainable - <i>realistic</i>	By the end of the day	Within the hour
Relevant - <i>big picture?</i>	Deadline is the end of this week	Prioritizing papers when quizzes need to be marked by tomorrow
Time-bound - <i>target date</i>	1 week in advance of the actual deadline	Actual deadline

Managing expectations!



Prioritization Activity

Now that we have an idea of how to set goals, we should consider how to prioritize our sometimes competing research and TA goals.

How do you prioritize? What do you consider?

In groups of 3-4 people, work together to prioritize a set of 10 general grad student duties that need to be completed (10 minutes).

When prioritizing, discuss and consider:

- Due date
- How long it will take – long ones first or short ones first?
- Immediate effect

Prioritization

Read the following TA duties and general research tasks that need to be completed. Number them in order of which tasks you would choose to complete first to last (1-10) by dragging the boxes.



What factors did you consider in making your decision? Create a textbox and record your thought process anywhere on this page.

1.	6.	Upload grades to Canvas from recent test/assignment.	Plan research with your supervisor.
2.	7.	Plan class tutorial session, lecture, or discussion group.	Create research poster/presentation for a conference.
3.	8.	Read three research papers.	Complete first draft of a research paper.
4.	9.	Conduct research experiments or readings.	Mark 50 term papers.
5.	10.	Upload course content to Canvas	Respond to student emails.

Prioritization

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What factors did you consider in making your decision? Create a textbox and record your thought process anywhere on this page.

1.	Plan research with your supervisor.		Respond to student emails.
2.	Complete first draft of a research paper.	7	Plan class tutorial session, lecture, or discussion group.
3.	Conduct research experiments or readings.	8.	Upload course content to Canvas
4.	Read three research papers.	9.	Mark 50 term papers.
5.	Create research poster/presentation for a conference.	10	Upload grades to Canvas from recent test/assignment.

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Factors to consider:

Take a look at your peers slides for ~1 minute.

What considerations did your group make when prioritizing the list?

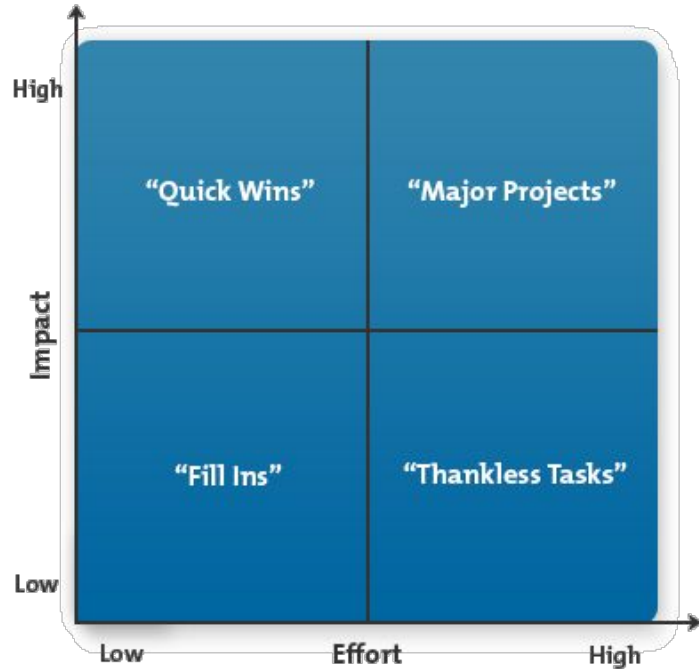
What are people commonly prioritizing? Why might that be?

- Research is first - it's why we're here!
 - *Well.. in theory*
 - Difficult to balance
- Upcoming deadlines - prioritize

So, why is prioritization important?

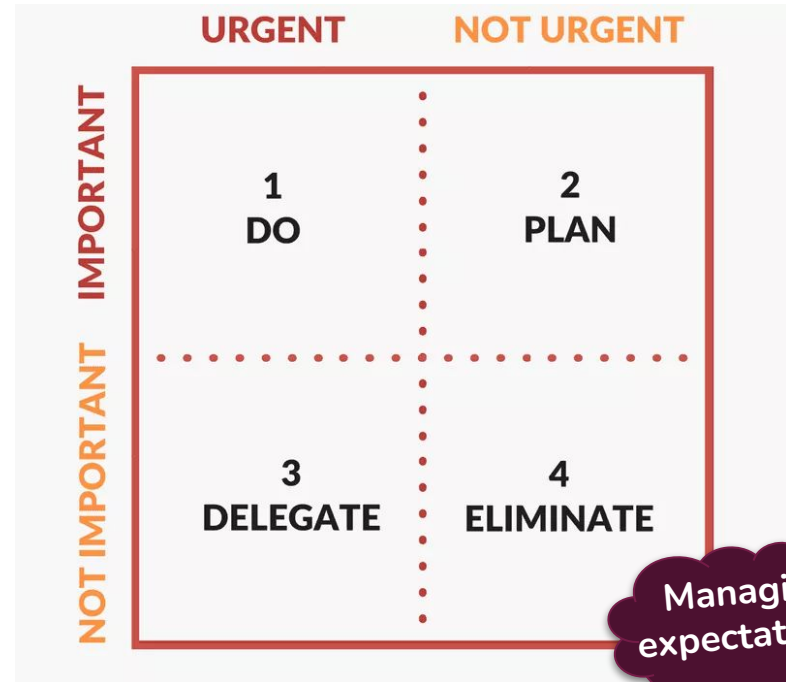
Prioritization

How to Prioritize



Action Priority Matrix

- Try [1-3-5-List](#), an online tool to help you prioritize tasks!
 - 1 big thing, 3 medium things, 5 small things



Importance Urgency Matrix

Managing expectations!



How to Prioritize

- Begin by writing down each task - *visual cue*
- Break large tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks
 - Each goal on your to-do list shouldn't take more than a few hours to complete
- Go through the list and prioritize (using your preferred prioritization method)
 - If you have a large number of tasks with similarly high priorities, revisit your list and revise your priorities

To-Do List Tools/Online Resources (see more on later slides)

- Bullet point journaling; pen and paper
- Outlook or Gmail calendars; [Microsoft To Do](#) - syncs with MS tools
- [Remember the Milk](#) - syncable and interconnected with many apps (i.g., Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.)
- [Strides](#) - Goal tracking and habit checklist and reports

To-Do List

<i>Major task 1:</i>		<i>Due date:</i>
<i>Major task 2:</i>		<i>Due date:</i>
<i>Major task 3:</i>		<i>Due date:</i>

<i>Task 1 subtasks:</i>	<i>Task 2 subtasks:</i>
1.	1.
2. ★	2.
3.	3.
4.	4. ★

<i>Task 3 subtasks:</i>
1. ★
2.
3.
4.

Managing expectations!

Procrastination, Scheduling, and Managing Interruptions



Procrastination

Why do you/people procrastinate?

Procrastination, Scheduling, and Managing Interruptions



Procrastination

Present you values **instant gratification** of binging an entire TV show on Netflix over the **long-term benefits** of marking those assignments that are due 2 weeks from now, which can be done by *future you*.

You are not rewarded by taking action towards a task that is due in the future. This results in negative consequences later, when your future becomes your present.

Reward Taking Action in the NOW	Consequences of Procrastination (negative reinforcement)	Schedule and Plan Your Action	Make the Task More Manageable	Manage Interruptions
-ex. mark papers while watching TV	-ex. set public deadlines (shame)	- (more detail later)	-ex. to-do lists	-ex. block/delete social media



Creating Solutions for Procrastination Activity

Instructions

- In your group, you will visit each of the 5 slides provided over the span of 10 minutes.
- At each slide, create a new textbox and brainstorm specific ways, tools, apps, or strategies to overcome procrastination by the given method.
 - Choose a text colour to use consistently represent your group's contributions on each slide (i.e., blue, purple, green, pink, orange.)
- You may start at any of the 5 slides you wish and move through them at your own speed. I will make an announcement every ~2 minutes to remind you to rotate. *Be sure to revisit slides as more text appears!*

This will serve as a resource of ideas for you try if you find yourself arriving at "Procrastination Station"!



Procrastination solution 1: reward yourself for taking action NOW

Rewarding myself with a big cheese burger or ice cream

Making plans for later

Looking at previous success and convince self ability to finish a task

Treat yourself to your favorite movie/restaurant/phone conversation

Finish task within set time and get to spend time with dog/take break

Making a delicious coffee or cookies/chocolate to have while working



Procrastination solution 2: make the consequences of procrastination more immediate (negative reinforcement)

Forego a plan you were looking forward to

Imagining the result and feeling if we procrastinate

Imagine your boss's face

Regular check-ins with supervisor/boss

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: Negative reinforcement is not generally considered a best practice. This might be a way to get you started in breaking your procrastination habit, but please be kind to yourself.



Procrastination solutions 3: schedule and plan your action/life/work

Keep track of when you feel most productive during your weekly schedule, and try to block out that time for writing or deep work

Plan rewarding things
before and after

Understand that
sometimes it just isn't
working out

Classify the type of tasks:
teaching, research, social

Block time in calendar to do specific tasks and
hold the time like its a meeting/can't be moved

Prioritize your
Spend some time before taking actions
Try bullet journaling

Plan out what you're going to do in your next work session at
the end of the previous one, so you can get back into flow

Schedule non-work, social, exercise, etc. time



Procrastination solutions 4: make the task(s) more manageable

Specific the task deadline

Know the man-hours of each tasks

Frame things as actions

Created subtask and try to guess how much time it takes

Break tasks into small pieces



Procrastination solution 5: manage interruptions

Find a separate place to work

Create a separate account computer for working, so you will not be distracted by emails popped out.



Creating Solutions for Procrastination: Possible Solutions

Take a minute to reflect on your own procrastination habits and consider what you could do to reward yourself, reinforce your action, schedule, manage interruptions, or make your tasks more manageable.

Some possible solutions:

- Reward yourself for taking action NOW
 - Reward yourself with food, TV, activity
- Make the consequences of procrastination more immediate
 - Set public deadlines where if they aren't met, you have disappointed someone, yourself
 - Place bets – apps to place bets
- Schedule and plan your action/life/work
 - Learn when you work best
 - Save hardest tasks for when/where you are most productive; get least pleasant tasks out of the way
- Make the task more manageable
 - Frequent breaks
 - To-do lists – break down larger tasks
- Manage interruptions
 - Apps
 - Get others to check in on you – friend, supervisor, course coordinator

Procrastination, Scheduling, and Managing Interruptions

TA Scheduling - A How-To Guide

1. Set aside your TA time each week

- PI knows when you are *not* available
- TA office hours?
- Schedule self-care and research
- Course coordinator knows when you are available

2. Schedule high priority tasks

- Use prioritization methods
- Accurately block out length of time required
- Use SMART goals to break tasks into smaller time commitments

3. Find peak hours and conditions for productivity

- Track your energy levels over several days
- Consider availability of fellow TAs/course coordinator
- Noise levels in office?
- Thirsty/hungry?

4. Build in contingency time

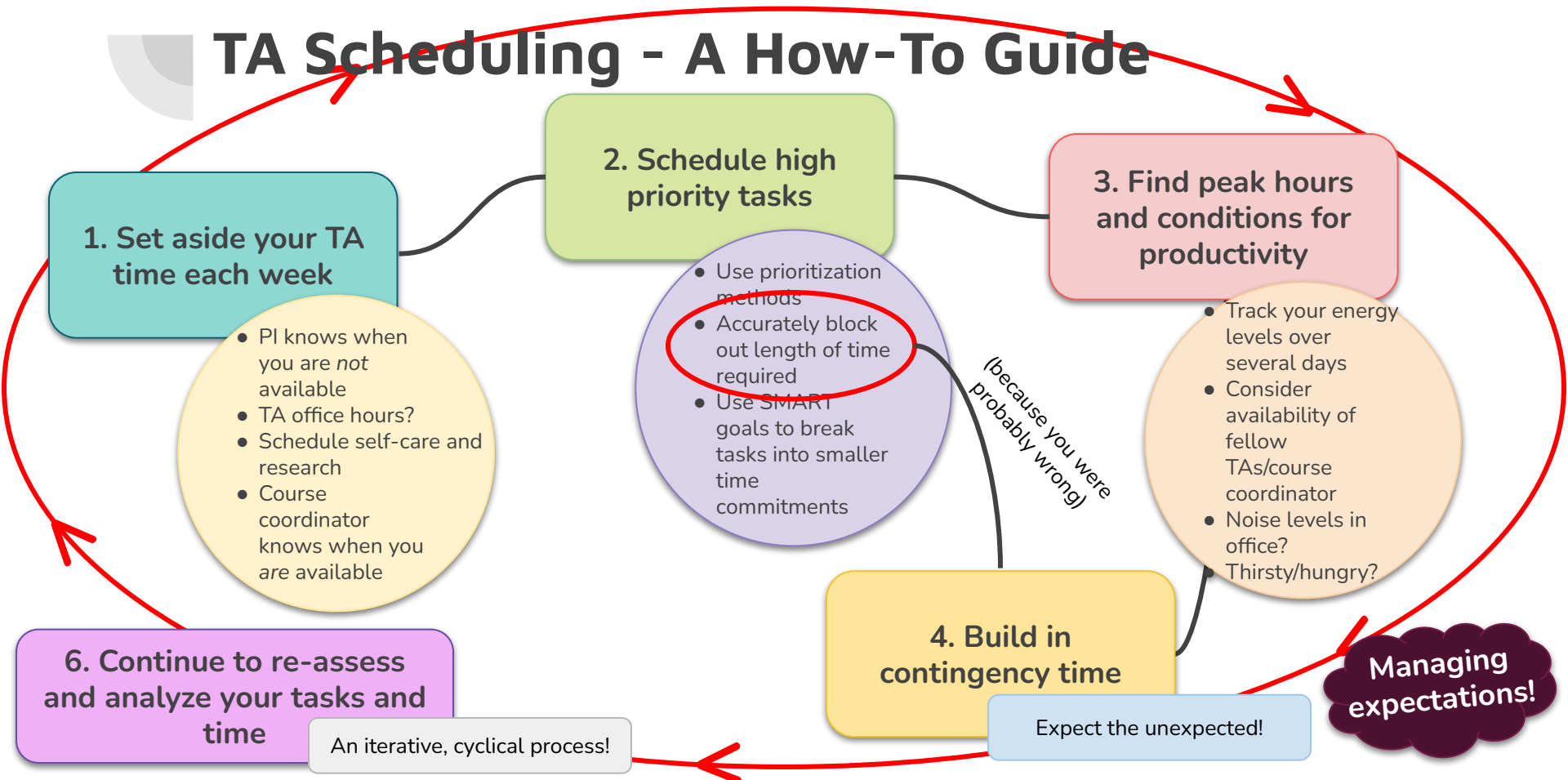
Expect the unexpected!

6. Continue to re-assess and analyze your tasks and time

An iterative, cyclical process!

Managing expectations!

(because you were probably wrong)





How will this workshop help me to change my time management habits in my TA work?

Q&A



Summary of Time Management Strategies

Goal-Setting

- SMART goals

Prioritization

- Timing: due date
- Action-Priority Matrix
- Importance and Urgency
- To-do Lists
 - Break large tasks into small, manageable chunks
- Confirming your priorities with supervisor/course coordinator

Procrastination

- Reward yourself for taking action
- Negative reinforcement
- Schedule and plan
- Make tasks manageable
- Reduce interruptions

Managing Interruptions

- See the Creating Solutions for Procrastination for specific ideas!

Scheduling

- Identify available time
- Schedule high-priority tasks
- Find your peak hours and conditions
- Contingency time
- Analyze and re-assess

Managing expectations!

- Be honest with yourself
- Communicate your availability, priorities, and needs with supervisor and course coordinator



CTLT Resources

- Sign up for CTLT's monthly newsletter
 - <https://ctlit.ubc.ca/about/newsletters/events-newsletter/>
- Follow us on Twitter
 - [@UBC_CTLT](https://twitter.com/UBC_CTLT)
- Connect with us on Facebook
 - <https://www.facebook.com/UBC.CTLT/>
- Keep an eye on our CTLT Events Page
 - <https://events.ctlit.ubc.ca/>
- Register for an upcoming **ONLINE** ISW
 - <https://ctlit.ubc.ca/programs/all-our-programs/instructional-skills-workshops/>