

Sept., 2020

TA INSTITUTE

JOIN US ONLINE



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

institute.ctlt.ubc.ca

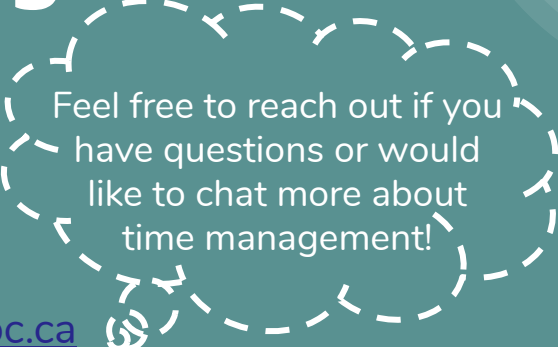
Time Management for TAs

Jennifer Brown

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Fall Online TA Institute

September 15, 3:00 - 4:30 PM



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



Join Audio

Computer Audio Connected



Share Screen



Invite Others

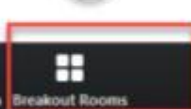
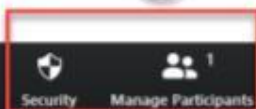
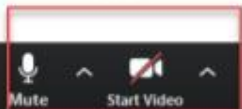
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End Meeting

Why am I “qualified” to run this workshop?

- PhD Candidate in Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Full-time wet lab research
- Holds fellowships
- Works at CTLT facilitating workshops
- Lead Facilitator of our Team
- Maintains strong relationships with friends and family
- Still have time for biking, knitting, Netflix, video games, beer, and cuddling my cat

Mental Health Resources from UBC

- [Counselling Services](#)
- [Student Health Service](#)
- [UBC Centre for Accessibility](#)
- [MindHealthBC](#)
- Enroll in [Wellness Centre: Online Canvas Course](#)
- [Empower Me](#) - connect with counselling, consulting, coaching professionals outside of UBC



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

Reflect

Tools

Be efficient

Learn from others

How to prioritize

CURRENT TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Pinning emails

Calendars

Setting boundaries

Schedules

TA DUTIES

Leading tutorial

Managing Canvas and Canvas content

Marking

Manage chat box

Preparing assignments

Moderate synchronous and asynchronous communication

Facilitate discussion

Answer student questions

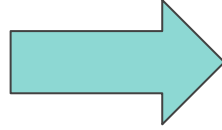


Learning Objectives

- 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!

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 position?
- What tasks are involved in your regular weekly TA duties and approximately how long does each take?

TA work - 12 hours/week

Marking - 4 hours

Attending lecture - 3 hours

Office hours - 1 hour

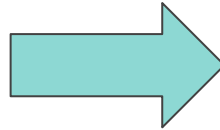
Leading tutorial - 2 hours

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.)

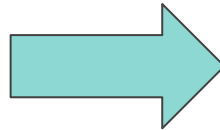
Identify:

- 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



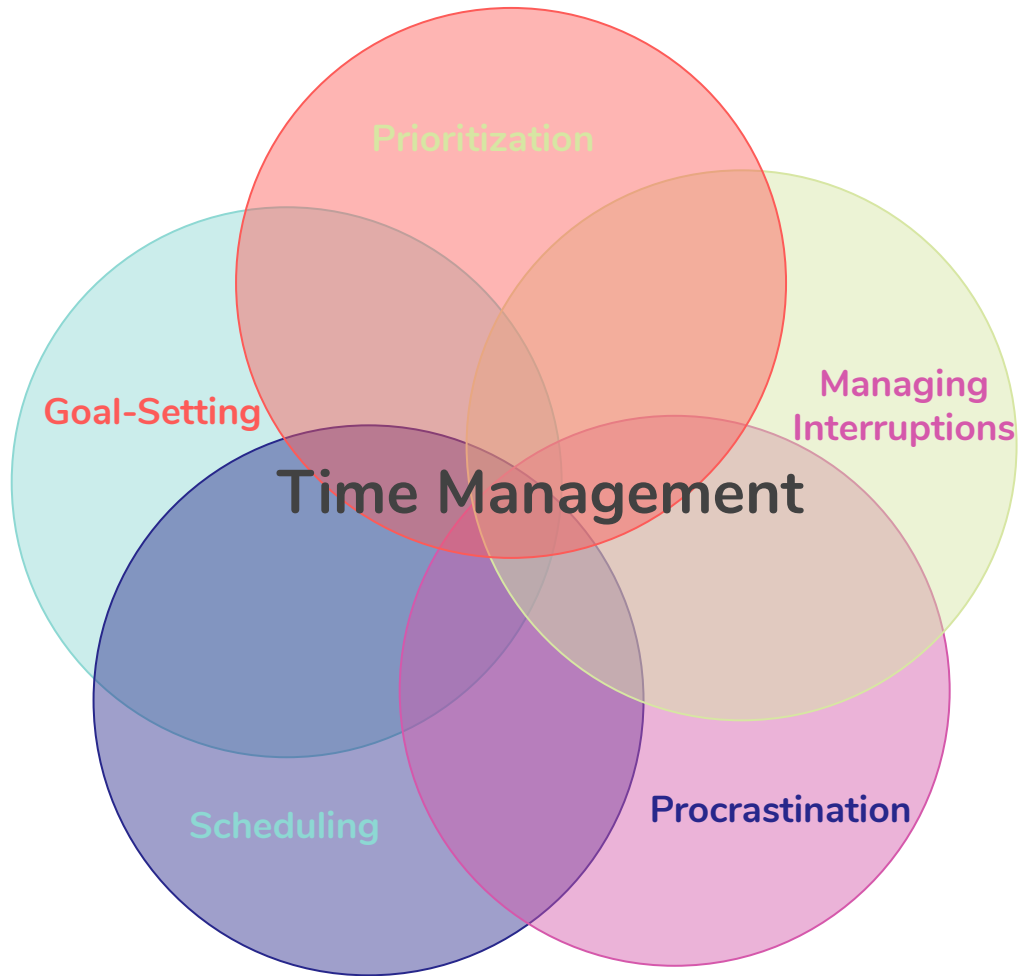
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SMART Goals:

Strategies I want to try

*★ But what about...?
I want to know more about...
I don't quite understand...*



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

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

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Purpose of why we are here is research - prioritize that first.

TA work can be organized based on deadlines/urgency.
- But those hard deadlines are up against research deadlines that can be moved.

Create personal deadlines to follow.

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Methodology:

1. Tasks that require immediate action
2. Tasks that help you plan for the future
3. Big Tasks that require extended effort
4. Actions that dictate/inform subsequent actions

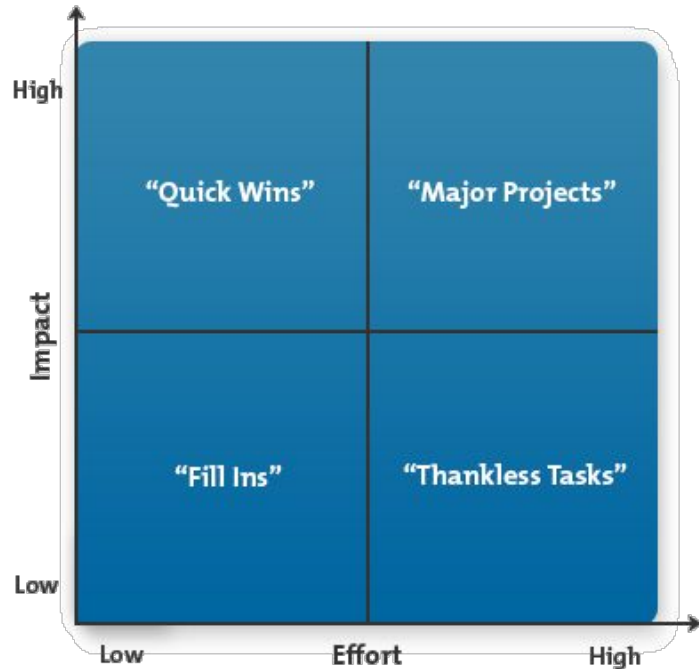


Factors to consider:

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

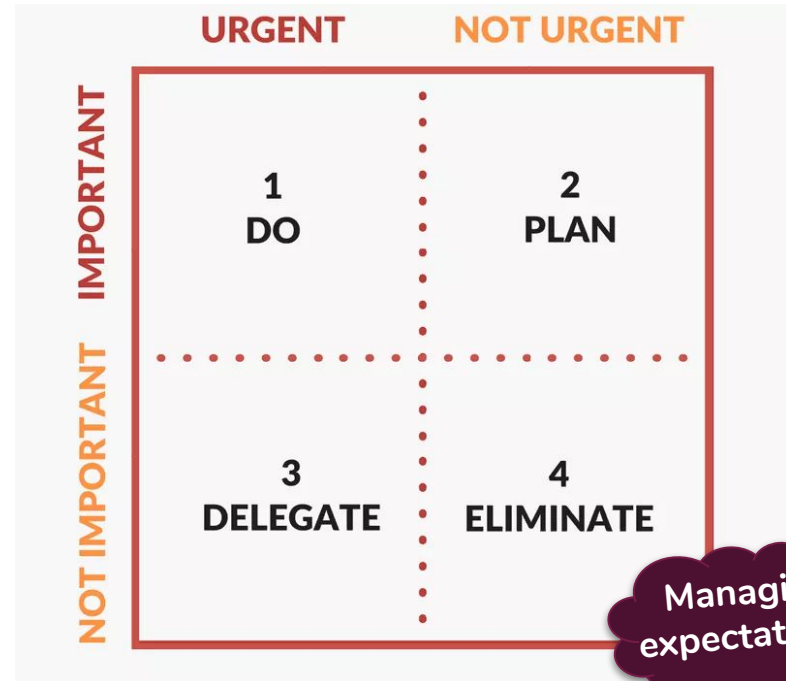
Prioritization

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



How to Prioritize

- Begin by writing down each task - *visual cue*
- Break larger 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)

- Pen and paper
- Outlook calendar - event reminders
- Gmail tasks
- Bullet journaling - journal, calendar, planner integrated

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>

Task 1 subtasks:

- 1.
2. ★
- 3.
- 4.

Task 2 subtasks:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
4. ★

Task 3 subtasks:

- 1.
2. ★
- 3.
- 4.

Managing expectations!

Procrastination, Scheduling, and Managing Interruptions



Procrastination

Present you values **instant gratification** of bingeing 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

GALLERY WALK

Instructions

- In your group, you will visit each of the 5 following slides
- At each slide, create a new text box (or text boxes) and brainstorm specific ways, tools, apps, or strategies to overcome procrastination by the given method
 - Add new strategies that other groups haven't added, yet!
- Each group will be assigned a colour (look in the window of your breakout room to see your group name). When you create your text boxes, use a shade of your assigned colour
- You may start at any of the 5 slides you wish and move through them at your own speed (but the facilitator may pop in to usher you along at times). Be sure to revisit slides as more text appears!
- You have a total of 15 minutes for this activity
- 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

Work in the garden

Get comfortable

Have a treat
(dessert, french fries
in moderation)

- Go out for dinner
- Bake and eat cookies

Tell yourself that if you complete X task, you will reward yourself with something you like to do - check out these examples that you brainstormed!

Go exercise

- Dog walk!
- Lifting weights
- bike

Take a screen break

- Check social media
- Watch TV

Watch a movie while you mark

Is there any productive work that you can do while also doing something you like?

Try getting the hardest/least pleasant tasks out of the way first - then it's super easy after that!

Enjoy a coffee/tea/soda/beer or snack WHILE you work

Work outside, on your balcony, in a park, at the beach



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

If I don't finish by <x> time, I can't go to <x> event

Consider external motivations - if you don't complete the task by the certain deadline, you will miss out!

Delaying graduation

- shame
- Paying more tuition
- Explaining to friends "when are you done/graduating" question

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.

Compare your work to others

- Feel guilty and shame

<https://www.stickk.com/aboutus>

- Make bets with yourself - if you don't complete the task, money is donated to a charity you hate

Make public deadlines - if you don't finish it by the deadline, you will be held accountable... and it will not feel good.

Make bets with friends to motivate you



Procrastination solutions 3 and 4: schedule and plan your action and make the tasks more manageable

Have multiple schedules/to-do lists for TA work, research, leisure, and chores

Daily, Weekly, & Monthly plan

- Month first, then by week/day

Tools

- Jira
- Trello
- Google Tasks
- Wunderlist
- Evernote
- Bullet journal

SMART goals

- stickK

Schedule your time

Blackboard with due dates/deadlines next to desk

Write everything that has to be done down on paper, group them by month, then try to prioritize them

Break your tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks that take a short time to complete

Pomodoro method - 25 min of work, 5 min break

- [Use a timer, here!](#)

Save hardest tasks for when you are most productive

- Track your energy levels and productivity!

Use to-do lists (slide 20)

Check off items when they are complete and make new plans for tasks that might have not gotten finished

Procrastination solution 5: manage interruptions



Leave phone at home/turn phone off/remove it as a visual

Get friends/coworkers/others to check on you - be held accountable

Productivity apps:

- [Forest](#)
- [Focus@Will](#)
- [Simple Habit](#)
- [Mindly](#)

Set screen time on your phone

Use apps/technology to help you

Lock yourself out of distracting websites:

- [ColdTurkey](#)
- [Freedom](#)
- [LeechBlock](#)
- [StayFocused](#)

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

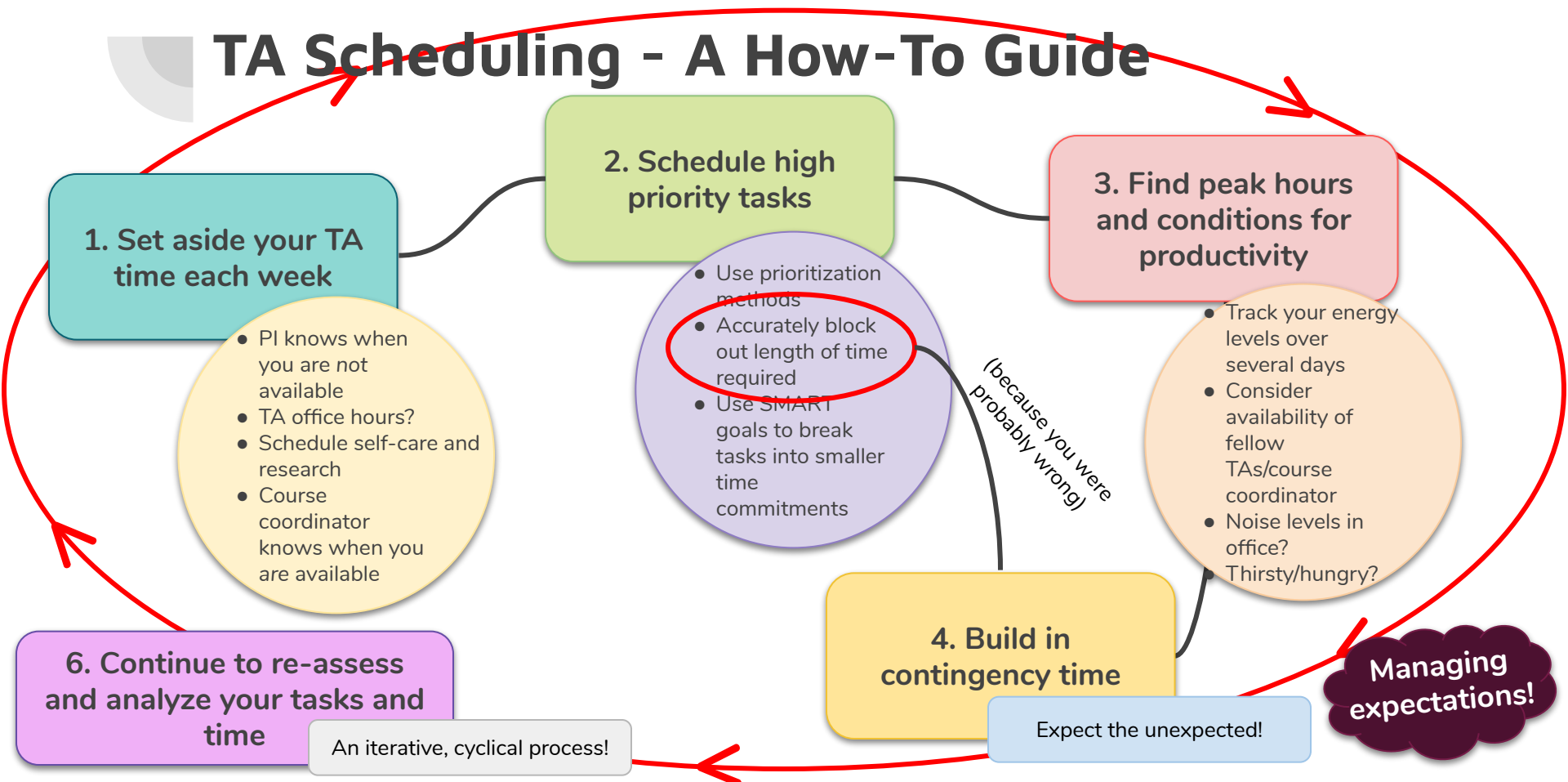
Expect the unexpected!

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





Learning Objectives

- 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

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
- Confirm your priorities with supervisor/course coordinator

Managing Interruptions

- See the Gallery Walk for specific ideas!

Scheduling

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

Procrastination

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

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/>