

Prioritizing Scholarship among Competing Demands
Engaged-Teacher Scholar Program-Dayna Henry, Ph.D.

- 1) **First ask yourself, “What would a successful scholarship year look like for me?”** Asking this question will help you prioritize among the many research projects we have going on. Post this list along with all your research projects in a place you work/look every day. Think about small successes and moving projects along at various stages of the research process.
- 2) **Make lists of shorter and longer tasks to complete for writing.** Are there smaller tasks that are not time consuming? What will require more time to complete?
- 3) **Block off time in your week for scholarship.** We all block off our classes, office hours and meetings but don’t often put time in for research. Put a fairly large chunk of time each week for research and protect it. Use this block to complete the larger tasks from #2. If you can, select the time of the day when you are most productive (e.g., early morning or late at night).

Don’t grade during this time and don’t allow others to schedule last-minute meetings during that time. Don’t have e-mail notifications available and turn off your cell phone. If you need to work elsewhere, use the CFI writing studios, faculty space in the libraries or your favorite coffee shop.

- 4) **When you find yourself free for a few minutes in between responsibilities, choose scholarship first.** Complete the shorter time frame tasks identified in #2 in these small pockets of time.

Bring your laptop/research work to appointments, kids sporting events, or to class. Instead of waiting and scrolling on your phone, while students are watching a video, completing an activity in class, or taking an exam complete a small research task like reading an article.
- 5) **When you have tasks for teaching, service and research, choose research first!** Unless there is an immediate deadline for teaching or service (e.g., it’s 20 minutes before the class or meeting you haven’t prepped) choose research. Handing back student papers within a few days vs. taking a week is not going to affect your teaching performance. Make the choice to work on research.
- 6) **If you are stuck because the task seems too big:** set a timer for 5 minutes and agree to work on research for that time. After 5 minutes, you might get into it and if not, try again later.
- 7) **Before you end a research working period:** make notes to yourself about where you were, what you were thinking, and things that still need to be done. Spend the last 5 minutes of each of your research working sessions leaving a trail. This will save you time when you return to that task next time since you won’t have to remind yourself what was next to complete.

Adapted from: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Make-Time-for-Research/239724> and Ed Brantmeier: Scholarship Agendas: Prioritizing Projects and Managing Your Time.