

Research Support and Development session, 11 July 2019

‘Protecting your time for writing and research’
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'Protect your Research time' - Mission Im/possible

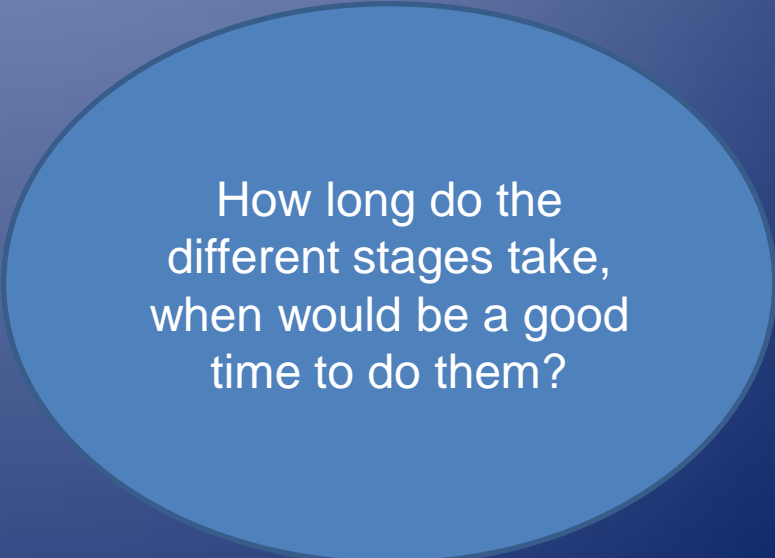


My approach

- Sharing my observations, practices, experiences
- Is it really about protecting our time or, more generally, asking what's stopping us?
- Disclaimer: To the best of my knowledge this presentation does not contain 'alternative facts'

What is research? (in terms of actions)

- reading
- having bright (and vague) ideas for a new project
- more reading>>mapping the terrain
- having more bright ideas, now a bit more specific
- designing the research project
- fieldwork
- data analysis
- writing up your findings
- publish your findings



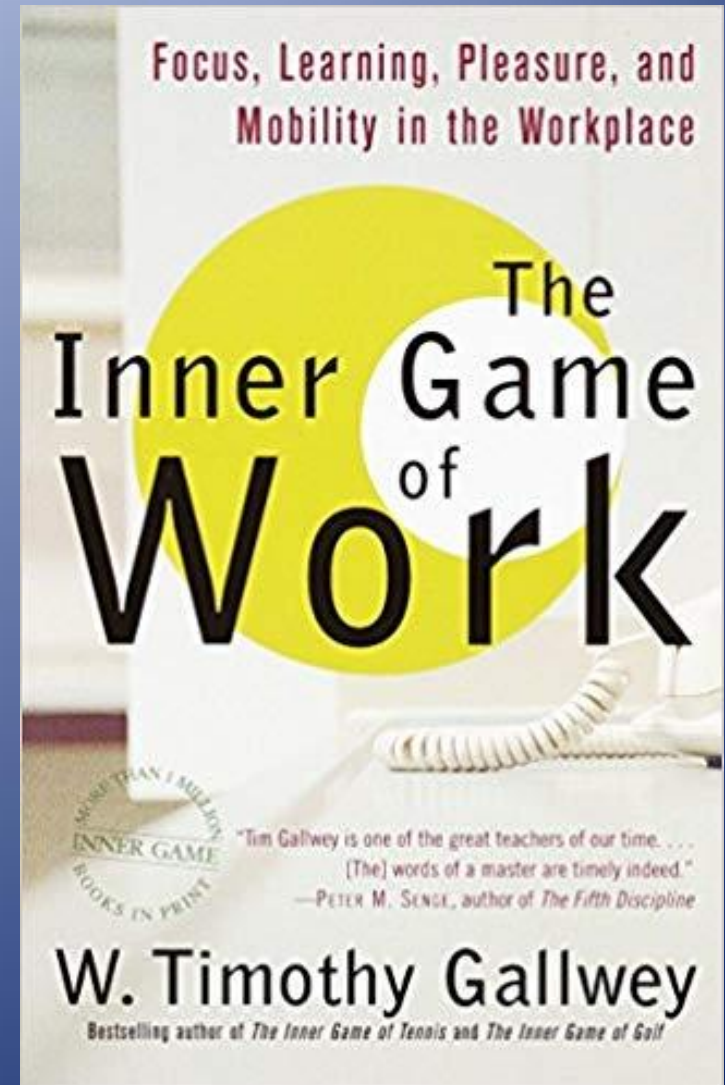
How long do the
different stages take,
when would be a good
time to do them?

Narratives of frustration

- they will never take my research seriously
- 'If-onlys': if only I had my own office, my own laptop, my own study at home, more money for books, a support network, more time, more focus, better supervision
- add more at your leisure

Books that changed my life

- Tim Gallwey: *The Inner Game of Work*
- Self 1 and Self 2



Books that changed my life

- Stephen Covey: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*



Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zin: *Full Catastrophe Living*

Principles of Mindfulness



Silvia: *How to Write a Lot*

- a behaviour-oriented approach to writing
- Actions like:
 - making a schedule
 - setting clear goals
 - keeping a track record of your work
 - rewarding yourself

Classic barriers according to Silvia

- I can't find time to write.
- I need to do some more analysis.
- I need to read a few more articles.
- I need a new computer, laptop, printer...
- I write best when I feel like it.

Overcoming barriers: no time

- Why don't we have time? What can we change?
 - unrealistic goals
 - time management:
 - knowing how long things take
 - prioritise research
 - self-management:
 - knowing when you write best, edit best, number-crunch best
 - learn to chunk time: 3 hours a day might be more productive than 1, 2, 3 days on the trot
 - know what you need for creative performance

Overcoming intellectual insecurity

- more analysis, read more articles>> do it during your research time. Just do it!
- When do you know it's enough?
 - when the 20th article on the topic bores you
 - when you are so excited about something that you need to get it down on paper
- Remember: writing and reading are best done as alternating actions



**KEEP
CALM
AND
JUST
DO IT**

Overcoming barriers: if-onlys

"If only I had my own office, my own laptop, my own study at home, more time, a support network"

– self-management:

- buy a laptop
- create space at home
- workplan everything: teaching, admin, research, relaxation
- simplify your life
- use stress management that works for you

Overcoming barriers:

'I write best when I'm inspired to write'

Motivational tools:

- Setting goals: long, medium, short term
- Setting priorities
- Monitor progress
- Weekly writer's groups
- Find a critical friend



The time management gospel according to Covey



My to-do lists: monthly and weekly

A-list

=urgent/important

- prep classes
- student crisis
- if I don't do X I will lose my job

B-list

=not urgent/important

- research:
 - write a paper
 - proof article
 - check footnotes
- prep meetings
- write report

C-list

=if there is time left

- favours for colleagues
- prep something for next month
- read Times Higher

Assertiveness

- Learn to say no to:
 - the student who wants you to read their assignment overnight
 - the student who expects you to answer emails over the weekend
 - the peer who keeps off-loading their emotional problems

Be realistic

- TTT= things take time
- accept your limitations (don't try to be excellent in 5 different things)
- run a research study on yourself
- know your own emotional hooks and try not to take the bait
- the best kind of self-control is to avoid situations that require self-control

5 things that really make a difference

- effective time management and workplanning
- prioritising >> focus on research
- little and often: regular short sessions of research
- not checking emails more than 2-3 times a day
- Making learner autonomy our teaching method. Remember that the approach is 'the student as producer'.

Thank you for listening!



Encore available upon request!

10 stress-busting techniques that worked for me

- time management matrix (Stephen Covey)
- STOP tool (stop - think - observe - proceed)
- working hard on work-life balance: book in must-do activities
- **distraction**: start a hobby that requires a lot of concentration (dancing, Tai Chi, learn a language, etc)
- **for acute stress**: hot shower, go for a walk, talk to a friend, breathing exercises
- mindfulness
- take regular breaks: daily, weekly, monthly
- good food
- **worry time**: keep diary, have a particular time of day to worry
- **assertiveness**: learn to say no, learn to respect your own rights and needs