Project planning / management considerations

June 14, 2017 STLF meeting

- Time management
  - Personal time management (focus your attention budget)
    - Make time for high importance/low urgency
    - Pomodoro + Timeout
  - Take data: track your time
    - Google calendar is a tool
    - Outlook is another possibility if you are already using it for email
  - Email: keep the number of "touches" to a minimum; for example, file away or convert into a scheduled to-do item when you first read the email, rather than noticing/re-reading it over and over until you actually deal with it.

- Juggling projects:
  - Assigning priority
  - Reviewing progress overall
  - Don't burn out: Can only do so much. Some research about losing efficiency above 40 hours (or maybe less) per week:
    - BBC's *Why you should manage your energy, not your time* from June 2017: http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20170612-why-you-should-manage-your-energy-not-your-time
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    - Short summary article with a bunch of links, *The Research Is Clear: Long Hours Backfire for People and for Companies*: https://hbr.org/2015/08/the-research-is-clear-long-hours-backfire-for-people-and-for-companies
    - Simliar theme, with a bunch of history on the 40-hour work week: http://www.salon.com/2012/03/14/bring_back_the_40_hour_work_week/
  - Say no
    - Try to redirect to someone else, or collaborate. (or just say no). Or defer to a later time.
  - Recognize that everyone is juggling too.

- Tools for effective/efficient collaboration
  - using google docs for collaborative documents and note-taking - is visible to everyone, keeps track of history and backups for you automatically, has suggestion mode and comments for different kinds of feedback/review
  - shared file space (UBC Workspace, Sync, Dropbox)
  - using descriptive file names (e.g. could be long, with topics, who just edited, date at end, course, who collected it, etc...) (past you doesn't answer emails)
  - Versions
  - Emails:
    - use descriptive subject lines - file things away quickly and make use of searching
    - Put a single request near the top of message, and don't assume everything after

- that will be read.
    - If people are meant to read multiple things, try a numbered list.
  - effective meetings- see notes from Nov 24, 2016 STLF meeting on facilitating effective meetings with faculty ("Facilitation STLF Meeting slides") on Basecamp.
    - Send agendas ahead of time
    - Follow-up emails with minutes from the meeting
  - clear deadlines for things
    - [How to process your email inbox](#) (LS uses Airmail email program which can connect easily with Todoist - both are free)

- Data management
  - Back up your stuff
  - Keep raw data in original form, e.g., the downloaded spreadsheet from the survey tool.
  - Privacy issues
  - Leaving or bringing in a new person or coming back in years

- Planning projects
  - Work breakdown structure - map out the deliverables into big pieces and subpieces
    - E.g., Course
      - Lecture (big piece)
        - Slides (subpiece)
        - Worksheets (subpiece)
        - Clicker questions (subpiece)
      - Midterms (big piece)
      - Labs (big piece)
  - Precedence network (shows which order things need to happen, can include time estimates)
  - Timelines
  - Risk analysis
  - Time needed for data analysis can easily be underestimated (plan for this)
  - Project closing event
    - Good example: Final meeting for TAs with cookies and things

- Research projects
  - Planning question, data collection, evaluation (recall worksheets for this)
  - Keep publication in mind
  - Think about authorship early
  - Consider partners/help in analysis (and budget time for it)

- Managing others
  - What could GRA/TA/undergraduate RA do?
    - Budget time for management, teaching them things, mentorship
  - UBC Work Learn has some documentation on this: orientation checklist for Work Learn (has some ideas not specific to Work Learn): https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/sites/facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/files/Work%20Learn%20Program%20-%20Orientation%20Checklist.pdf
  - UBC HR has a section on Student Workers: http://www.hr.ubc.ca/administrators/student-workers/