

TEA Strategies and Shared Resources

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Time

- Time audit

- An example of a time audit would be to set a timer each waking hour of your day and write down in a spreadsheet what you did in that hour and how you felt doing that. After a week or so of the audit, analyze how you spent your time throughout the week and how you felt while you were doing an activity. During your reflection, think about whether the amount of time you're spending on different activities aligns with how much time you're spending doing things you enjoy or help you in the long run.
- It can be helpful to do a time audit specifically for your school day. In your planner, on Google calendar, or even just a post-it, in real-time, jot down how you spend your unmanaged time (before and after school, lunch, planning time). Is your time being spent how you'd like it to be? How can you make more efficient choices to save some time?
- Resource(s)
 - [How to Conduct a Time Audit](#)
 - [Conducting a Time Audit \(Video\)](#)
- Complementary strategies
 - Time blocking
 - Pomodoro method

- Time blocking

- Open your calendar and schedule in time for deep work, low mental energy work, and leisure/family. By making time for yourself, you can make it easier to say no to things that take away from your leisure or family. For example, set aside time in your day for email and do not check your email outside of that period of time. If something is urgent, you can always be a text or phone call away.
- Time blocking can be highly effective for your school day, too. Teachers typically have shorter blocks of time to complete tasks, and planning higher or lower energy tasks during planning times or days that match your energy can help you to be most productive.
- Resource(s)
 - [Mapping out your schedule process](#)
- Complementary strategies
 - Conducting a Time Audit
 - Pomodoro Method

- Pomodoro method

- This method involves setting a timer to work for a set period of time, then take a scheduled break before resuming the next time block. For example, set a timer for 50 minutes and take a 10 minute break to walk, stretch, meditate, make music, read a book, etc. This approach simultaneously trains your brain to work for extended periods of time while giving yourself a break to prevent getting mentally drained after a long work day.
- The Pomodoro method operates in 25 minute blocks of time with five minute breaks. After four Pomodoros, take a longer 10 minute break. Pomodoro also assumes that you'll work on one task at a time, as multitasking decreases focus.
- Resource(s)
 - [Tomato-Timer](#)
- Complementary strategies
 -

- Create time-based boundaries between work and leisure/family

- Teaching never ends, so it's helpful to set a specific time of day where you will start and stop working. Set an alarm at the start of your work day to signal when you are now thinking about teaching and then set another alarm at the end of your work day to signal that you are no longer focusing on teaching and should instead focus on your leisure/family.

- Another strategy that might work is setting appointments at the end of your work day. This could be a workout class, a coffee date with a friend, or scheduling time for yourself to do something you love.
- Resource(s)
 - [A strategy for leaving work on time \(Video\)](#)
- Complementary strategies
 -
- Makeup for lost time
 - If you're taking time out of your leisure/family time to attend a conference, family night for your school, or anything related to teaching that isn't a part of your 40-hour week, take PTO to make up for your lost leisure/family time. Don't use this time to catch up on projects; this is time for you to rest.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Find an accountability buddy
 - Find someone who will kindly hold you accountable to the time boundaries you've set. This could be another teacher, a partner or family member, or friend.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Accountabilitybuddy Video](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 - If you don't have a live person, you can use a "study with me" type of video on Youtube to mimic this effect.
- Delegate materials prep to students
 - Materials prep can take an individual teacher hours, but might only take your students five minutes to gather for themselves or their group. Delegating these tasks frees you up for more higher value tasks, like lesson planning or giving feedback, and takes minimal time from your class period.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Ways to delegate work to students \(Video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Create systems for your work
 - Implementing systems for your work can streamline your tasks and improve efficiency so you can take your time back. Identify a process you use over and over again: a workflow tool, a procedure for your classroom, something curricular. Implement one system at a time and test and iterate. You want to keep it simple and stay consistent. Systems save time and mental energy.
 - Resource(s):
 - Jen's Redo System:
 - Use a Google Form: [Click here to get mine](#)
 - Choose one day a week to grade redos
 - Be specific with deadlines
 - [Consider creating a gradebook key](#) -- use a Google doc and link all of the necessary info
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Set up an email autoresponder
 - Use your email vacation responder as a way to answer commonly asked student or parent questions. This helps you draw a line between work and home time (and avoid answering emails during home time), while also ensuring students or parents get answers to commonly asked questions quickly.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Short Autoresponder example \(Video\)](#)

- [Jen's Autoresponder template](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Take email off of your phone
 - Checking email takes extra time, but also makes it difficult to separate work and home life. Taking email off of your phone gives you back your time outside of work, while also removing an additional distraction. The emails will still be there when you get back.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Email strategies \(video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- The 24 Hour Rule
 - One of the best things you can do to protect your time is to carefully evaluate before you say yes to new commitments. One way to do this is to use the 24 hour rule to give yourself time to consider new opportunities before saying yes. When someone asks you to take on additional work, let them know that you'll have an answer for them the next day (or take more time, if needed). This allows you to talk through opportunities with family or friends, consider your schedule, and make the best decision for you and your students.
 - Resource(s)
 - [The 24 Hour Rule \(Video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Say no.
 - Similarly, if you are asked to take on a new opportunity, and it's not a "Heck Yes!," you should feel empowered to say no. The easiest way to protect your time is by not adding additional commitments. Remember that "No." is a complete sentence – you are allowed to decline opportunities without explanation. Saying yes to opportunities also means saying no to others (even if it's just free time!).
 - Resource(s)
 - [Leaving existing commitments \(Video\)](#)
 - [No is a complete sentence \(Video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Use email templates
 - Create email templates for commonly used emails. These can save you time by limiting the creative energy needed to write each new version of the same email. Save them as templates in your email client, or use a Google doc that you copy and paste directly from.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Email Template Playlist \(TikTok\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Planning your work to get the most important work done first
 - The reality of teaching is that your to do list will never be completely done. As such, it's important to prioritize your tasks to get the most important work done first. Planning strategically can be incredibly freeing because you realize that you'll always leave work with work still to do, plus, you'll be able to commit to a reasonable amount of work given the constraints of your time (ie: it's unrealistic to expect to complete four hours of tasks if you only have 45 minutes of planning time). Start by listing out everything you need to do. Next, estimate how much time you think it will take you to accomplish each individual task. Next, prioritize your list, labeling the most important task as '1,' the next most important task as '2,' etc. Now, looking at your timeboxed and

prioritized list, and knowing what your schedule is for the day, commit to what you'll accomplish, starting with #1 (see resource for a video of this process). Then, get things done!

- Resource(s)
 - [Eisenhower Decision Matrix \(Video\)](#)
 - [What this could look like in your planner \(Video\)](#)
 - [Planning to get your most important work done first \(Video\)](#)
- Complementary strategies
 -
- Saving time with grading
 - Grading can take a lot of time as a teacher, and finding ways to streamline some of your grading processes can free up time for other work. Consider that not every piece of work a student does needs to be graded. If it does need to be graded, you could utilize autograding or self-grading, which might result in less personalized feedback, but provides immediate feedback to students. Finally, using rubrics combined with short form feedback (like plusses and deltas) allows you to give personalized feedback while cutting down on grading time.
 - Resource(s)
 - [A podcast episode on three different types of assessment](#)
 - [More podcasts on assessment](#)
 - [A few strategies to cut down on grading time \(video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Build in repetition to lessons
 - Building repetition into your lessons or classroom protocols (like how you set up your students' weekly LMS content) helps streamline your planning and lessens the cognitive load for your students. If a lesson structure or strategy is particularly effective, save it as a template to use for future topics.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Keep a list of quick tasks and use small chunks of time
 - Teachers often have small chunks of time - five minutes between classes, 15 minutes before students arrive, 10 minutes at the end of your lunch, etc. Keeping a running list of quick tasks that can be accomplished in fifteen minutes or less can help you maximize your time during the work day. Have a few free moments? Knock out one of your quick tasks – it's a quick win, and it's one less thing to do later.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Quick task post-it \(Video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Your idea
 - Describe your idea
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -

Energy

- Walking desks when working at home
 - Walking desks can make it so you simultaneously get your steps in while checking emails, lesson planning, playing a video game, etc. Jared's walking desk consists of a long drum pad extending over the arms of the treadmill to hold a laptop and a shelf holding the monitor above the treadmill.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Build your own walking desk](#)
 - [Jen's under desk walking pad \(on sale for Prime Day\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Restore your energy through nutrients
 - The nutrients we consume and when we consume them can have a profound impact on our energy levels throughout the day. For example, there's research that suggests consuming caffeine every other morning between 90 and 120 minutes after waking up can have a profound impact on your energy levels while minimizing the risk for developing a caffeine dependency ([see this podcast for more information](#)). Not only is caffeine beneficial for improving our energy, but the amount and timing of proteins, carbs, fats, sugars, etc. we consume on a regular basis can dramatically impact energy levels throughout the day.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Using Caffeine to Optimize Mental & Physical Performance](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Plan around your energy cycles
 - Are you most energetic in the morning, afternoon, or evening? Plan your most important/difficult tasks for the time of day when you are most energized and your tasks that require the least amount of energy (e.g., responding to emails) for times of the day when you are least energized. For example, Jared would arrive at school a couple of hours before school would start to work on their dissertation because they had more energy at the start of the day than at the end of the day.
 - Resource(s)
 - [When by Daniel Pink](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Socialize with others
 - Having a group of friends and peers can have a profound impact on energy levels. Find groups of like-minded people (both within and outside of education) to connect with socially.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Join a local CSTA chapter](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Recharge in the best way for you
 - Knowing whether you're an introvert or extrovert can help you maximize your energy. Introverts recharge through solo activities (reading, journaling, going for a walk solo, etc), while extroverts recharge through interacting with others (grabbing coffee with a friend, going to a social event, etc). Choosing activities that align with your energy profile can help you recharge more quickly.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Introvert vs. Extrovert](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Get outside

- When possible, take 5-15 minute breaks outside. Sitting on a bench, taking a lap around your school, or having your coffee outdoors can help signal to your body to wake up.
- Resource(s)
- Complementary strategies
-

- Your idea

- Describe your idea
- Resource(s)
-
- Complementary strategies
-

Attention

- Remove notifications from your devices
 - There's some research that suggests every interruption while working on a task takes 5-15 minutes to get back to the attention state you were at before your interruption. Every notification that goes off on a phone or computer can have a profound impact on your attention while working. Turn your devices onto "do not disturb" mode or remove notifications entirely from your devices. That email can wait until Monday.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Attention training (meditating)
 - Meditation can be a form of attention training if you spend time walking, sitting, or lying down and focusing your attention on one sensation (or alternating every couple of minutes between multiple sensations). Schedule some time in your day to meditate and train your attention.
 - Resource(s)
 - [Calm](#)
 - A meditation app
 - [Ten percent Happier](#)
 - A podcast and app to learn more about meditation
 - [Waking Up app](#)
 - Another meditation app
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Organize your space around your attention
 - Find ways to separate your work from your leisure by dedicated space specifically for work that you can leave when you're done for the day (e.g., close an office door when you're done working). If you don't have room for a dedicated space, rearranging monitors on a computer can help. For example, face one direction when working and change your orientation when gaming on the same devices. Although a simple switch in positions, it can have a profound impact on your attention.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Analyze your Schedule
 - Take 5-7 minutes to map out your typical work week on Google Calendar (or on paper, if you prefer). Include teaching time, meetings, etc. If you know you'll have coverage or an extra meeting pop up weekly, put those on the calendar (it's okay if the day of the week changes). Once you've mapped out your managed time, Analyze your schedule: Where are your blocks of unmanaged time? How long are your blocks of time? Where do you typically have high energy? Low energy? When do you think is best for creative work? Once you've analyzed your schedule, use other strategies to best plan out your unmanaged tasks.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Avoid Multitasking
 - Multitasking is a myth – your brain can't do two things at once. Instead, when we're "multitasking," we're instead engaging in what is called "task-switching." Task-switching reduces your productivity by 20% with each additional task you add, because it takes you (and your brain!) time to switch both mentally and physically to a

different task. Instead, commit to one task at a time, decide what “done” looks like for that task, and work on only that task until it meets your definition of done.

- Resource(s)
 - [Multitasking is a myth \(Video\)](#)
- Complementary strategies
 -
- Batch your work
 - Batching your work refers to categorizing your work into like tasks and tackling like tasks together. Batching helps you work more efficiently because it’s less of a cognitive lift to move through tasks that utilize similar parts of the brain, while also minimizing multitasking. An example of this for teaching might be doing all of your grading (new grading, regrades or latework, etc) two days a week, rather than grading a little every day. I like to group my work into four categories: Creative tasks, Decision-making/cognitive tasks, Logistics tasks, and 15 minute or less tasks.
 - Resource(s)
 - [How to batch \(video\)](#)
 - [What batching looks like on a schedule \(Video\)](#)
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Film yourself on time lapse or lock your phone away
 - Phones can be a huge distraction. If you notice yourself constantly checking your phone, put it in a different room or lock it in a drawer while you’re focusing. Can’t do this? Consider filming yourself working on time lapse. Not only will it render your phone unusable, but you’ll get some cool B-roll to share on social media.
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -
- Your idea
 - Describe your idea
 - Resource(s)
 -
 - Complementary strategies
 -

General resources

- Podcasts

- [A Productive Conversation with Mike Vardy](#)
- [Beyond the To-Do List by Erik Fisher](#)
- [First Things by Brandon Vaughn](#)
- [GTD - Getting Things Done by David Allen](#)
- Recommendations for preventing burnout in education (from the [#CSK8 Podcast](#))
 - [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
 - [Part 3](#)
- [The 5 AM Miracle by Jeff Sanders](#)
- [The Productive Woman by Laura McClellan](#)
- [The Productivity Show by Asian Efficiency](#)

- Publications

- [A World Without Email by Cal Newport](#)
- [Atomic Habits by James Clear](#)
- [Deep Work by Cal Newport](#)
- [Digital Minimalism by Cal Newport](#)
- [Eat That Frog by Brian Tracy](#)
- [Essentialism by Greg McKeow](#)
- [Getting Things Done by David Allen](#)
- [Goals by Brian Tracy](#)
- [Hyperfocus by Chris Bailey](#)
- [Preventing Burnout by Jared O'Leary](#) (free)
- [SuperBetter by Jane McGonigal](#)
- [TEA: The 3 Pillars of Productivity You Need To Unlock Your Full Potential](#)
- [The ONE Thing by Gary Keller](#)
- [Think Like a Monk by Jay Shetty](#)