

Welcome

As people are settling, please ...

Locate or write out your to-do list.

Use whatever format and professional/personal focus works for you. You will work with this list, but don't have to share it with all of us.



How to get it all done?!?

To-do lists, productivity and priorities
for educators trying to do it all

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First Literacy
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About Me:

Coordinator, HCC Adult Learning Center;
writer-trainer-consultant in my “free” time;
brain-geek and life-long learner; partner,
two-under-two mom; gardener and novice forager.

I believe in reflective practice, my students, and
color-coded spreadsheets.

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Agenda

01

TO DO LIST
ASSESSMENT 

02

“JUST WORK MORE”

03

PRIORITIES

04

PRODUCTIVITY

05

ON NOT
DOING IT ALL

06

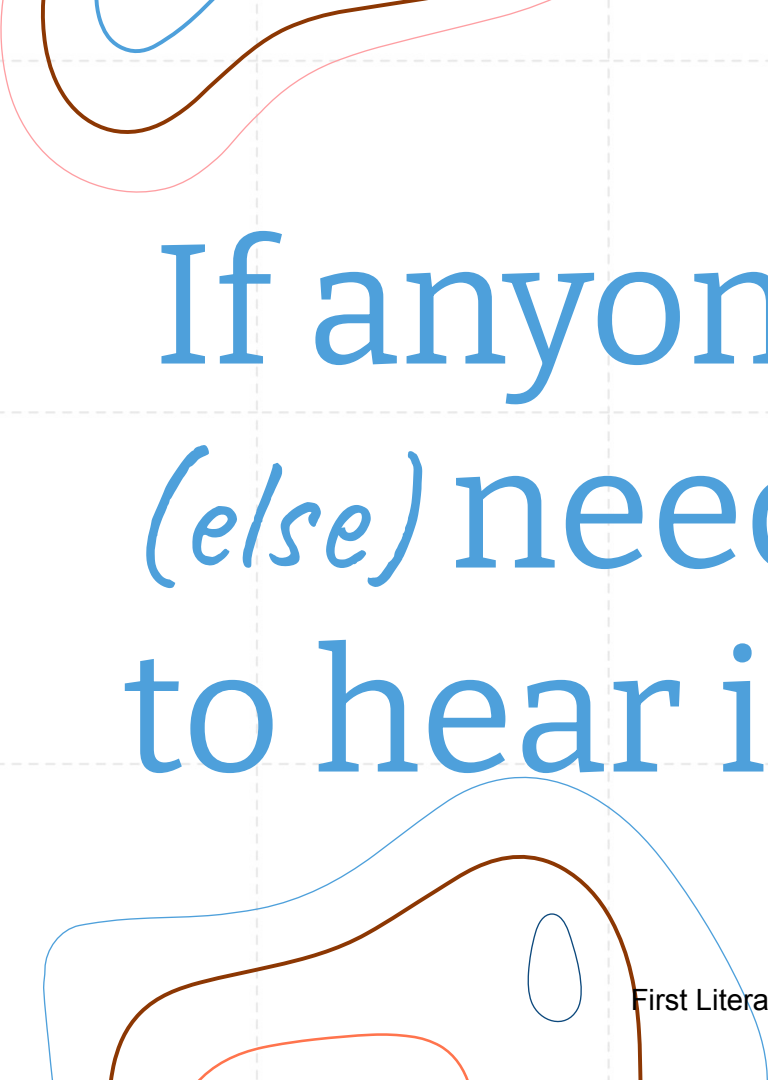
TO DO LIST
STRATEGIES 

A few guiding ideas

We can all benefit from being intentional about our time & tasks

There is not a single “right” way to be productive, make a to do list, or to set priorities.

You do you.



If anyone
(else) needs
to hear it:

You are not your
to-do list.

Your value as a human is
not dependent on how many
things you check off (or
don't).

Encouragement to (Re) Define Success

~~Checking off everything on my list~~

(This might not be within your control)
(Or even the best use of your time)

*Making time and energy to do
the things that matter*

(Also, you get to define “matter”)
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01

To Do List Assessment

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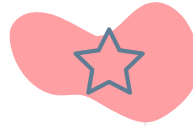
Assessing your to-do list

- ❑ We'll annotate different items using symbols. One item *might* get multiple symbols, but every item should get at least one.
- ❑ If you can't or prefer not to write on your actual list, grab scrap paper or a digital file and make a new list under each category.
- ❑ When you're done with each symbol, give me a (real or digital) thumbs up



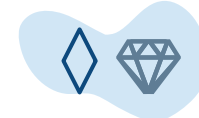
HEART

Do you love to do it? Does it bring *you* joy?



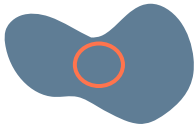
STAR

Does it make a big difference?
(for your students, for colleagues etc.)



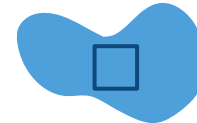
DIAMOND

Doing this now will save time/hassle/work in the future



CIRCLE

None of the above



SQUARE

It's a requirement.

What's not on the list?

Tasks you do so often you don't bother writing them down?

(Hi there, making dinner and checking my email)

Times you spend with people? For yourself?

Distractions and time sucks?

Please add these, and give them the appropriate symbols too



Love

Impact



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Future



Development

Required



Workshop



None

Reactions and Reflections

Please take a minute to look over your list and the annotations you've added to it.

What do you notice?

What do you feel?

What do you think?

Priorities



HEART

Do you love to do it? Does it bring *you* joy?



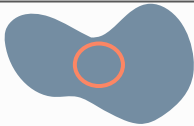
STAR

Does it make a big difference? (for your students, for colleagues etc.)



DIAMOND

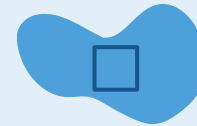
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CIRCLE

None of the above

Questioning and/or
Boundaries



SQUARE

It's a requirement.

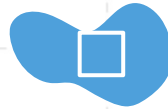
Productivity

So now what...?



PRIORITIES

Let's make time to give our best energy/attention to these



REQUIREMENTS

Are they really? If so, let's do them as efficiently as possible



NONE of the ABOVE

Why are they on the list?
Can we just stop?

02

If your plan is just
work more / just
do it all ...



Multi-tasking

Our brains can not think about multiple things at once.

They switch back and forth (rapidly)

It's exhausting.

(you probably knew that part)



Total Work Hours

Our productivity *declines* when we work more hours in a day, or in a week.

We are less creative and not as good at problem solving

We make more mistakes (that we have to deal with later) and are less efficient.



Burn Out

It happens.

Turn over impacts teams and organizations,
not “just” individuals

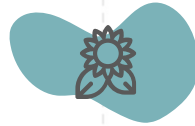
Resource: [To Avoid Burnout, Work Less and Ignore
'Productivity Propaganda'](#)

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Three Ways to Think about Working Extra



Volunteering



Your
wink-wink-
nod-nod
contract



Unpaid
Overtime

So Now What...

If the “just work more” plan isn't going to work, then what?

Reduce the amount you're doing ...

Prioritize

and /
or

Reduce the time it takes to do it ...

Productivity



03

Prioritize





Priorities: The Short Answer

The most important thing you can do to be more productive, is to identify your priorities.

Priorities > Productivity



♥ Hearts

Do you love to do it? Does it bring *you* joy?

These may not look “productive” to other people ... that’s ok.

Remember: productivity is not about checking off as many things as possible. It’s about having the time and energy to do the things that matter.

Doing things that energize you, helps you keep showing up for the other things.



☆ Stars

Does it make a big difference?

Pareto Principle and the 80/20 Rule

“The Pareto principle states that for many outcomes, roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes.”

Bottom line: Some tasks give you more ‘bang for your buck’ than others. If you can’t do everything, do these tasks first/best.



☆ Stars

Does it make a big difference?

There are different kinds of ‘important’

- ❑ Important to your goals/outcomes
- ❑ Important to your values
- ❑ Important to take care of your people
- ❑ Important to someone else

*(These *might* be more like requirements... squares not stars)*



☆ Stars

Does it make a big difference?

Pareto Principle and the 80/20 Rule

Know **your** triggers

If there are particular undone tasks that will throw you off/leave you scattered ...

and/or

If there are particular tasks when done make you feel better/focused/on top of things ...

... these might make a big difference to your overall productivity

Productivity Reflection

Consider the times you feel most productive

- What time of day? Day of the week?
- Where? An office or classroom? Home, a library or coffee shop?
- Are there environmental cues (music, coffee etc.) that help?
- When you can pluck away at something? Or deep dive into it?
- Are you most productive solo or around others?
- Are there tools or organization that help?


*What flexibility do you have to arrange more of these ?
And/Or to put your highest priority tasks into these windows*

04

Productivity



Diamonds:


Doing this now will save  time/hassle/work in the future

Sometimes it takes time (now) to save time (later)

This might look like... organizing, making a template, teaching your students a routine or skill etc.

These are gifts to your future self.


Diamonds:

Doing this now will save 
time/hassle/work in the future

Looking for diamonds

- ❑ What tasks am I doing the same thing, repeatedly?
 - Can I batch, automate, template etc.?
- ❑ What tasks seem harder/to take longer than they have to ?
 - Can I streamline, level up my skills, or find a more efficient way?

Diamonds:

Doing this now will save 
time/hassle/work in the future

Breakout Group Check In

“Sometimes it takes time (now) to save time (later)”

- What have you done in the past? How has it gone?
What current tasks could you make easier in the future? How? Do you have ideas? Do others in your group?



Producticrastination:

“Productive” procrastination: Doing something that maybe-sorta-feels productive, while procrastinating on the thing that really needs to get done

That task you just can't seem to check off..

If it's hard to **start** it might be ...

- Inertia
- Overwhelm or lack of clarity
- Lack of urgency
- I just don't want to *(that's real)*
- Not actually a priority *(and, that's not necessarily a problem)*

That task you just can't seem to check off..

If it's hard to **finish** it might be ...

- Perfectionism
- Distractions / divided attention
- Discouragement
- Unclear goal posts
- (Or, again, maybe not actually a priority)

That task you just can't seem to check off..

It might help to ...

- Do a VERY SMALL part, build momentum*
- Set a timer (I'll do X minutes ...)*
- Break it into stages or sections*
- Set or request a deadline*
- Ask for clarity*
- Set a time with a friend/colleague*
- Define 'good enough'*
- Block out a specific time*

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- Set or request a deadline*
- Ask for clarity*
- Set a time with a friend/colleague*
- Define 'good enough'*
- Block out a specific time*
- Power hour*

Tactics

It quite likely helps to ...

Identify the problem

(Source:Gretchen Rubin)

Strategy



06

To Do List
Strategies

Top tip

- ❑ Make a to-do list for a specific time frame, not all the things ever



Getting Started

(especially when you're not sure
where to start)

- ❑ Swallowing Frogs ([Mark Twain / Asana](#))
- ❑ Getting points on the board

What to Do

(especially when you're feeling unmotivated or aimless)

- ❑ Identify top priorities ahead of time
- ❑ Decide ahead: Time blocking / scheduling
- ❑ Eisenhower matrix ([more info](#))
- ❑ Pairing / Reward tasks
- ❑ Keep a “low brain power” or “quick wins” list to make use of wasted time
(but beware of producticrastination)

Feeling Productive

Sometimes we actually, objectively **are** productive (meaning, we are getting things that matter done) but we still **feel** overwhelmed/ unproductive/ unmotivated

- ❑ Highlight instead of crossing off
- ❑ Ta-dah lists ([more info](#))
- ❑ Theme days / times
- ❑ Working to **a** completion point



07

Implementing

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Re-Review your to-do list

- ❑ Can you **eliminate** any tasks all together?
- ❑ Are there tasks you want to **add**, to make things work better in the long term or in line with your priorities?
- ❑ Do you want to **change** how you make or organize your list?