

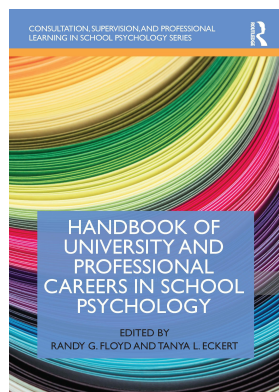
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Being a Productive Scholar

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21 Being a Productive Scholar

*Robert J. Volpe, Lyndsay N. Jenkins, and
Amanda L. Sullivan*

You have most likely turned to this chapter because you are looking for ways to increase your scholarly productivity or perhaps you aspire to be a highly productive scholar, that is, to be among the most productive scholars in our field. There is no shortage of valid reasons in support of these goals. Scholarly productivity is a critical determinant of one's success in academe as it plays a central role in obtaining academic positions (Martinez, Floyd, & Erichsen, 2011), achieving tenure and promotion (Green, 2008), and developing notoriety among your peers (Grapin, Kranzler, & Daley, 2012). Your productivity not only can have an impact on your starting salary, but it also typically has a significant impact on your annual raises (Mittal, Feick, & Murshed, 2008), which are compounded over the course of your career. Beyond these personal considerations, scholarly productivity can impact how your program or unit is viewed by your discipline (Kranzler, Grapin, & Daley, 2011) and how it is viewed by administrators at your institution (McGrail, Rickard, & Jones, 2006). Further, productivity can influence your competitiveness for awards and grants where your scholarly products and contributions are part of the selection criteria.

In this chapter, we will first discuss what it means to be a productive writer. This question should be contextualized in consideration of the expectations of your workplace and also on your short- and long-term career aspirations. Second, we will discuss common barriers to scholarly productivity—there are many! Third, to overcome these barriers that we all face, we will consider three resources that you will want to optimize to become a productive writer. Briefly, these resources are (1) time—that is the amount of time you spend being productive, (2) human resources including mentors and collaborators (both students and peers), and (3) your own motivation. Being a productive scholar means effectively balancing all the demands placed on us by our professional and personal lives. We will discuss these issues throughout the chapter. Finally, we will discuss how to maintain your productivity over the course of your career.

What Does It Mean to Be a Productive Writer?

The first author of this chapter recalls clearly being on his first academic job interview and being asked, “How many papers do you expect you will write each year?” It is a fair question. The reply was “Three or four a year, I suppose.” This was an aspirational figure, as opposed to a specific plan at the time. The surprising follow-up was (it has been a while, so paraphrasing here), “You know the top scholars in school psychology publish between 6 and 8 articles a year.” The figure cited by the interviewer (someone I greatly admired and still do) was accurate if one were talking about the top two or three most productive scholars in the field of school psychology. Grapin et al. (2012) examined the number of articles published by tenured and tenure-track faculty in American Psychological Association (APA)-approved school psychology programs and found the top five most productive scholars published between 31 and 40 articles between 2005 and 2009 or roughly between 5 and 8 articles per year. Examining the complete

list of the top 25 school psychology faculty (out of 274 in the study) indicates that one could have published as few as three papers a year and still been in the top 9% of school psychology faculty in regard to the number of publications in that time period. Grapin et al. also found that the frequency of publication for school psychology faculty is not normally distributed. Rather the data were positively skewed with many faculty publishing only a few articles and very few faculty publishing at the very high rate mentioned previously. The median number of publications over the 5-year period was 4 (or 0.8 per year), and the mean was 5.8 (or 1.2 per year). Over half of the sample published less than one journal article per year, and almost 16% of the sample did not publish a single journal article over the 5 years investigated. This is somewhat consistent with other studies investigating the productivity of school psychology faculty (e.g., Carper & Williams, 2004; Little, 1997; Roberts, Davis, Zanger, Gerard-Morris, & Robinson, 2006; Wagner, Lail, Viglietta, & Burns, 2007), which have found the average publication rates to be between one and two publications per year. As you might expect, context is an important consideration. Publishing at a rate of one or two publications per year could be considered stellar performance at many institutions where teaching loads are high but woefully inadequate at many institutions where a greater proportion of workload is allocated to research.

The quantity of publications one produces is important for the reasons indicated previously, but as we so often hear, quantity does not equal quality. One indicator of publication quality that is being used increasingly in hiring-, tenure-, and merit-decisions is the degree to which publications are being used by peers. One way to quantify peer use is to count the number of times the publication is cited in other publications (Hargens, 1990). Unfortunately, using this metric is potentially problematic as one might have one or two highly cited papers and others that have never been cited or have been cited just a few times. Several indices have been developed to address the limitations of publication counts and citation counts. The most commonly used of these is the *h* index (Egghe, 2010). Developed by Hirsch (2005), the *h* index is calculated by first listing publications by the number of times each one is cited in descending order. *H* is the *n* number of papers that have been cited at least *n* times. So, if you published seven papers, and they were cited 20, 16, 15, 11, 10, 4, and 2 times, then your *h* would be 5. That is because you have five papers with at least five citations. Raising your *h* to 6 would require that one of those last two papers gets cited at least 6 times. Numerous other indicators of scholarly impact have been developed, but *h* remains the most popular (Egghe, 2010).

So, what is considered a good *h*? There are several factors that should be considered in answering this question including academic rank, type of appointment (e.g., tenure-track and non-tenure track), the type of program and institution (Joy, 2006; Ruscio & Prjapati, 2013; Watkins & Chan-Park, 2015). Watkins and Chan-Park (2015) analyzed the *h* indexes of 401 tenure-track school psychology faculty and provided normative data based on academic rank and type of program (specialist, doctoral, or combined). Since *h* is dependent on the database from which citation data are drawn, they provided data based on two sources (Scholarometer and Scopus). Keeping in mind that as in the distributions of the number of publications, distributions of *h* index scores are positively skewed, as reported in Watkins and Chan-Park, the mean *h* for an assistant professor in a specialist program would be 1.66 (*SD* = 2.55) compared to a mean of 3.39 (*SD* = 2.91) for an assistant professor in a doctoral program.

The problem with using *h* for our purposes here is the lag time involved. For those of us with a decade or more in the field, citations and our *h* index can provide useful feedback as to what extent our work is being used by others. Citations, however, can take a long time to accumulate. Rate of publication is most certainly the more proximal and immediate indicator of potential impact. In addition, different databases draw on a different universe of citations such that, in our field and others, Google Scholar's estimated *h* index for a given scholar tends to exceed substantially those provided via other sites (e.g., 30–40% higher in the case of this chapter's authors), such as Scopus or Web of Science.

Tips in Thinking about Productivity and Impact

Although we have briefly summarized information concerning rates of scholarly productivity and indicators of impact for our field, it is important to consider your own environment when evaluating your productivity and impact. One would not expect a scholar with a heavy teaching and service load to have the same scholarly output as someone with a workload weighted more heavily toward research. In thinking about your productivity, it is also important to consider both your short-term and long-term career goals. A very salient goal for assistant professors is to obtain tenure at their current institution. It is tempting to look at the accomplishment of recently promoted colleagues for a guide regarding the level of scholarly productivity and impact that might lead to successful promotion. However, it is important to note that sometimes the goalposts are moved. Institutions can rapidly change their criteria for tenure. In our careers, we have seen changes in staffing (i.e., new presidents, provosts, deans, and tenure committees) that can lead to notable differences in expectations for tenure. Ideally, one would want to publish at a rate that would support promotion not only at one's current institution but also other institutions where one might want to work—hence the saying, “Do the work for the job you want, not the job you have.” That is the ideal, but there is a great deal of variability in the degree to which positions and institutions support research productivity. If you happen to be looking for your first academic position, the best advice we can give you is to find a job that you can leave. That is, positions with heavy teaching and service expectations with few supports for, or emphasis on, research can be difficult to leave because it is difficult to maintain productivity in these types of settings.

In addition, the increasing proliferation of university positions outside of the traditional tenure-track may present challenges to the research productivity of individuals in these positions. Even in research-intensive institutions, supports and opportunities can be extremely limited for individuals for whom research or publishing (in the case of the researcher who must continually secure grants or contracts) is not an explicit part of their duties. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when holding constant institution type and controlling for institution mission and hours of appointment, tenure-track faculty spend more time on research and are more productive but also work more hours—the equivalent of an extra month per year—than their non-tenure-track peers (Bland, Center, Finstad, Risbey, & Staples, 2006). Although this may invoke a number of questions regarding demands of tenure, it also presents an opportunity: Even if you are not in a tenure-track position, if you can carve out an average of 4 hours per week of research time, you may start to close the gap with your tenure-track peers.

Although gender and age differentials are two of the most researched factors related to productivity, discrepancies seem to lessen over time and may be less pronounced in school psychology. That is, although men appear to have a productivity advantage over women faculty, this finding is largely isolated to pre-tenure (and are even reversed among senior scholars) and is diminished when age of children, level of specialization in research area, and desire for recognition are taken into account (Duffy, Jadidian, Webster, & Sandell, 2011). In a 2017 study, half of the most productive school psychology faculty from 2010 to 2015 were women (Johnson, Schneider, Hulac, & Ushijima, 2017). Age-related declines in productivity are likely related to increased administrative responsibilities and declines in resources and motivation (Duffy et al., 2011). More broadly, there are numerous factors shown to be related to research productivity, including institutional characteristics (e.g., organizational features, culture of research, resources, rewards, and mentoring programs), leadership characteristics (e.g., style, structures, and role modeling), and individual characteristics (graduate training and mentoring, skills, habits, motivation; Bland et al., 2006). Some are malleable, but many are not—insofar as you may not be able to readily change institutions or redo your graduate training—so we focus on the most malleable factors in this chapter. Moreover, such historical or institutional predictors

tend to have only weak relations to long-term productivity (Duffy et al., 2011), and even past productivity is only a weak predictor of future output (Joy, 2006), so we encourage you to consider writing productivity as highly malleable. Accordingly, we emphasize those factors you can most readily influence to support your writing goals.

Key Resources to Cultivate

Irrespective of your work setting, there are several resources that are important to nurture to reach and maintain high levels of scholarly productivity. In this chapter, we will talk about the following four resources: (1) time, (2) human resources (mentors, colleagues, and students), and (3) your own motivation (Table 21.1). Although your work setting can influence each of these resources, in the sections that follow, we focus on how to cultivate each of these important resources. We do not consider a fourth important resource here (community partners) since there is a chapter in this volume exclusively focused on that topic (see Chapter 27 by Miranda et al. and Volpe & Briesch, 2013).

Time. The time one spends advancing their research agenda is an important factor impacting scholarly productivity (see Santo, Engstrom, Reetz, Schweinle, & Reed, 2009). Adequate time is needed to read, reflect, plan, conduct research, and write, and so we often talk about protecting time for research (e.g., a writing day). Protecting time for research is necessary, but it is not sufficient for producing high-quality research. As school psychologists, we often work to increase rates of student academic responding as this is an alterable variable that is of central importance to academic success (Greenwood, Delquadri, & Hall, 1984). In seeking to enhance your scholarly productivity you must work to maximize your productive research time (PRT).

PRT is the amount of time you spend engaged in work that advances your research agenda (Figure 21.1). Take a moment to think about the average amount of PRT you have accumulated per week over the past 4 weeks compared to the amount of time you have spent engaged in other tasks. Time is a very scarce resource. You have your whole work week (between 40 and 60 hours per week, maybe more). Within that work week, you have the time (hopefully you do) that you have scheduled for writing or other research activities, but much of this gets displaced by competing tasks (service and working on meeting deadlines of various kinds).

Table 21.1 Tips in Regard to Key Resources

<i>Key Resource</i>	<i>Tips</i>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach in your area of expertise • Align service to your area of expertise • Schedule large and small blocks of time • Get out of the agonizing phase • Plan ahead of writing time • Prioritize writing • Engage with others
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out different mentors for different needs • Work on expanding your network of mentors and colleagues • Get the most out of your students • Support your students based on their unique skills and motivations • Discuss roles and deadlines with collaborators • Embrace technology that facilitates collaboration
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful to set attainable goals • Provide yourself with regular feedback toward long-term goals by breaking down large tasks to a series of smaller ones • Maintain a growth mindset

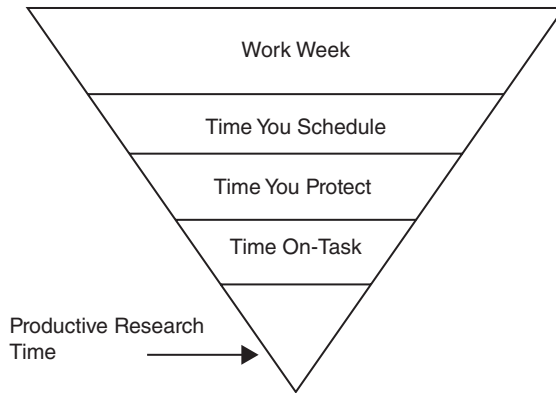


Figure 21.1 Productive research time (PRT).

Scheduling time for research is not enough. The time must be protected, meaning that you have eliminated distractions and prioritized that time over competing demands. So, a subset of that scheduled time is protected time. Just as scheduling time for research is important, so too is protecting that time. We do not allow other demands to displace our time in the classroom, so why should we allow them to displace the precious time we have scheduled for research? It is best to schedule your research time when you are least likely to be affected by competing demands. Protecting your time is an important skill to develop, and another important skill is to maximize your time on task during that protected time. We have some colleagues who only write at home because there are just too many distractions at the office; others work only at the office because there are too many distractions at home. Keep track of those things that lead to distraction and seek to minimize them. If you are an obsessive email checker, work on increasing your discipline to only check email at certain times of the day (i.e., turning off alerts on your desktop and phone).

We clearly have to work hard to maximize the time we spend on task, but only a subset of on-task time is PRT. Unfortunately, many of us have used much of our on-task time engaged in activities that do not advance our research agenda. Having a clear sense of your research agenda (see Kranzler, Blake, & Van Norman in Chapter 18) and being committed to advancing that agenda is the best defense from getting pulled into projects that are not related to your research core. Such projects sap the scarce resource of time. Careful planning and prioritizing of your research efforts can maximize the potential that your efforts will yield outcomes that are usable and will advance your research agenda. Each of us has been approached by someone who has collected a large dataset only to learn later that some design or measurement flaw rendered the data useless for its intended purpose. Setting priorities and planning your time and projects are critically important.

Tips for maximizing PRT. You probably have heard from other sources that it is critically important to protect time for research, but if you are like most of us, you have been struggling to protect that time consistently and to make the most use of the limited time you have. Maintaining a consistent pattern of scholarly productivity takes much effort, but hard work is not enough. It is important to work on your skills of organization and time management and to creatively recognize opportunities to create time for research. We tend to think of research, teaching, and service as three separate silos of activities, with our limited time divided between these three areas. However, we encourage you to seek opportunities to convert some of your teaching and service time to PRT.

Teaching in your area of expertise is an excellent example. First, it turns your class preparation into time you can use to expand your knowledge of the relevant literature and to more deeply explore the material of which you are already familiar. Engaging students in the literature can be a fount of new insights and ideas. Your classes can also be an opportunity to collect data and engage your students in preparing manuscripts. Literature reviews in your area of interest are a great way to develop student writing skills and can lead to presentations and publications for you and your students. Classes can also be an opportunity to collect data in schools. Arguably the best way to do this is to teach a service-learning course. In a service-learning course, you engage students in activities relevant to the course objectives that benefit the community. Such engagement is designed to contextualize learning objectives and should provide some benefit to the community. The first author applied this philosophy to an academic interventions course wherein graduate students provided academic interventions in partner schools. The graduate students benefited from first-hand experience delivering interventions, some of these projects resulted in conference presentations or publications. Moreover, students receiving the interventions benefitted from the additional resources provided to the school, and the engagement with partner schools helped build sustainable partnerships between school and the instructor (more on this later).

Just as you can direct some of your teaching efforts toward research, it is sometimes possible to do the same with your service obligations. This can sometimes be easier in regard to national service. For example, serving as a reviewer for a journal can provide you with a first look at new research in your area and expose you to research and statistical methods that might be novel. Serving on a task force in your area of research is another way to align service with areas of research interest. Although we do not always have control over the service we engage in at our institutions, when presented with more than one option, it may pay to consider the alignment of each option with your research interests or skill sets that might be gained or sharpened, thereby benefitting your research objectives. In sum, it is helpful to be creative in breaking down the silos between research, teaching, and service. It can lead to increases in PRT and help keep your mind actively engaged in your program of research.

Many academics tend to protect one day a week for research. Although setting aside a writing day can help compartmentalize competing demands, it is difficult for most of us restart a new task after putting it down for a week. It is particularly difficult to start a new writing project. It is best to schedule both large and small blocks of time for writing throughout the week. Everyone is different in regard to what time of the day is best. Some of us like to write the first thing in the morning, while others like to write in the evening. When beginning a new writing project, it may be best to schedule a larger block of time because it takes some time to gain momentum. Conversely, when a project is well underway, one can be very productive in a short block of time. Struggling to start a new writing project is one of the key threats to maximizing PRT. This is where most of us engage in elaborate procrastination rituals. We can spend days, weeks, and months procrastinating before we eventually sit down to write our first sentence. Such procrastination can lead to stress and negatively affect your self-efficacy. One thing that can help with such procrastination is to consider that there are basically two parts to any writing project. There is the agonizing about it, and there is the actual writing of it. When you find yourself stuck in the agonizing phase, it may help to self-reflect as to where the block is. It may be helpful to start with an outline. If that proves difficult, just start with a bulleted list of ideas you want to convey or questions you have that require further review of the literature. The point here is that if you are outright avoiding writing, you are not able to track down where the block is.

A key strategy for maximizing PRT when writing is not to wait for your scheduled writing time to decide what you are going to write. Have a clear plan and a goal for each writing session. We will talk more about goal setting later in this chapter. Once you have started the writing

process, set aside time at the end of each writing session to plan out what you are going to do next time you open the document. You can think of this as writing a note to your future self. The more you capture your thoughts regarding next steps while you are already warmed up, the easier it will be for you to get a rolling start at your next writing session. There are sometimes unexpected free blocks of time during the week (e.g., when a meeting is cancelled, or you have a small block of time between meetings). It can be helpful to keep a to-do list of both small and large writing tasks. A list of small tasks can be very helpful in making good use of an unscheduled hour (e.g., updating a reference section or proofreading a section of a manuscript). The take-home message here is that working longer weeks does not result in increased productivity; it is important to use your time effectively. Doing so requires planning ahead in regard to being creative about creating research time, planning how you allocate research time throughout your week, and making the best use of your writing time once you are engaged in the writing process.

Managing competing demands. At this point, you may be wondering how you go about creating research time in a schedule overpacked with obligations, either family, administrative, advising or supervising, or service. For some of us, carving out a little time each day, even 30–60 minutes, can make all the difference between producing something this year and seeing another month, semester, or year go by with no discernable research progress. For others (including the third author), blocking out larger chunks of time is more manageable (for discussion, see Sullivan, 2018). In these cases, regular, frequent meetings with collaborators can help ensure that research projects continue to progress, but the bulk of writing happens at less frequent but longer intervals, either once a week, month, or semester (e.g., when the kids are in school but the university is on break). When working more (e.g., starting the workday a little earlier or later to create writing time) simply is not feasible or sustainable because most days are already jam packed, this approach can be applied to strategically leverage lulls in other areas of work.

In addition, although finding and holding time is a challenge, relying on social support can be especially helpful. This might include in-person or remote writing partners who meet for a few hours of time to keep each other accountable, if only to maintain the writing appointment where competing demands might lead you to give up your solo writing time. If you lack potential partners, there are even websites that allow you to partner with strangers. See <<https://thewritelife.com/find-a-critique-partner/>> for a list of online options.

Although, there is a paucity of rigorously designed studies, in their systematic review McGrail et al. (2006) found consistently positive impacts for writing support groups on annual publication rates. Common elements of support groups examined in the McGrail et al. study included (a) regular meetings, (b) discussions of novel ideas in regard to their potential for publication, (c) discussion of the shared challenges in writing, (d) manuscript review, (e) encouragement through the review process, and (f) engendering camaraderie and goal sharing. A formal monitoring component involving sharing goals and regular progress updates among participants appears to be a useful component (Morss & Murray, 2001).

Writing retreats or hunkers can also be helpful. These are extended writing blocks, from half-day to multi-day arrangements, where writers come together for concentrated writing time (see MacLeod, Steckley, & Murray, 2012 for description). Ideally, these approaches are combined with briefer, frequent intervals of solo writing time to create sustainable, impactful practice (Murray, 2013). As mentioned earlier, the key to all these strategies is *protecting* your writing time, no matter how brief or infrequent it is. As with writing partners, the social context provides for personal and group accountability.

Human resources. Another critical skill to develop in becoming a productive scholar is nurturing human resources. Few scholars in the field of psychology publish single author papers, with less than 7% of United States psychology publications being single-author papers in 2010 (Piocuda, Smyers, Knyshey, Harris, & Rai, 2015). Thus, the vast majority of researchers use a

collaborative approach to writing. The ability to maintain healthy collaborations with each of these collaborators may be the difference between having a highly productive writing career and a mediocre one.

If you embrace the idea that using a network of collaborators can increase your writing productivity, there will certainly be some obstacles to overcome when dealing with this human resource. Your obstacles may be finding the best humans to resource but may also include how to facilitate the production of written work, accountability, and dealing with problematic relationships. In this section we explore how to utilize mentors, colleagues, and students to increase your productivity, as well as offer suggestions for maintaining healthy collaborations and how to deal with problematic ones. There is very little empirical work on collaborative writing to guide this section, so we have primarily pulled from our own experiences.

Mentors. Many early career scholars have a “default” mentor, their advisor in graduate school. However, it can be problematic to have a “one-mentor-fits-all-needs” mentality. To grow your mentoring network, you must first identify your goals. Let’s pretend that one of the authors of this chapter would like to pursue external funding from a research foundation, increase their aptitude with hierarchical linear modeling, and manage the demands of being an associate professor while having three kids (hint, hint: It’s the second author). That person would probably not be able to find a single individual to support them in all those goals. Yes, perhaps this unicorn mentor exists somewhere, but this is unlikely. It is better to identify one or two potential mentors for each of the three goals.

There are a variety of ways to reach out to potential mentors, but we recommend that you do not send vague “Will you be my mentor?” emails. Instead, you could ask to meet for coffee prior to a faculty meeting, set up lunch at an upcoming conference, or ask for a 30-minute conference call. These discrete, time-limited, “tell me about your experience” meetings can grow into a fruitful mentorship rather than an open-ended request for their time. Bottom line: You need to identify your needs, determine who is doing the thing that you want to do, and extend polite requests for discrete blocks of time. Here is some motivation for growing your mentoring network: There is evidence that faculty who are involved in formal mentoring programs are more productive on average compared to their peers who did not engage in mentoring (Muschallik & Pull, 2015).

Colleagues. In addition to mentors, you may want to add colleagues to your network. Colleagues are individuals who are interested in the same area of research or have complementary skill sets. We have several suggestions for making connections with potential colleagues. At conferences, attend symposia and paper presentations. Either the presenters or other people in the room may be potential collaborators. Poster sessions can also be rich with collaboration opportunities. Do not limit yourself to the annual conferences. Think about attending a conference that is in your specific area of research. These may also be excellent places to find interdisciplinary colleagues. In addition, your mentors may have former or current doctoral students that may be great colleagues to add to your network as well. People within your own department, college, and university who are geographically close are a good choice. Some universities have internal grants to facilitate interdisciplinary research projects, which can be a bonus!

Students. Engaging students to maintain or increase productivity as a writer can be useful, if done correctly. Taking on the responsibility of managing a team of students can require an unbelievably large amount of time, so you must find the delicate balance of taking on enough students that can be helpful without being overwhelmed with how to manage them.

Undergraduate students often can work in a research lab for course credit or volunteer to gain research experience before applying to graduate school. They can be very useful in conducting literature searches, summarizing articles, coding, transcribing, proofreading, and entering data.

Graduate students can do all the same tasks but are also probably looking for more experience with writing as well. It is appealing to think that graduate students can help with manuscripts

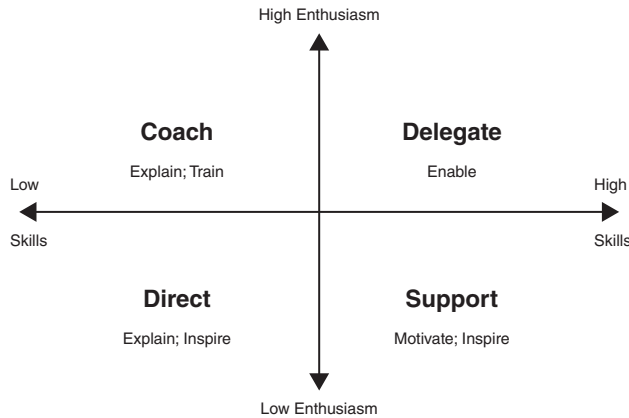


Figure 21.2 Situational leadership.

blocking your publication pipeline, but it is important to have realistic expectations about their abilities and level of motivation. Situational Leadership Theory (SLT; see Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2013) provides a useful framework for supervising a diverse research team. Applying this framework, it is up to you as the leader of the team to identify your most important tasks and priorities. Once you have established your priorities, the next step is to identify the readiness level of each member of your team and match your leadership style to the supports required for each team member. Figure 21.2 is based on SLT, but we encourage you to read the original source for a more detailed rationale for applying the model. You will see from Figure 21.2 that when student skills are low, there is a greater need to support the students' skill set, and when motivation is low, there is a greater need to inspire students. We have worked with students where both their skills and motivation are high. In such cases, we have found that it is best just to get out of their way. However, in many other cases, skills are low and much instructional and motivational support is needed for the tasks to be completed. Keep in mind, however, that these quadrants are not fixed. The overarching goal is to move students to the point where these supports are no longer needed.

Tips for collaboration. Once you have increased your network of colleagues, it is important to maintain healthy collaborations through good communication, shared accountability, and wise application of technology. Communication can occur via email, phone, text, video conference, or in person. Here is a selection of items that should be communicated: (1) authorship order, as originally discussed and renegotiated as needed based on actual contributions, (2) the target journal outlet, (3) the assignment of sections of the paper and procedures for writing these sections (e.g., Will one person draft the entire manuscript and others edit? Will everyone write in parallel and then share their section? Or will one person write a section and then pass the manuscript to the second person to write their section?), and (4) the plan for remaining accountable to your co-authors.

Discussing accountability is extremely important for projects to move toward completion. Timelines should be set and agreed upon publicly by all contributors. If one contributor tends to miss deadlines, the lead person should send polite reminders prior to the deadline to ensure that they are making progress. One suggestion for built-in accountability is to have working meetings, whether virtually or in person. Find 2 hours everyone is available and ready to work, either online or in the same room.

In the spirit of maintaining healthy collaborations, try not to assume the “all work and no play” mentality. You can hold colleagues accountable for self-care as well. Ask what non-work

activities are planned, confirm that they are engaging in self-care, inquire how their families and children are doing, discuss their next vacation, or see if their dog recovered after surgery.

Communication and collaboration can be facilitated with technology. Using a shared drive like Dropbox or Google Drive can be a useful place to store files. Drafts can be updated in real time and collaborators can simultaneously work in the same document. Holding video conferences through platforms such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, or Skype can also be useful. There are project management websites and apps (e.g., Trello, Asana, and Basecamp) that can also be helpful in fostering collaboration.

Problematic relationships. Despite attempts to establish and maintain healthy collaborations, it is inevitable that most researchers will end up having at least one problematic relationship. You may find that difficulties arise due to different work styles, an inability to meet deadlines, low quality work production, or interpersonal challenges. If you find yourself dealing with problematic collaborators, then you have to decide if you can continue with them on the writing team. If you want to (or have to) deal with them, the approach you take may vary. You should politely but firmly tell them how the project will proceed with or without their contributions, saying something like “Please send your section by X date, or otherwise I’m going to have to reassign your section so we can move forward” or “We are submitting the manuscript at the end of next week, so send any comments you have by this Friday.” You may have the ability to firmly deal with them in the moment but avoid future collaborations.

Your own motivation. We are several pages into this chapter, yet you are still reading. Why? You must have some reason to do so, otherwise you might have instead chosen to read some other book or do something else entirely. Your motivation to read this chapter appears to be sufficient to enable you to resist the urge to do other things and instead focuses your attention to this page. Being motivated means, “*to be moved* to do something” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). It is the drive to do some particular thing at a given time. Your motivation to complete the tasks necessary to be a productive scholar is the final key resource that we will discuss in this chapter. The degree to which you can maintain your motivation in the face of challenges will determine your success in becoming and remaining a productive writer. Yes, but there are so many ways that our careers can sap our motivation. How does one maintain motivation? There are a host of theories pertaining to motivation that are relevant to our discussion. School psychologists should be familiar with relevant works by Albert Bandura (e.g., Bandura, 1997) and his students (e.g., Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994) and the writings of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan on Self-Determination Theory (see Ryan & Deci, 2000). The limited space afforded by this chapter is not adequate to describe each of these relevant works, but the advice we offer is informed by work conducted by these scholars and others, most notably Carol Dweck.

To complete any challenging task—and scientific writing is undoubtedly such a task—we must have the will to do it and stick with it. Motivation is not fixed, global, or stable; instead, it is specific to certain domains, it modulates, and it is malleable (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). There are many potential sources of motivation including intrinsic interest in the topic (Ryan & Deci, 2000), what one hopes to get out of the experience, and one’s expectations as to whether the goal will be achieved (e.g., Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). Motivation can be generated and nurtured through our self-regulatory practices and the effects they have on our beliefs about ourselves (Zimmerman, 2002).

Feedback is so important in maintaining your writing productivity. Providing yourself with a rich schedule of feedback can be useful in fueling your motivation and being resilient to threats to your motivation. Imagine going to your local gym and hopping on one of the treadmills. Maybe there is a television on it, and you watch the news while logging in a mile or two. Yes, that tends to be tedious and boring. What if instead, you had been training for a 5K or half-marathon, so you went to the gym to complete a scheduled six-mile run, and you decided that you wanted your pace to be 8 minutes per mile. Let’s say this was a somewhat challenging

goal for you, so you needed to pay careful attention to your splits (the average pace per mile). If you are a runner, you know that when you are running a challenging pace, you get out of breath, there are aches, and your body is telling you in a number of ways to stop or slow down. What keeps the runner going in these situations is a goal. Without a clear goal, we are pretty much hardwired to stop running. Goals have incredible power, but they lose that influence if they are not perceived as attainable. If you hopped onto that treadmill and you set a goal for a 4-minute mile, you might stop as soon as you realized you were no Usain Bolt. (He ran a 3:43:13 mile in 1999.) For goals to be useful to us in regulating our behavior, they must be achievable (if you struggle with setting realistic writing goals, see Murray, 2013, chapter 3 for examples).

Zimmerman (2002) outlined a cyclical model of self-regulated learning that illustrates this very point. In this cyclical model, there are three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. The forethought phase involves goal setting and strategic planning. Your goals should be explicit as to what is required for success and when the task should be complete. We are hoping that you use the topics we have discussed in this chapter for your strategic planning, that is to plan how you will reach your short- and long-term goals. During the performance phase, one works toward achieving the established goal. This involves self-control and self-observation. Self-control is what we need to do to stay on track, it may be resisting the urge to check email or make a trade on your fantasy football team. Self-observation is keeping track of how well you are doing in ignoring these competing pulls on your attention. This can involve informally checking on one's progress, or it could be more elaborate, such as self-recording or even self-experimentation. To-do lists are basic examples of self-recording. It can be quite rewarding to check off tasks as they are completed. The act of completing a task is rewarding and checking off a box serves to increase the saliency of that reward.

We have employed a number of different self-recording strategies including charting words written on a timeseries chart (for a particularly odious writing assignment) and recording time on task versus time off task using an electronic chess timer or using the Pomodoro technique (see <https://francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique>). Self-recording can be employed for self-experimentation, which would involve you comparing your data across several conditions (e.g., writing in the mornings versus the evenings or at the office versus home). In the self-reflection phase we make judgments and reactions to our performance. Did you reach your goal? Are you satisfied with your performance? To what do you attribute your success or failure? These judgments affect our self-efficacy and should have an impact on the goals we set for ourselves moving forward. Those goals affect our future performance.

Tips for maintaining motivation. Should you find yourself struggling with your motivation for writing consider the treadmill example and ask yourself if you are making the most out of the system of self-regulation described previously. The model can be applied to both short-term and long-term goals. Sometimes we set goals that are too distal to guide our behavior, and what is a reasonable goal one day may be completely unrealistic on another day. The advantage of a short-term proximal goal when it is both realistic and explicit is that it provides rapid feedback on performance. Marathon runners may have a goal of completing the 26.2 miles in 4.5 hours, but they most likely are not waiting for the finish line for feedback. It is likely that they are setting goals for pace throughout the race, which helps them to push on. It is best to set a series of short-term goals however and have your long-term goal in mind. Otherwise, you run the risk of getting pulled off task before working toward the next short-term goal. We find a marathon to be an apt metaphor for an academic career. It is all about endurance and understanding how your system of self-regulation and motivation works. Finally, in this chapter, we hope we have conveyed that the skills and attributes required to be a productive writer are highly malleable as opposed to fixed (see Dweck, 2006). If being a productive writer was not difficult, it would soon lose some of its appeal. Nevertheless, being a school psychology researcher can be quite

Table 21.2 Books, Web Resources, and Comic Relief that Support Writing Productivity

Books

Darley, J. M., Zanna, M. P., & Roediger, H. L. III (Eds.) (2004). *The compleat academic: A career guide* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Silva, P. J. (2019). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Web Resources

Cathy Mazak: <https://www.cathymazak.com/>

Laura Vanderkam: <https://lauravanderkam.com/>

National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development: <https://www.facultydiversity.org/>

The Early Career Forum: <https://www.sssp-research.org/earlycareerforum/>

Comic Relief

Dear Mr. Journal Editor, It's me again (Roy Baumeister): <https://roybaumeister.com/2003/10/14/dear-journal-editor-its-me-again-pdf/>

challenging. Grant applications and manuscripts get rejected; we receive critical reviews of our work. It can be discouraging. A quote from one of the highly productive scholars interviewed by Martinez et al. (2011) illustrates what Dweck would call a growth mindset or a belief that your qualities are things you can grow through hard work:

I read reviews, then ignore them for about a week or so before I re-read them and begin revision. It's just too close to jump from reading to revision; I need to let the feedback "simmer" before I'm ready to respond. I remind myself of some of the things I've said about other people's work and remember that I've probably learned more from reviews than from reading over the years. It helps take some of the sting out of the process. (p. 702)

This is a great quote because it acknowledges just how discouraging this kind of feedback can be. Nevertheless, the interviewee clearly sees the feedback to make their work better. It is seen as an opportunity for growth. Table 21.2 includes a few books, websites, and some comic relief that may further enhance motivation.

Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed what it means to be a productive scholar given the context of your work environment and have expanded that discussion to consider one's scientific impact. Central to establishing and maintaining productivity are the cultivation of the three essential resources of time, people (mentors, colleagues, and students), and your own motivation. The cultivation of these resources involves skills that you likely have to some degree already. We hope that increasing your awareness of the central role these resources play in your scholarly productivity will lead you to apply the strategies we have discussed in this chapter to help you contribute to the literature in your area of expertise. Throughout this chapter, we have directed your attention to other contributions to this volume that may be drawn upon to help you achieve your goals. Though we have drawn on the literature where possible, given the paucity of research focused on strategies to increase rates of academic publication, we have largely drawn from our own experiences in preparing this chapter. One final recommendation for you to keep in mind as you seek to increase or maintain your scholarly productivity is that once you establish momentum do your best to maintain it. Stalled momentum is one of the key reasons for a lack of academic productivity (see Boice & Jones, 1984). This would seem to be an obvious suggestion; use the strategies that

we have discussed here to start and keep your momentum going. It is much easier to maintain productivity than it is to re-establish it once momentum is lost.

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