

Transcript of recording from Planning Your Winter Semester

Recording available to download here: [Write Every Day \(Recording\)](#)

I sent this out to my newsletter list initially but will be sharing on JoVanEvery.ca

Introduction

Jo Van Every: 00:00 Hi, this is Jo VanEvery from the academic writing studio. When we did Planning Your Winter Semester in December 2018, Sarah asked a really good question at the end that I think a lot of people ask. So here's the conversation that we had and what I said about it.

The question

Jo: 00:17 Hello Sarah. So what would you like to ask or say?

Sarah: 00:21 So you know, how often, if research is one of your priorities, a lot of people recommend blocking time out for it every day.

Jo: 00:34 Right...

Sarah: 00:34 I've realized how difficult that is to do. So I'm just wondering where, you know, how would you would go about that, whether that would still be something that you do, even if it's just 20 minutes a day?

Jo: 00:47 Well, some people find everyday works really well for them, but a lot of times it's hard to do because yeah, you're right. It's hard to block a significant amount of time every day because you've got a lot of other stuff going on, right?

Write every day to reduce starting inertia

Jo: 01:02 So there's two ways of thinking about the every day part. One is that you've got a lot of other stuff going on and if you find that the starting inertia when you haven't looked at your project for several days is significant, then spending even 15 minutes every day can make those longer sessions better. Right.

Jo: 01:29 So a couple of years ago we had somebody in the group who was at a college in the States where she was teaching like four classes every semester. Right. Like 4 different ... you know, she was really busy. She did come to Meeting With Your Writing on Monday. She was able to carve out that couple of hours on Monday morning to come to Meeting With Your Writing. But that was it. And what she said was she found that when she got ... like that the Monday was really good and she was really glad she had it, but it took her like a first half an hour to kind of just remember what she was doing. And then I suggested doing the 15 minutes a day in the other days and she said that made a difference to how the hour and a half of Meeting With Your Writing felt. She was more productive. She felt more productive. She felt like she could get right into it. Okay.

Jo: 02:18 So the 15 minutes don't have to be like big significant stuff. It can be a little bit like keeping a pot of soup on simmer on the back of the ... Right. Like you're, you're just keeping it warm so that when you want it to be hot, it's quicker to bring it to the boil. Yeah. Okay.

Not writing every day

Jo: 02:39 Not everybody needs that. Right? It may be that what you find is that doing big blocks once a week, if you can do a like a slightly bigger block once a week or if you have a whole day, like I don't know, do you, are you able to have a research day?

Sarah: 02:55 Yes I am. I'm very lucky.

Jo: 02:57 Right. So that's the thing. So it's really, if you're able to have a research day and you've been able to protect that and really spend that whole day working on your research, then that's maybe like that's a lot of time, like that's a fifth of your week really that you're spending on research. So you know the fact that you're... So that might be. So you might want to think of it more as okay on Mondays (because I think your research day's Monday, right? Because you've come to Meeting With Your Writing) so on Mondays you get to do your research. The great thing is you have it at the beginning of the week, so it's like the first part of your working week. You get to focus on your research and then you can go through the rest of your week being like, I did that already. I'm not like ... I gave it my best part of the week. I was rested. I focused on that and now I'm going to focus on my teaching and my service, like my meetings, meetings, students, all that. And I'm going to give it all my attention. And then I'm going to have the weekend, or at least part of the weekend,

and I'm going to rest and recharge and like have some fun and spend some time with my family. And then on Monday I get to do research again.

Figure out what works for you & experiment

Jo: 04:02 And if that works for you and if because you have the whole day, if you don't mind that you spend the first hour or so kind of getting warmed up and reminding yourself what you're doing then just go with that. Like that's what works for you. If you're feeling frustrated on Monday morning when you come back to it, then think about doing a little bit every day but only little bits. But if you're not feeling frustrated, but then one day a week during term time is awesome. And you could try it for a semester and see how it works. Try it for two months and see how it works and then adjust. Right? Nothing's set in stone.