**TWR - episode 108**

Hey there think right revised listeners. I'm popping in to let you know that this episode is brought to you by my virtual summer writing groups program because Summer is starting very soon. And if you have writing goals, I would love to support you. This is a program that includes a series of weekly group coaching meetings to help you stay accountable to your writing goals, but also have a little bit of fun along the way.

Each virtual groups package includes these weekly meetings some private coaching sessions with me on topics of whatever you want to talk about access to my nine-part course on academic writing and Publishing and always a lifetime membership to prolific which is my online community for academic writers and we have so much fun over in prolific.

So if you're ready to tackle some writing goals, I hope you'll join in groups for summer 2019 start the week of June 10th. So you can check out the program today at Katie Linder dot work backslash. - writing - groups and you can also sign up to be notified for future offerings of the program if you want to think about it for the fall or winter.

I always offer this program about four times a year. I hope you can join in you're listening to think right revised episode 108. Hey there, and welcome to think right revised a podcast that offers a peek behind the scenes of productive writing life. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder. In this episode.

I want to talk a little bit more about using a Gantt chart to map out your scholarly. This is something that I mentioned in a previous episode and someone actually wrote in and said can you talk about this more? And what does it look like? So I want to go ahead and put it in the show notes so that you can take a look.

I'll just do a quick screenshot so you can see what it looks like. But this is something where it's definitely you can make it what you want. It doesn't have to be anything special and I made it in just literally a word table. But the idea of the Gantt chart is it's almost like a timeline and I guess I should preface this by also saying I'm not an expert in Gantt charts.

It's a project management tool. I'm using it in the way that works for me. So if you are an expert again towards and you're listening to this and going that's not really what they're supposed to be is for I apologize for that. This is just my understanding of what Gantt charts are. So it's basically a way of showing kind of overlapping timelines and sometimes those things I think can be assigned to different people.

I tend to assign them to different projects. So because I'm always juggling multiple things in my writing pipeline. It's helpful for me to have something like a Gantt chart so that I know that they're not all kind of releasing at the same time for example, and I'm not having to disseminate multiple projects at the same time.

It allows me to see what the different stages are that the different projects are in. So it would be relatively easy to do. This is also kind of a pipeline visual where you're just listing out what stages your projects are in or even like a modified. Like agile scrum board, which I've also talked about in some other spaces were basically you just have three categories.

What's in your backlog. What are you currently working on and what is done and you kind of move things along that pipeline, but with a Gantt chart what I've decided to do is basically have different stages of my publishing Pipeline and usually these stages are things like going through an IRB.

Application when I am actually actively recruiting for data collection when we're going through a data analysis phase which can take a while depending on our data set when we are writing up the results of that analysis, which can also take a while and then when is Art kind of active dissemination.

And I say we because I'm mostly talking about projects that are through the Research Unit that I lead at Oregon State eCampus where I have a small team that works with me. It is me and I have a full-time to full-time researchers. One of whom is a postdoc and also an admin who helps so between the four of us.

This is a really helpful tool to be able to share where we are at any given stage and also it's a great way to track is any project kind of falling behind. And a lot of these stages for us just to give you kind of a sense of our timeline. A lot of these stages will stretch over a term or two. So for example, we might be doing data analysis in like the winter and spring of a particular year.

So it's not necessarily stuff that's assigned to like a two-week period it's because we're juggling so many things it's often, you know assigned over multiple. And so when I do this Gantt chart it's a table that across the top is a series of columns that are basically the upcoming terms. So it's broken out by quarters of the year.

So fall spring summer winter. And then down the side on the left. I have across the rows would be the different projects that were working on and then I color code the different stages of where we are. And then I use the merge cells function in the table to kind of. Place where it what the different tests are for the different projects.

So for example, I might have in the first row with project one that in this upcoming fall and winter we're going to be analyzing data for that project. And so I would merge the fall and winter cells together. Put the kind of background color in that's the analyze data color and then note that we're analyzing data during that time.

Now on another row. We might not have that same fall winter schedule. We might have a summer fall schedule. And so I would merge the summer and fall cells and then say what we're doing. So basically what it allows me to do once I see the different stages of the projects and how I've kind of map them out.

I can then order the projects so that I can see what are the ones that are releasing first. And that's how I've done it on this particular kind of modified Gantt chart is I've looked to say what are the things that were kind of writing up first and releasing first. So what ends up looking like as you have.

From the top to the bottom of the chart you have the stuff that we're releasing and disseminating the most quickly and then it goes kind of in declining order from the things that are soonest to the things that are farthest away. And again that also helps us to know like is the most current project that we're working on even though we're working on many at the same time.

But the one that is releasing first ahead of the other ones, is it actually on track and most recently. Actually found out we got a couple IRB approvals on the same day actually and when we had been waiting for for like three months and when we had like just put in so it was a really kind of random thing that they both came through on the same day.

And it meant that we were going to be recruiting for two studies at roughly the same time and we hadn't expected the three-month IRB to take that long. And so we were already pushing out the project kind of farther in terms of our recruitment schedule than we had planned. And then the other one we thought was going to take longer and so like our whole timeline for that got kind of reshuffled and it ended up meaning that there was another project.

We were planning to recruit for that. We ended up bumping until the fall. And so I was able to look at this chart and say what is the true effect of moving the stuff around are we going to have a window of time where we aren't disseminating anything for example, or where we have a gap in between.

And we don't we were able to kind of Shuffle things in a way that you know, pretty much every term or two were releasing a new project which allows us to disseminate it at conferences do webinars on that project release a report have content for social media accounts work with our marketing team so that they have content to work with and the goal is really always to have something that folks are able to interact with and that we can be updating our website with and and releasing in the in-person events that we go to like.

As so I don't want to have any gaps in that schedule or if there are gaps they need to be intentional. And so anyway by moving these projects around. And by looking very intentionally at this chart and how all these things interact together. I'm able to strategically plan what's going on with all of our different projects.

Now this also helps me to take on additional things. So when we are contacted by a potential collaborator for example, and they want us to do another project. I can look at this chart and say when are we available again? Basically to add something new to what's on our plates and right now on this chart.

I think we have six or seven different projects and they're basically mapped out through I think summer of 21 in terms of our release schedule. Now that's quite a ways out. I mean that's you know two years from now. And so if I'm wanting to add one more thing to our plates it often means bumping something back or you know deciding that something is going to need to take a lesser priority than the thing.

I'm adding to our plates or that the thing I'm adding to our plates can't be really released until more than two years from now because of what we have going on. Now some of those projects that could be added to our plates could be really big and it could take them awhile. For example, if we decided to do a book project or something like that, it probably would take a full two years before this thing would come out and so I think that there are ways to kind of Juggle that pipeline but the the visual of having the Gantt chart is something that's really helpful for me to really see, you know, what it is that we're able to align with each other and also making sure that we're not doing too many of the same things at once because in terms.

Kind of the logistical behind the scenes tracking of Recruitment and things like that. It can be a little bit challenging to have multiple projects happening at the same time. So I will post a visual like a screenshot of this in the show notes so you can take a look if you're like still not able to figure out what I'm talking about.

But the other thing I would recommend is go into Google and just search in the image section for Gantt charts. If you want to see what this looks like, there are software programs that do this. I am obviously not using one. It's not something that. I felt like I needed to really learn how to do in a more formal way.

But I think that using just this table and the color coding has been something that's been helpful for me. So, of course, I'd love to hear if you have questions about this. I did mention. I'm not an expert in this area, but I'm happy to share more about the process of how we're juggling these things.

If you would find it interesting or helpful. You can always email me a contact at Katie Linder dot work. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender. You can connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore lender. Or you can always write me a letter at Katie lender PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three, two one.

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