You are listening to, you've got this episode 341. Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life. I'm your host, Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode, I'm going to share my plans for my annual restful July.

Now, for those of you who've been listening for a while, you might remember that I take each July off of content creation, and mainly this is a break from creating weekly blog and podcast episodes before I dive back in to wrap up. The second half of the year. Now this is called Restful July because when I first started this several years ago, it was really cuz I just needed a break and I was trying to figure out how to do that in the middle of the year.

How to build in a bit of a break for myself, give myself a little more margin and time. And I have just kept the title of Restful July. Even if I sometimes build in other projects into the month, that maybe don't make it as restful because I eat up the time with other things. But, uh, taking this break does give me a much needed chance to evaluate all of my content channels to see what I like to create, to brainstorm ideas for the remaining five months of the year, from August through December.

Um, and so I, I find it really helpful to just kind of take a bit of a pause midyear, so, Um, each year though I also sometimes filled in other projects, as I mentioned, uh, during this window of time cuz I give myself a little bit of time back. And I thought I would share about that in this episode because I'm planning to do a bit of a project push in the month of July.

And so I thought I would talk a little bit about it. So the main project that I'm planning to work on in July is the second edition of my book Unblended Course Design. I mentioned in a previous episode that I was getting a little bit stressed about progress on this project, so I'm actually taking two weeks off of work to kickstart it, and that includes the first week of July.

I'm kind of starting at the tail end of June, and then going through the first week of July with like that 4th of July holiday. I also have a creative retreat scheduled in July with the prolific community that I lead. Um, so that will be another full day that I can devote to the project. All together though, I'm really hoping that I can get through about a third of the work on the book, which is basically updating about five chapters during this retreat from my day job and, and the other times that I can devote throughout the month of July.

That's really what I'm kind of hoping to do. This will really set me up to understand what else I need to get done in the remaining months before the book deadline in November, and I think I will just feel better. I think I will feel a weight lifted from my shoulders if I can make significant progress on this project, you know, at the halfway point of the year, roughly when I still have several months left to work on it.

Now, I thought it might be helpful for people who are also working on larger writing projects this summer to share what I've done to prepare for this bookwork because I really wanna hit the ground running, um, in those couple of weeks when I'm off of work and see how far I can really get with this. So the first thing that I did, and this was like months and months ago when I wasn't sure when I was actually gonna start on this in earnest, is I gathered a bunch of books from my publisher.

That I think I wanna incorporate into the new edition. Um, the book was originally written in like 20 12, 20 13. It's been almost 10 years. And then it came out, I think in, I. Well, that might be a little bit too far away. Maybe it was like 2014, uh, 2015 cuz I think it came out in 2016. So, um, there's quite a bit of literature that's happened since then.

And of course the pandemic, there's quite a bit that we've learned about, um, blended and hybrid learning in that period of time as well. But having all these books on hand makes it way easier for me to like peruse them quickly, decide where in the book I want, might want to include them or cite them. And of course I'll be looking into a bunch of like articles as well, but just having the stack of books, um, is also really helpful.

Now the next thing that I did is I put all of the notes for the individual chapter edits into a section of Asana where I'm compiling a master list of work for the project. And I've also shared this with my co-author. So the book was sent out to reviewers to get kind of their feedback and and thoughts and ideas on a second edition.

Then we broke down those reviewer comments by chapter, and then I added in my own notes and my co-authors notes about possible changes. And this is really gonna help me track for the chapters I'm working on. Have I done a comprehensive review and update for each chapter? Now there's certain things that apply to every chapter.

For example, updating literature reviews, and um, changing some language and things like that. But there's also specific things that are kind of unique to different chapters as well that I wanna make sure we're covering. Okay. The next thing that I did, and this was super helpful, is I recently met with my co-author and we spent about 90 minutes talking through our plan for revision.

And this conversation included dividing up the chapters between us, so we kind of knew who was tackling what. Um, talking through some high level changes in language and terminology that we know we wanna update throughout the manuscript. Um, and also establishing a communication schedule. So when I'm offered these two weeks, Um, how can I provide updates to my co-author of kind of how things are going so that, that we both have a sense of kind of progress that's being made on the manuscript Now?

I think that this kind of conversation that we were able to have, it served a couple of purposes. One is it gave me a plan so I kind of know what I'm tackling when I'm, when I'm on this two week break, but it also kind of started to help me anticipate the work a little bit more because this is a project that has been.

Really on the back burner. I haven't given it much thought at all other than knowing I need to do it. So being able to have this conversation really allowed it to kind of come back to the forefront of like, yep, this is coming, this is happening. And, um, starting to just get my my brain kind of back into the mode of thinking about this kind of writing project.

Um, okay. So another set of tasks that I've outlined for myself to do actually this week as I record this, is to create the folder structure and the change log document for the book revisions. So my co-author and I are gonna be working with just a Dropbox, um, folder or set of folders that once one of us has completed work on a chapter, the other one can review and kind of see what's going on and add in any additional, um, changes that we might wanna make.

We also want to create a detailed change log for the publisher so they have like a really clear sense of how the revised edition differs from the first edition. And one of our kind of, um, additional kind of components here, I won't even call it a challenge, it's just kind of a variable, is that the original publisher that I worked with on this book, Was recently acquired by another publisher, and so we're also working with kind of like a new editorial team for this project.

And given that transition, I think that the change log should just really help all of us, um, in terms of making the process more efficient for everyone involved, especially people who may not be as familiar with the manuscript. Okay. So the other thing I think I should just mention here because I think it's really important and I I certainly don't take it for granted, is that I have worked with my co-author, um, for this project before and we have a very comfortable set of like communication methods.

And a strong working relationship. So that is an amazing plus as we're tackling this project together in a relatively short period of time. I have co-authored a book with this person before. We have kind of worked through, you know, outlining and editing and revising and giving feedback and all of those kinds of things in the past.

And, um, like I said, I don't take that for granted. It's actually really significant when we're moving through a project at a, a pretty rapid pace. Okay, so the last thing is I've cleared my schedule on the days that I plan to be writing. I'm going to try and tackle one chapter roughly every couple of days, which admittedly is an ambitious schedule.

I've never done this before, but I feel like if I'm starting with chapter drafts that already exist, it should go faster than like creating something from complete scratch. So we do have a few new chapters that we're gonna be adding to this, um, manuscript, but. I'm also just kind of updating things that are already there, so I'm, I'm hopeful.

That, that is gonna go faster. I'm also really motivated, I would say, by the lack of time that I have, because once fall hits, I just don't think I'm going to be able to devote a ton of time to this. So I'm, I'm kind of like using that fear of like, I'm gonna run out of time, um, to see how quickly I can move through these revisions.

And that is giving me a feeling of kind of excitement about like, how far can I really get with this in a short period of time. My goal is to get up in the mornings for like a quick workout and then settle into like four to six hours of deep work, and this is what I found in previous retreats. That works pretty well for me.

It's usually a couple, two to three hour blocks, and then I'll take the evening off, or kind of like recovery reading, you know, watching TV or something. I'm usually a pretty quick writer and a pretty fast rev advisor as well, so I'm hoping that even like four hours of work in a day could see significant progress.

Okay. All that said, I have to admit, I'm feeling a little bit nervous and rusty like it's been a few years since I've worked on a book project. The last time I had a book come out was in 2020, so the positive self-talk that I'm using as you know, I'm like really big on positive self-talk is, um, I've done a lot of things to help this be successful.

Um, I can adjust as needed along the way if what I expect to happen is different than what actually happens. So really giving myself a lot of flexibility here and also like some progress is better than no progress, given that I haven't been able to devote much to this throughout the year. It's just a big deal that I'm gonna get anything done at all.

So I'm actually really looking forward to diving into this writing project and having the dedicated time to work on it. It feels like such an incredible privilege to be able to do that and to be able to take these couple of weeks to get it done. Now of course, I would love to hear if you are working on any writing projects this summer, you can always email me at hello dr katie leonard.com.

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