



# A Time-Management Workbook for Teachers

**6 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR TIME AND MAKE TIME FOR YOU**

AUTHORED BY JULIE MASON, HEAD OF CONTENT & CURRICULUM & THE  
TEACHERVISION ADVISORY BOARD

 **TeacherVision**<sup>®</sup>



## Why We Created This Workbook

It's the middle of the week. I just finished teaching my last class, and I'm exhausted. The Exit Tickets that I distributed at the end of my last period are scattered about the classroom floor like confetti. The whiteboard is covered with examples of how to use commas in a series, and students' drawings. Students' homework is spilling out of the turn in bins. My classroom library looks like it should be declared a national emergency. While I attempt to organize the room, several students come in with questions about the homework. The interruptions continue for the next hour. I look at the clock, and I realize that I have ten minutes to get to my son's soccer practice, and I haven't eaten anything since the two Luna bars I finished while distributing handouts and in between classes.

Does this sound familiar?

If you have spent any time teaching in a classroom, you likely feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to get it all done, let alone feed yourself, and use the restroom.

Here is what I know: there are only so many hours in a day, and you have a limited amount of energy. You can't do it all, nor should you.

I also know that you can better manage your time so that you can replace the Luna bars with a lunch that includes something green.

Here is the hard truth: If you don't have enough time, it is on you. It means that you need to take action and make changes so that you can take your time back.

You can develop systems to save time grading.

You can make a backup plan for the inevitable roadblocks that will derail your schedule and plans.

You can set yourself up for success before the week begins.

A few small shifts and changes can make a big difference in how you manage your time. We looked to our TeacherVision advisory board, a group of experienced teachers from all across the country, for their best time-management techniques and tips, while also drawing on our experience.

We hope that the resources in this workbook leave you feel empowered, and with more time on your hands.

Take Care,

*Julie*

# Table of Contents

● Sunday Sit Down	5
● Morning Routine	8
● Meal Prep	10
● Always Make a Plan B	12
● End of Day Organization Checklist	15
● Grading Time Savers	17
● Author Bios	22



## Sunday Sit Down

When I was in the classroom, I was really good at planning my teaching week. In fact, I had a planner where I diligently mapped out my lessons. What I wasn't really good at doing was planning my week. I didn't schedule my workouts, pencil in when I was going to get the check engine light on my car looked at, let alone choose meals and prepare snacks for the week.

Being a teacher was a central part of my identity, but my mistake was that I allowed it to become my dominant identity. Yes, I was a teacher, but I was also a wife, a mother, a sister, a friend, a neighbor, and a human being that needs good nutrition, lots of water, exercise, sleep, and time to pursue what brings me joy.

My life was all work, very little balance.

One of the most effective ways I was able to better plan my week, and manage my time was through what I call, The Sunday Sit Down.

Every Sunday morning, I sat down at our kitchen table and made a list of everything that was happening that week. First, I focused on school. Next, I focused on family. Then, I focused on me.

Once I had that list, I was able to see that my son's school had a half-day on Tuesday, I had a dentist appointment Saturday, and my husband would be out of town on Wednesday, I was able to plan my week.

I then charted out my week and included everything from teaching and family obligations to scheduling my workouts and time for my husband and I.

If you have a partner, it is a great idea to include them in this process so that you can ask for help, and make sure that everything is covered.

SUNDAY SITDOWN	WEEK OF:	
SCHOOL	FAMILY	ME

MY WEEK				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY



## Morning Routine

I believe that how you start your day is the most important step you can take to preserve your energy and effectively managing your time. Every morning I wake up before my children. I drink a glass of water and my coffee, and I do some journaling to clear my mind of any clutter. I make the same smoothie, and I pack my teacher bag the night before. Each of these choices reduces my stress level and sets me up for success.

If I skipped breakfast, and got hungry at work, I'd likely grab something quick and unhealthy or drink too much coffee. If I didn't pack my bag the night before, I might leave something important on the kitchen table, like my computer charger. If I didn't wake up before my children, I felt resentful that I had no time to myself. The choices that I made put me in the driver's seat, and I felt in control.

All of us at TeacherVision agreed that these tips are how we have successfully established morning routines. Here they are:

### **Tip: Start Your Day An Hour Earlier**

Wake up an hour earlier than you do now. I know. You are rolling your eyes right now, and thinking, but I already get up early! You have to trust me on this one. If you wake up and you are already running late, you are going to start your day stressed.

## Tip: Get Up First

If you have roommates, a partner, children or family visiting, chances are your day starts off with taking care of others. This means you start your day on the defensive instead of the offensive. I can't tell you how many times I woke up on the wrong side of the bed because a seven-year-old woke me up asking where his favorite shirt was, and I stepped on a pile of Legos trying to find it in his messy room. When I am the first one up, I can enjoy a cup of coffee, read something I want to read or do some yoga.



Jessica Peresta

**"My favorite way to prepare for Monday morning is to make sure I'm prepared as much as possible on Sunday night. Mentally prepare yourself by getting enough sleep, packing your lunch, and getting your outfit ready the night before. If you're a parent, make sure your kids stuff is ready to go the night before as well. The more you can do the night before, the easier Monday mornings will go and the "I have a case of the Mondays" won't feel as hard."**

## Tip: Eat Your Greens

There were many mornings where my breakfast consisted of whatever stale cookies I could find in the teacher's lounge. The years that I was constantly sick were the years where nutrition was at the bottom of my priority list. One of the most effective ways to start your day off with a breakfast that is quick, easy and will energize you is to make smoothies. I put the ingredients in plastic bags and stored them in my fridge so all I had to do was dump the contents into my blender and push a button.



Julie Mason

**"My favorite go-to smoothie is a few handfuls of spinach, two cups of almond milk, a spoonful of almond butter, a handful of frozen blueberries, a few ice cubes, and some protein powder. I start my day with energy and feeling good that I ate something healthy. Plus, I can drink it on the way to work, so it saves time."**



## Meal Prep

Remember those Luna Bars? I can't tell you how many days I counted a Luna Bar as lunch. Because I had to get up so early, I often forgot to pack a lunch or didn't have time. When I got home at the end of the day, I was too tired to cook, and relied on pizza and takeout. There is nothing wrong with ordering a pizza, but there is something challenging about getting sick more often, and having no energy.

While the concept of planning your grocery shopping and meals might sound as appealing as going to the dentist, it can change your life and your health.

If you want to eat better, and have more energy, start small. Plan out your breakfast for the week, and make sure you have the ingredients and recipes you need to be successful. Starting each morning with a smoothie that has spinach, almond butter, almond milk, and frozen blueberries makes a big difference in how I feel and how productive I am.

You can then think about lunches and dinners, and when on the weekend you can grocery shop and prep for your meals.



Tara Dusko

"As teachers, we devote so much of our day to our jobs. We leave early in the morning, spend at least 7 hours at school, and get home just in time for dinner. When I get home from work, the last thing I want to do is cook. I also have to pack three lunches and supply my whole family with breakfast every morning. After countless nights of takeout and grabbing unhealthy breakfast foods as we walked out the door, I knew I had to do a better job planning our food for the week. Now, I plan out our meals for the week over the weekend and prepare everything ahead of time. This helps us eat healthier and saves money because we don't eat out nearly as often."



## Always Make A Plan B

Schedules change, and the unexpected can quickly unravel your plans. Rather than address a roadblock as it comes, I always recommend anticipating potential challenges and developing a Plan B before anything happens. A backup plan is essential when you are juggling all your obligations.

### **Tip: Create A Backup Plan**

Make a list of all the potential roadblocks that might come up. For example, a flat tire, getting sick, transportation delays, a parent-teacher conference at your child's school, an injured pet, a broken washing machine, a doctor's visit, etc.

Next, come up with a plan for how you will handle these unexpected events. For example, if you get a flat tire, do you have Triple AAA? Do you know how to change it yourself? Do you have all the tools that you need in your car? Is there someone else you would call? Who do you need to contact at school?

If you are a parent, having a list of babysitters or family members that can help you if your child gets sick and needs to stay home makes scrambling to find coverage that morning

## **Tip: Prepare A Substitute Plan**

You never know when you might have to miss a day of school. I know from experience that having a substitute teacher can often feel like more work than teaching yourself. This doesn't mean that the substitute isn't qualified or won't do a good job, but the preparation is left to you, even though you won't be in the classroom. If you are really sick, putting together plans is the last thing you will want to do. Here are some suggestions and advice from a veteran teacher, [What's In My Sub Binder](#).

Make sure you leave the following information for your substitute:

- Schedule
- Note From You
- School and staff information with contact numbers
- Class Lists
- Arrival and dismissal procedures
- Class rules and management procedures
- Emergency procedures
- Lesson plan with modifications for students with IEPs
- Substitute Notes Form(How did the day go?)

ROADBLOCK	NEXT STEP	NOTES

# How Did The Day Go?



**We Didn't Get To:**

---

---

---

---

**Students who did great/struggled:**

---

---

---

---

**Other Notes:**

---

---

---



## End of Day Organization Checklist

By the end of the day the last thing I felt like doing was getting organized for tomorrow. Physically and mentally exhausted, I just wanted to sit down, put my feet up, and enjoy the quiet. However, I learned that spending 15-30 minutes prepping my classroom for the next day was worth it so I didn't feel rushed the next morning.



Sara McCarthy

**"I know it's tempting to rush out as soon as possible on Friday, but I prefer to put in the time to plan for Monday, make copies, tidy my room, write Monday's date on the board, etc. That way I don't have to go into school over the weekend and I am ready to go when I arrive Monday morning."**

Tara created this checklist, which helps her stay organized.

# 5-Step End of Day Organization Checklist



- \_\_\_\_\_ My paper for tomorrow are copied and sorted by subject.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student papers, including homework, are in their mailboxes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I've assigned everything for tomorrow in Google classroom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Morning work is on desks, and the morning message is ready.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The date and lunch count are changed for tomorrow.



## Grading Time Savers

I still have nightmares about my pink tote bag. This was the bag that I filled with all the homework I needed to grade. It was heavy. I took it home every night, and while I often took everything out, I never finished my grading. We all have that “tote bag.” I don’t know a teacher that doesn’t feel that grading takes too much time, and causes stress. If we spend our evenings and weekends grading, we never get to recharge, and we are more likely to burnout and become resentful.

### **Tip: Try The Pomodoro Technique**

If distractions make grading take longer than it should, and procrastination gets the best of you, this is a time-management technique that breaks work into 25 minute intervals, which are separated by five minute breaks.

Setting a timer instills a sense of urgency, and because you only have 25 minutes to make as much progress on a task as possible, you are more likely to spend that time grading, rather than checking social media or getting up to change the laundry.

This technique also forces you to take breaks, which prevents burnout.

You can also establish grading boundaries with this technique. If you decide that you

have three hours to grade, you break up that three hours using the Pomodoro Technique, and once the time is up, your grading stops. For someone who spent her first year teaching grading papers on Christmas Eve, this technique is especially helpful for new teachers.

Francesco Cirillo invented this technique. You can learn more about it by reading his book, [The Pomodoro Technique: The Acclaimed Time-Management System That Has Transformed How We Work](#).



Tara Dusko

“I try to start grading tests as my students finish them. I carry my clipboard with me as I monitor the rest of my students who are still working. Most of the time I’m able to grade at least half the stack as I walk. I also take papers to lunch with me and grade as I eat. I try not to take too many papers home with me. When I have to grade at home, I do it Friday night so it’s done and I can enjoy the rest of my weekend.”

### **Tip: Forms Are Your Friend**

I learned the hard way that grading takes much longer if you don’t have systems in place. It takes much longer to create an Exit Ticket than create an Exit Ticket Template, and fill it in. I found that using Google Forms sped up the Exit Ticket process even further, and allowed me to review without lugging a stack of papers home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week: \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Close: \_\_\_\_\_

# Weekly Bell Ringers

MONDAY



THURSDAY

TUESDAY

FRIDAY

WEDNESDAY



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel about today's lesson?



Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel about today's lesson?



Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel about today's lesson?



Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel about today's lesson?



Why?

# EXIT TICKET

Today I learned:

---

---

---

I could have:

---

---

---

Next Time I Need To:

---

---

---

# EXIT TICKET

3 things I learned:

---

---

---

2 things I found interesting:

---

---

---

1 question I still have:

---

---

---

### **Tip: Focus Area Revisions For Writing**

If you teach writing, you know that grading students' paragraphs and essays can be incredibly time consuming, especially if you are doing line edits. If your rubric covers 5-6 different categories, you can easily spend hours grading all of your students' work. While using rubrics is a best practice for summative assessments, it can be equally helpful to provide students with feedback that is personalized to one writing goal. To learn more about this process, read [Coaching Sessions: Save Every Page, and Call Them, Writers.](#)



## Author Bios

**Tara Dusko** is a third grade teacher in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania. She's spent the past 14 years finding engaging ways to make her students love learning. When she's not planning lessons for her classroom, she is spending time with her husband and two children or trying out new recipes in the kitchen. Get some tips for reducing the stress of teaching on her blog, [www.teachwithouttears.com](http://www.teachwithouttears.com).

**Julie Mason** is the Head of Content and Curriculum for TeacherVision. She brings an expertise in blended and personalized learning, instructional coaching, and curriculum design to the role. She was a middle and high school English teacher for eight years. She was a blended and personalized learning instructional coach for K-12 teachers at BetterLesson for two years, and she has presented at The National Principals Conference, ISTE, and ASCD where she shared her expertise on how instructional coaching builds teacher capacity in K-12 schools. She has extensive experience designing and facilitating professional development for teachers, and she oversees the TeacherVision advisory board. She podcasts about teaching and learning on [ClassroomCruasde.com](http://ClassroomCruasde.com).

**Sara McCarthy** has been teaching middle and high school math and science in Nova Scotia, Canada for the past ten years. She has recently started Escape Ed, which produces educational games for math and science classes. Before becoming a teacher, Sara worked in a molecular biology lab where she honed her mad scientist skills. She spends her winter breaks on ski slopes and her summers at the beach. You can find

Sara's resources at [Escape Ed](#).

**Jessica Peresta** taught elementary music in Tulsa, OK for seven years. She is now the curriculum developer and music teacher mentor for [The Domestic Musician](#). When she's not talking about all things music education, she's a wife and mom to three little boys and loves Netflix, coffee, playing keys on worship team, and watching Razorback-sports.