

Laidlaw Scholars Undergraduate Leadership and Research Programme
Record of Reflection

Learning to Manage Time

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I started the research summer assured of certainty and left embracing uncertainty. I thought I had a clear plan of what I would research and how I would do. Stepping onto the ground of research proved me otherwise. I started out by looking all over the Internet for datasets reflecting tourism numbers in Machu Picchu across different years. It was not the easiest task: I could not access certain government websites and there was no official information in English. Upon finally coming across the datasets that would become the main objects of analysis in my research, I noticed some anomalies in the numbers I had not anticipated.

The datasets were now the drivers of my research direction, and I had to update some of my methods to fit the data. Talking to my research supervisor about how to best approach the data, contemplating various ideas, and determining what the best path forward would have provided me with self-assurance and autonomy over decisions. From that point onwards, I felt more confident to work with the data, analyze it, and interpret the results. I had set a framework, and I was determined to follow it.

I knew that making my time to work on my research project while navigating independence and living in a host city of the World Cup would be a challenge. To prevent feeling burnout, rushing through deadlines, and ensuring meeting the program requirements, I created a backwards timeline for working on research deliverables. I set September 1st, 2026, as the final deadline, and created priorities for each week. Then, I broke down those priorities and larger tasks into smaller, easy-to-follow steps that I would like to achieve each day. This structure helped me ensure consistency in my routine and hold myself accountable to my research project.

Showing up for myself consistently, no matter the complexity of the task at hand, was a key factor to my success in submitting research deliverables on time. A postponed task entailed

not being able to move forward with the research plan, having to readjust timelines, and compromising other aspects of my routine. Something I would have done differently since the start of the research period is to set recurring meetings with my research supervisor to allow for more continuous and timely feedback.

One of the biggest supports I had during my research summer was the University of Toronto Deep Dive meetings. By engaging with three other Laidlaw Scholars on a weekly basis and discussing our progress, challenges, and learnings, I felt like I could relate to some of the experiences my peers would share. I noticed early on how open my peers were to express difficulties they were having, and I contributed to the discussion by sharing some of the resources, software, best practices, and tips that had helped me navigate uncertainty during my research. Likewise, my peers were kind to share their learnings with me, so I could also use some of the resources that had worked for them. For example, a colleague helped me become more efficient with collecting and citing sources in my literature review, while another one provided me with emotional support when I mentioned feeling stuck with navigating the anomalies in the datasets.

Exchanging advice helped me build a more collaborative mindset, especially when the research projects were individual and very different from one another. Reflecting upon my struggles also let me see how I went from feeling stuck to finding alternative paths to analysis, solving problems as they arise without waiting for my research advisor to determine the solution.

Overall, I have become more responsible with setting deadlines and following through. I have blocked off my calendar to ensure I dedicate time to my research, staying on track with the submission of deliverables. I have also consistently shown up to Deep Dive meetings, excited to learn how my peers were progressing on their work and share my updates and weekly takeaways.

On a personal level, the summer research experience has been a test of my ability to juggle different commitments, choosing which to prioritize at each given time without having to compromise other areas of my life. On a professional level, holding myself accountable to the work I have committed to doing and setting an agenda or schedule help me stay on track, show professionalism and seriousness in my work, and allow me to communicate the progress of my work to a supervisor in a structured way. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to build on my research skills while also grow to become a leader of my own time.