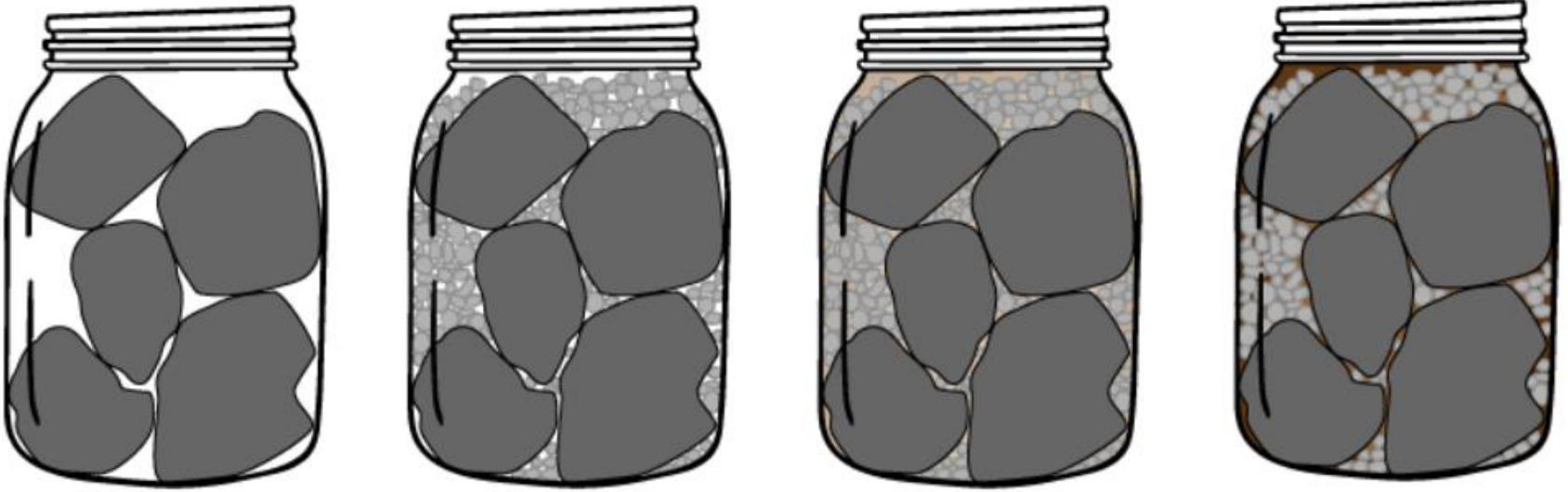# Managing Research Interests and Activities

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How many stones fit into the jar ?

Prioritization Matters More Than Productivity

IF YOU FILL YOUR JAR WITH GRAVEL AND SAND FIRST, YOU WON'T HAVE SPACE FOR YOUR BIG ROCKS

BIG ROCKS FIRST

GRAVEL SECOND

SAND THIRD

Then, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR COFFEE WITH A FRIEND

Illustrations taken from
https://mindfulambition.net/big-rocks-first/
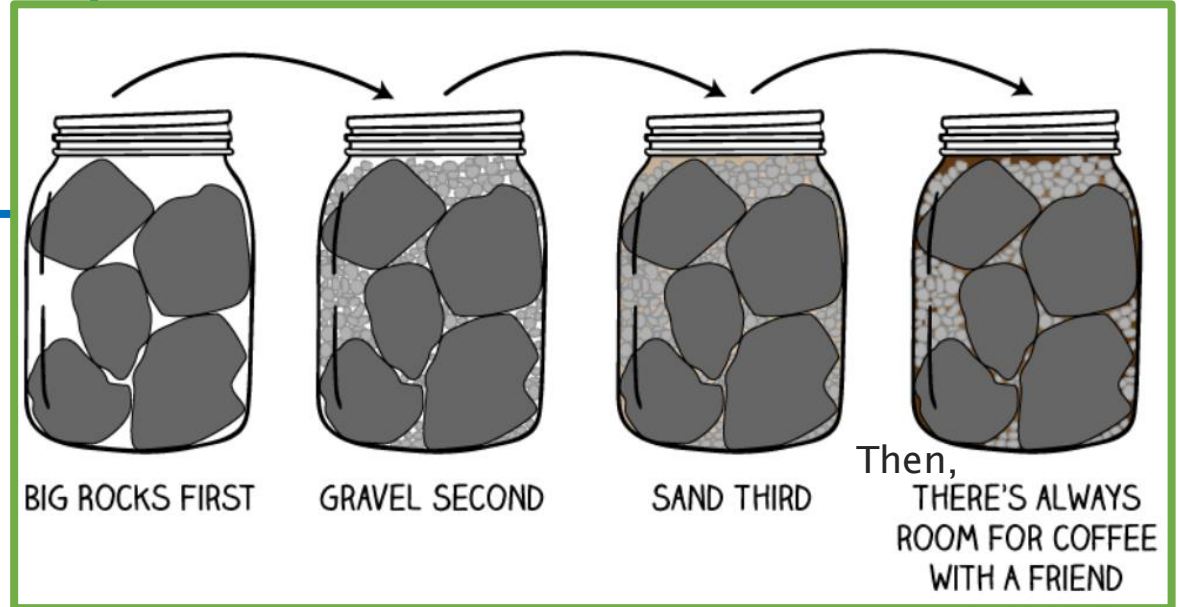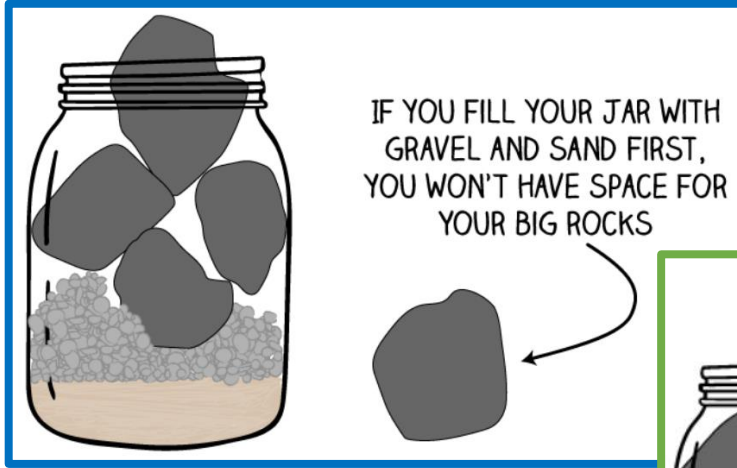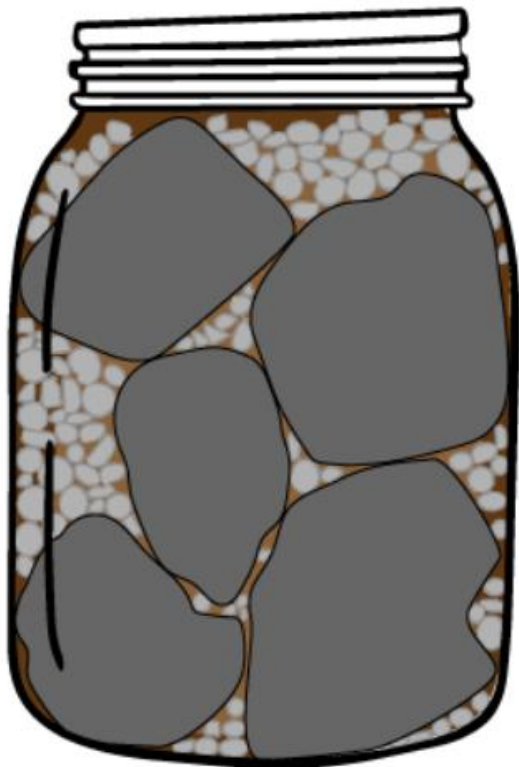
THE JAR OF YOUR LIFE
(FILL IT WITH INTENTION)

Define your *Research Agenda* ("Mission statement")

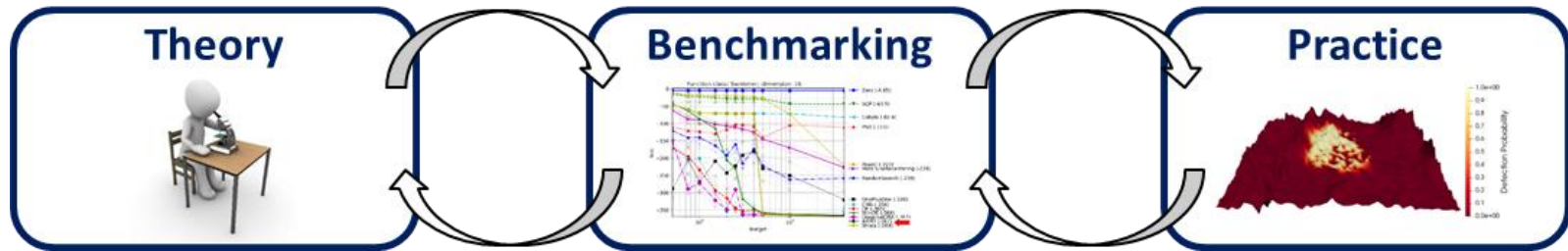1. **develop** efficient black-box optimization algorithms

2. **understand** which algorithms to choose for which problems and under which conditions (evaluation budget, parallelization, …)

3. make this knowledge and the algorithms available to practitioners

Identify *how* you want to achieve it

Theory → Benchmarking → Practice

Find (or create) *the right environment*

Carola Doerr Anja Jankovic Elena Raponi Alexis Robbes Koen van der Blom Martin Krejca (now at École Polytechnique)

Mara Santarelli Océane Fourquet François Clement Maria Laura Santoni Duri Janett

Universiteit Leiden

UNIVERSIDADE Đ COIMBRA

Meta THALES AutoML.org Freiburg-Hannover

HRI Honda Research Institute INSTITUT PASTEUR Jožef Stefan Institute TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

ETH zürich ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE IP PARIS

**collaborators can be close by, but need not be !
(zoom, skype, mail, …)**

Environment & Resources:
- **collaborators**
- **funding**
- **equipment**
- **working hours, holidays**
- **opportunities to relax**
- **…**

Allow for changes

Preferences for
- **research mission/vision**
- **favorite methods**
- **collaborators**
- **activities**
- **…**

…can change over time

Try not to judge other people's research
→ **what may seem useless to you, may help other people understand something that they're interested in** (and this may be important, even if you cannot see it (yet))

Discussion

1. Do you have a vision for your research? What is it?
2. Where do you see your contribution to this vision? What is your mission?
3. Do you know *how* you want to achieve your mission?
4. Are you in the right environment to achieve your goals? Do you have access to all required resources? If not, what is missing? How can you obtain this? Who could possibly help you?