

# How to Get a PhD (Successfully and Timely) *The Long and Winding Road ...*



# The Long and Winding Road

## The Beatles (June 1970)



*The long and winding road that leads to your door ...  
The long and winding road that leads to your doctor ...*

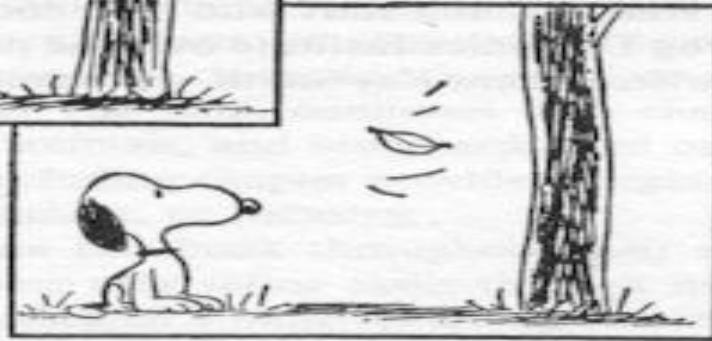
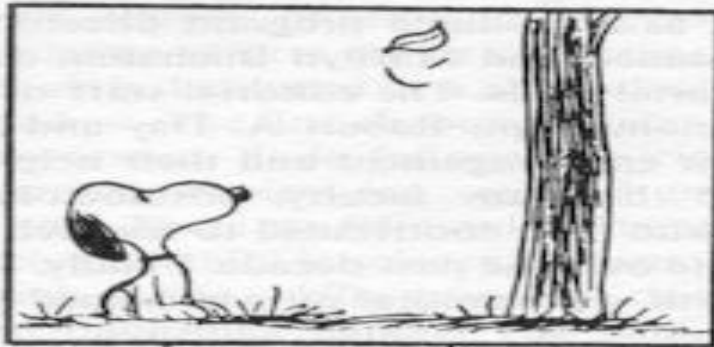
# Conflict of Interest

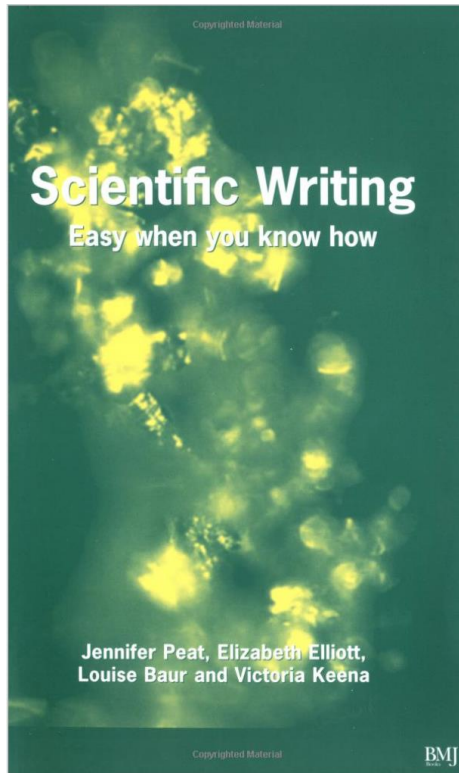


– Nothing to declare



"Under disclosure rules, I'm required to tell you I own stock in the company whose drug I'm prescribing."





# ***“Easy When You Know How”***

*Jennifer Peat. “Scientific Writing”. London: BMJ Books, 2002*



How to Get a PhD  
(Successfully and Timely)  
*The Long and Winding Road ...*

*“Easy When You Know How”*

# How To Get a PhD

A handbook for students and their supervisors

Estelle M. Phillips and Derek S. Pugh



**FIFTH EDITION**

*Open UP Study Skills*

# DOCTORATES DOWNUNDER

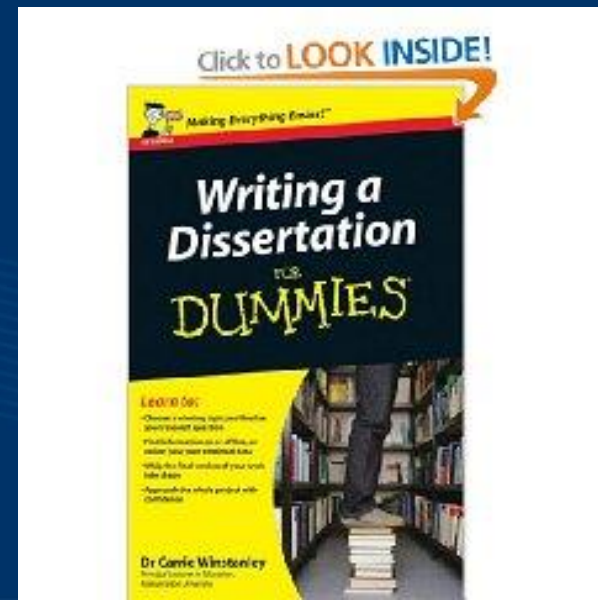
Edited by Carey Denholm and Terry Evans  
Foreword by Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty

→ KEYS TO **Successful**  
**Doctoral Study**

IN AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



- Kearns H, Gardiner M, Marshall K, Banytis F. *The PhD experience: What they didn't tell you at induction*. Adelaide: Flinders University, 2006.
- Winstanley C. *Writing a Dissertation for Dummies*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.



# ‘It’s a PhD, not a Nobel Prize’: how experienced examiners assess research theses

GERRY MULLINS

*Adelaide Graduate Centre, Adelaide University, Australia*

MARGARET KILEY

*Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship, University of Canberra,  
Australia*

*‘A PhD is a stepping stone into a research career. All you need to do is to demonstrate your capacity for independent, critical thinking. That’s all you need to do. A PhD is three years of solid work, not a Nobel Prize.’*

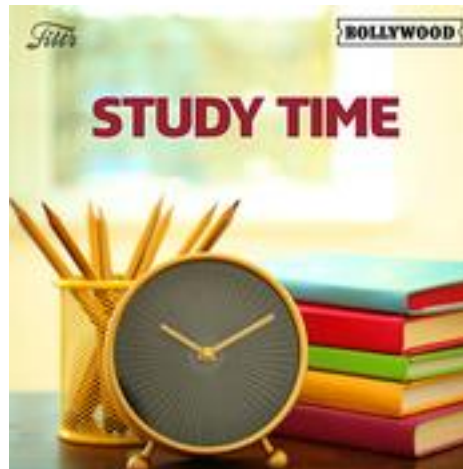
# On Becoming A Research Student

- **The nature of doctoral education**
  - You are under your own management and have the responsibility for determining what is required as well as for carrying it out.
- **The psychology of being a research student**
  - You will experience periods of self-doubt which you must come through with the clear aim of becoming a competent professional researcher.

*‘How to get a PhD’ is a handbook and a survival manual for PhD students!*

# Full-Time Student Status

- Benefits include:
  - More likely to graduate;
  - Pay less in tuition and living expenses;
  - Gain additional years of earnings;
  - Free up limited class room space for other students.



# The Nature of the PhD Qualification

- **The meaning of a doctorate**
  - A bachelor's degree traditionally meant that the recipient had obtained a general education
  - A master's degree is a license to practice
  - A doctor's degree historically was a license to teach – meaning to teach in a university as a member of a faculty

# Doctor of Philosophy

- *In the context of the Doctor of Philosophy and other similarly titled degrees, the term "**philosophy**" does not refer to the field or academic discipline of philosophy, but is used in a broader sense in accordance with its original Greek meaning, which is philosophia "**love of wisdom.**"*
- *Wisdom: the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgement; the quality of being wise.*



# Types of Doctorate Degree

## 1. PhD by Thesis

- Over three or four years of research at university
- A thesis typically 60,000-90,000 words in length

## 2. PhD by Course

- Various courses in research methodology and knowledge field
- Dissertation as partial fulfillment for degree

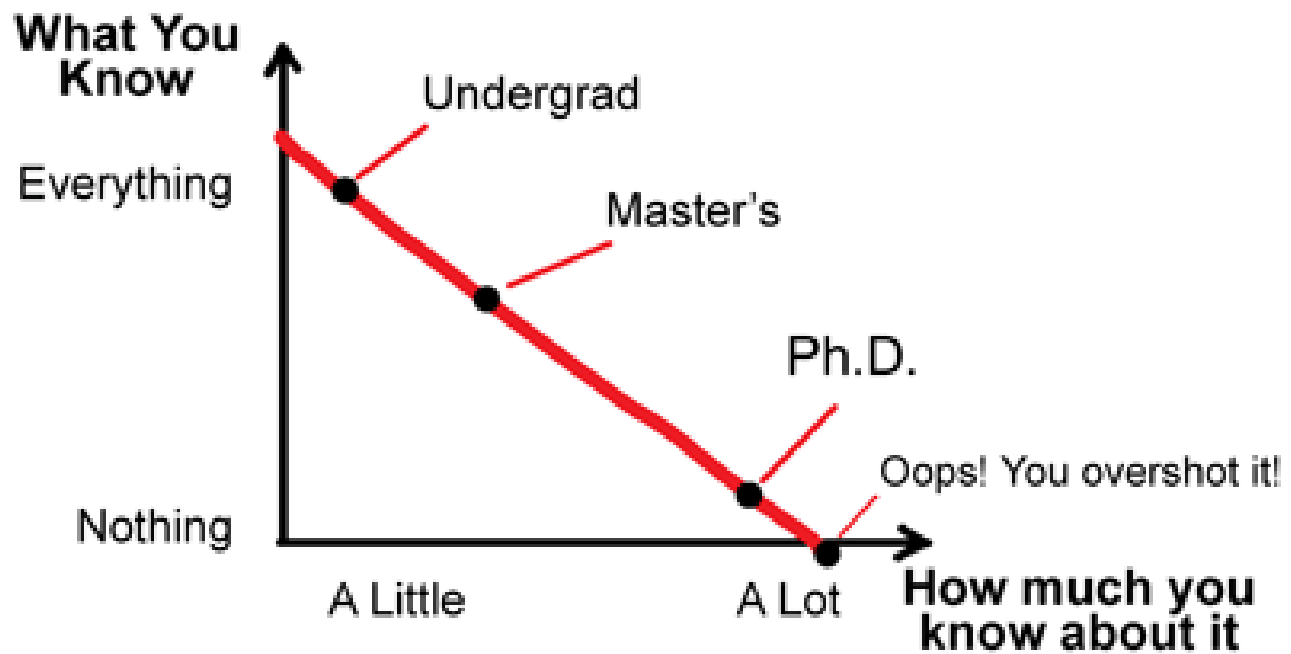
## 3. PhD by Publication

- 4 to 5 manuscripts in various stages of publications (draft, submitted, accepted and published) with Cover Story

## 4. Professional Doctorate

- Geared primarily towards current professionals in vocational sectors such as healthcare, teaching and education, and engineering and manufacturing (e.g., Doctor of Public Health)

# What You Know vs How much you know about it



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# Differences between the MPhil and the PhD

- The MPhil is a less advanced qualification than the PhD in which the student is expected to master a content area and can be completed in two years' full-time study.
- The MPhil dissertation is normally shorter than the PhD thesis.
- A candidate for an MPhil must undertake an investigation but, compared to the PhD, the work may be limited in scope and the degree of originality.

# Differences between the MPhil and the PhD

- The MPhil can be limited to the replication of research already published. It is also acceptable for secondary sources to be used.
- Although a full summary of literature is required in MPhil thesis, it does not have to be an *evaluative* review as in the PhD. The difference here is in the breadth and depth of the review as well as in the amount of critical appreciation that is expected.

# The Concept of Originality (Phillips, 1993)

1. Carrying out empirical work that hasn't been done before;
2. Making a synthesis that hasn't been made before;
3. Using already known material but with a new interpretation;
4. Trying out something in *Indonesia* that has previously only been done abroad;
5. Taking a particular technique and applying it in a new area;

# The Concept of Originality (Phillips, 1993)

6. Bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue;
7. Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies;
8. Looking at areas that people in the discipline haven't looked at before;
9. Adding to knowledge in a way that hasn't been done before.

***Generally - stretching the body of knowledge slightly.***

## What is Already Known on This Topic

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- 
- 

## What This Study Adds

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# **‘You cannot get a PhD unless you do know what the standards are’**

- Quite early on in the process you must begin to read other PhD theses in your field so that you can discover what the standards are. How else will you know what standard you ought to aim for?
- If you have to go along to your supervisor after you have done your work and ask if it is good enough, you are clearly not ready for a PhD, which is awarded as a recognition that you are able to evaluate research work (including your own) to fully professional standards.

**Matthew Might, PhD.**

**Associate Professor**

School of Computing, University of Utah

<http://matt.might.net/articles/phd-school-in-pictures/>

## **The illustrated guide to a Ph.D.**

[\[article index\]](#) [\[email me\]](#) [\[@mattmight\]](#) [\[+mattmight\]](#) [\[rss\]](#)

Every fall, I explain to a fresh batch of Ph.D. students what a Ph.D. is.

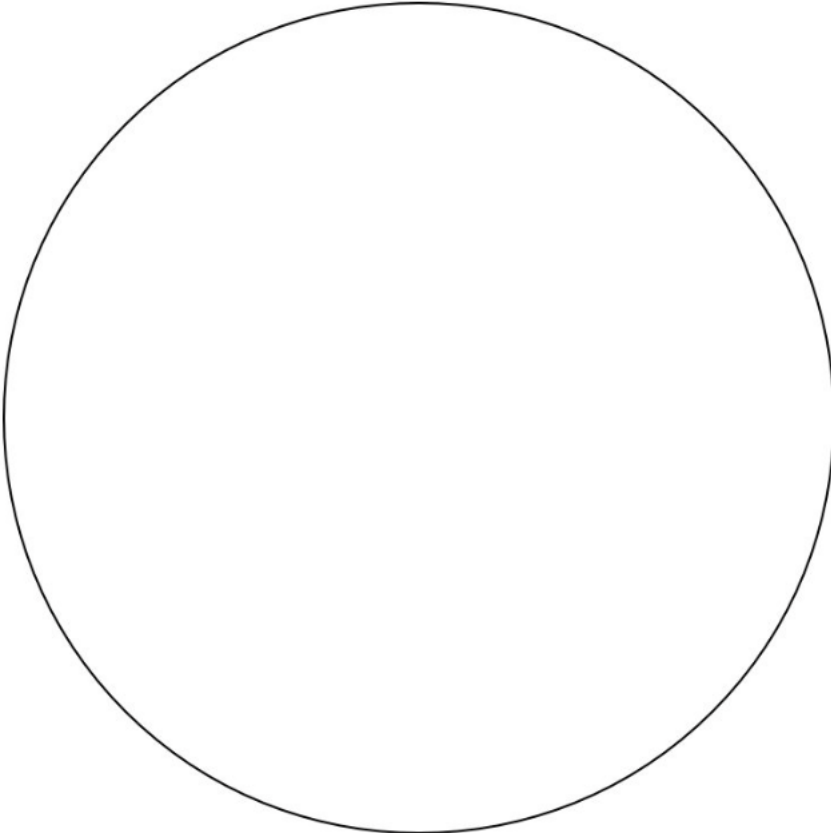
It's hard to describe it in words.

So, I use pictures.

Read below for the illustrated guide to a Ph.D.

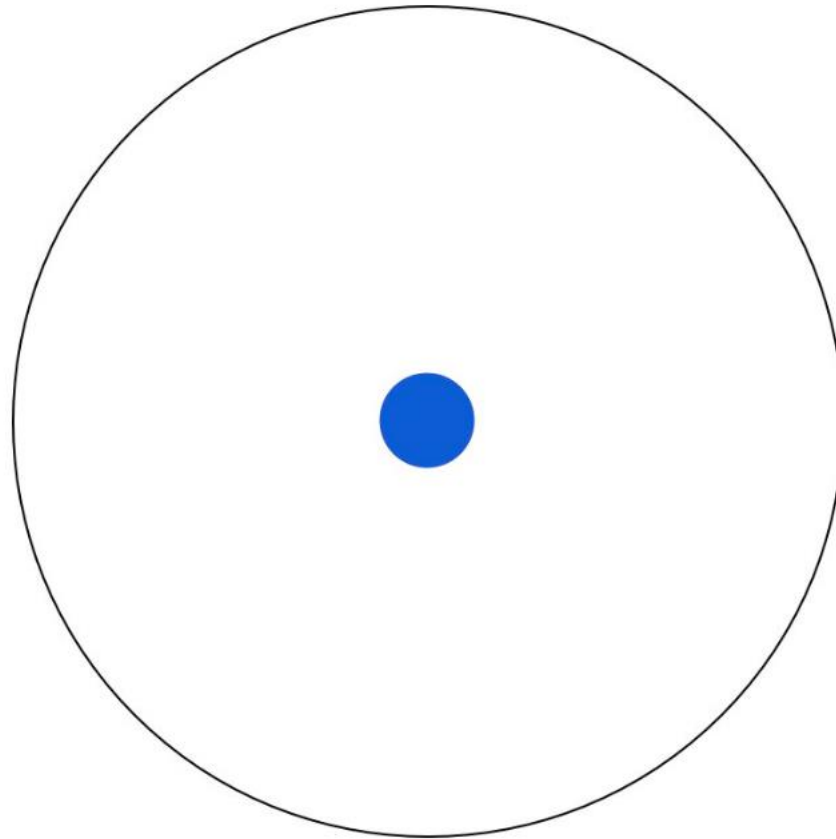
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Imagine a circle that contains all of human knowledge:

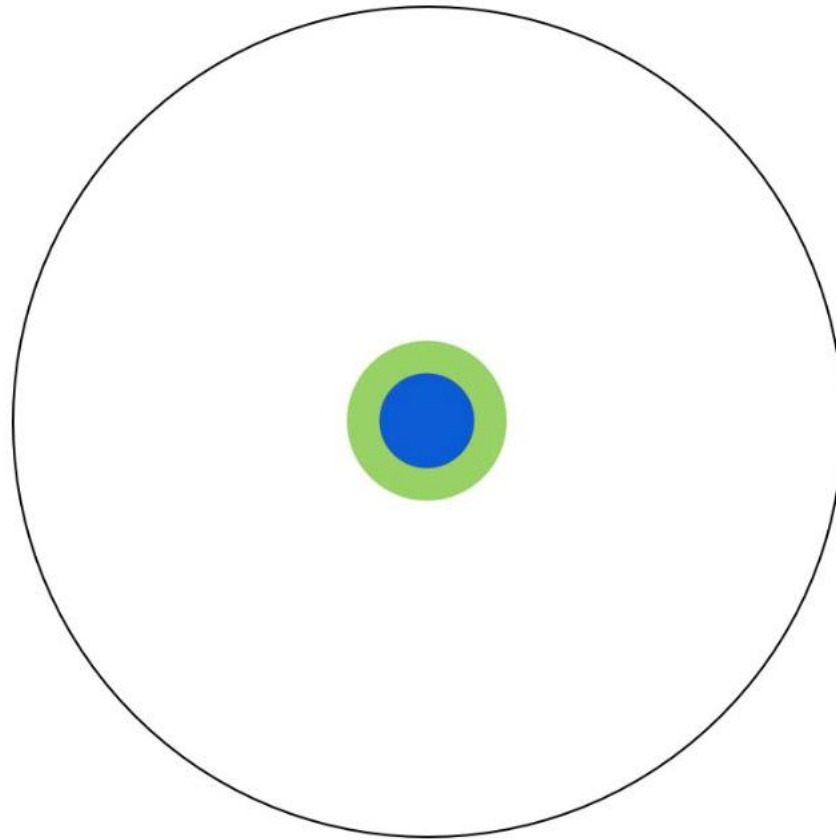




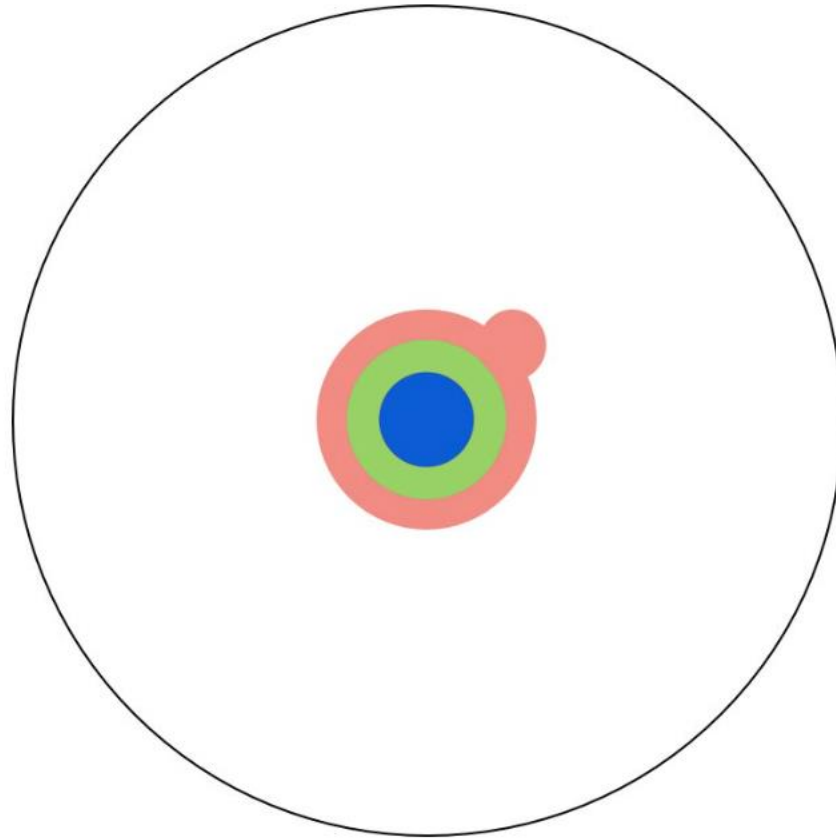
By the time you finish elementary school, you know a little:



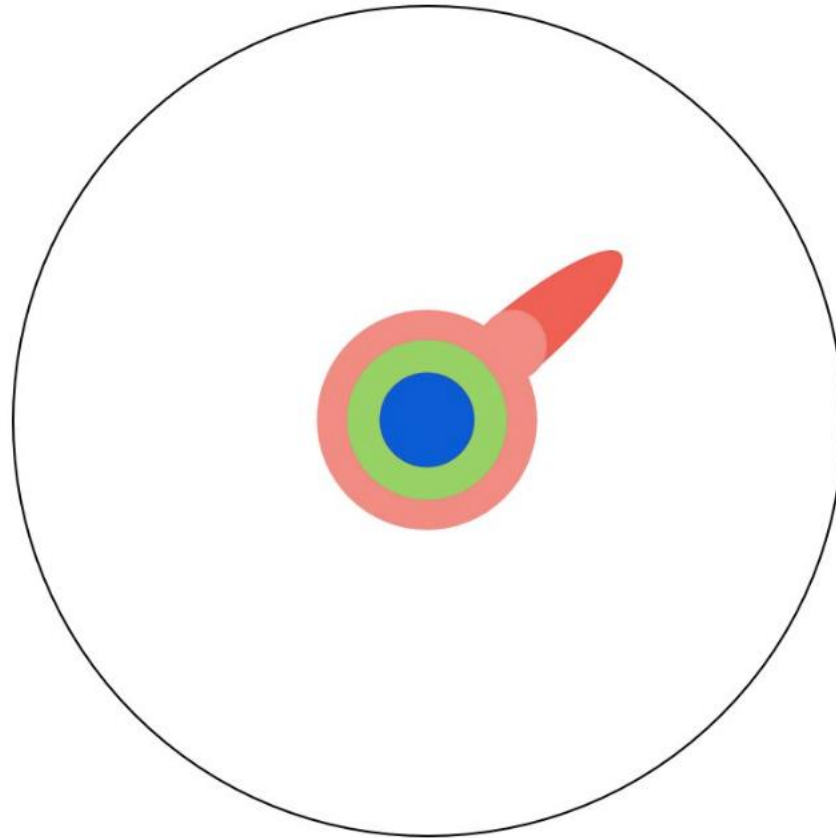
By the time you finish high school, you know a bit more:



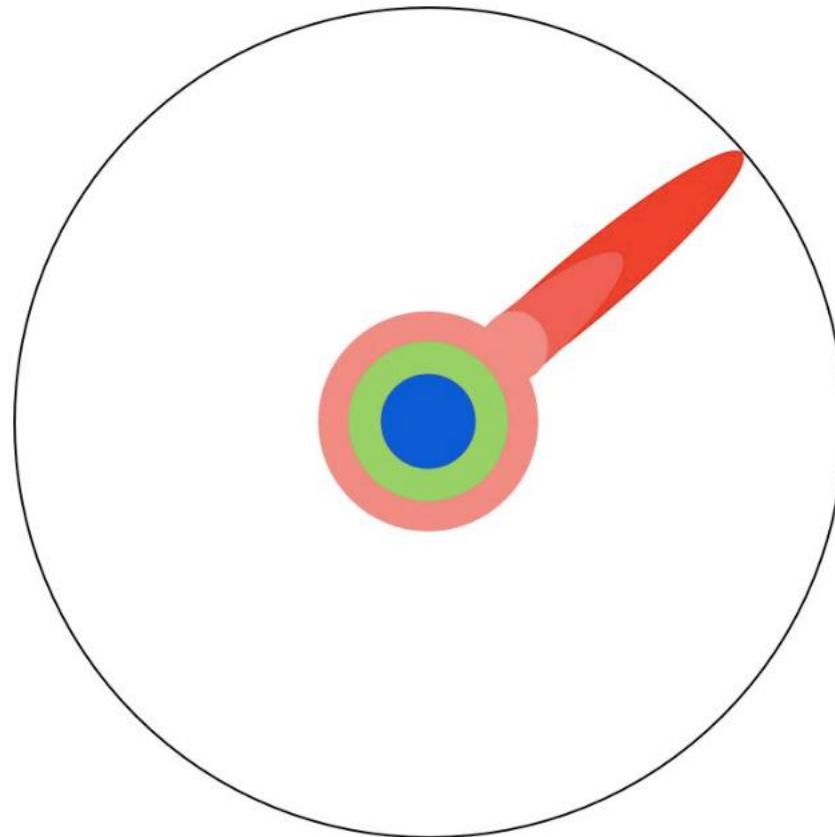
With a bachelor's degree, you gain a specialty:



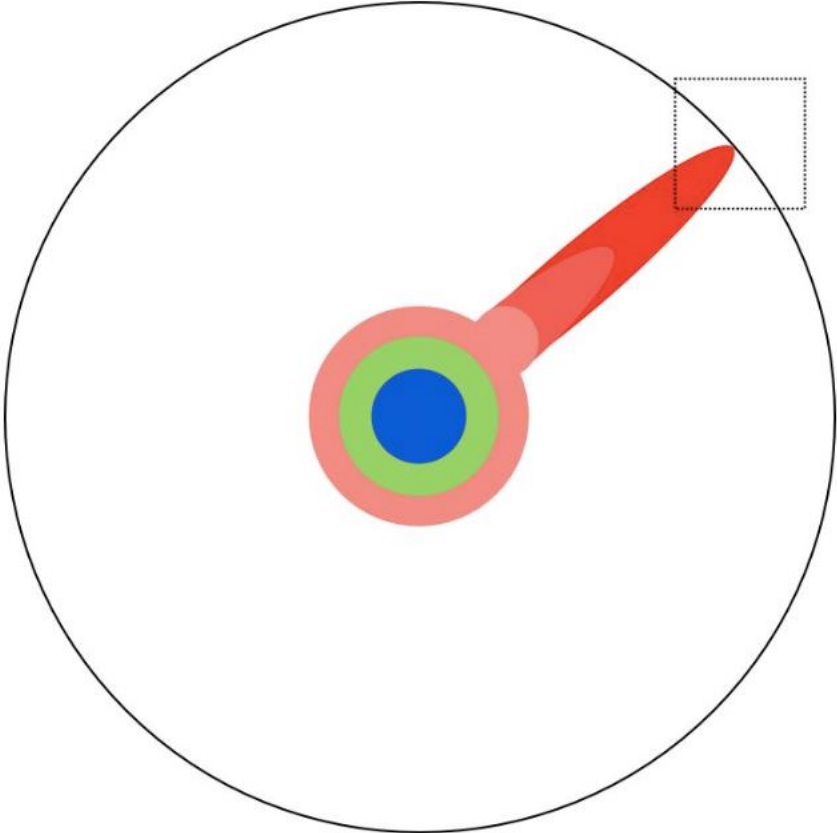
A master's degree deepens that specialty:



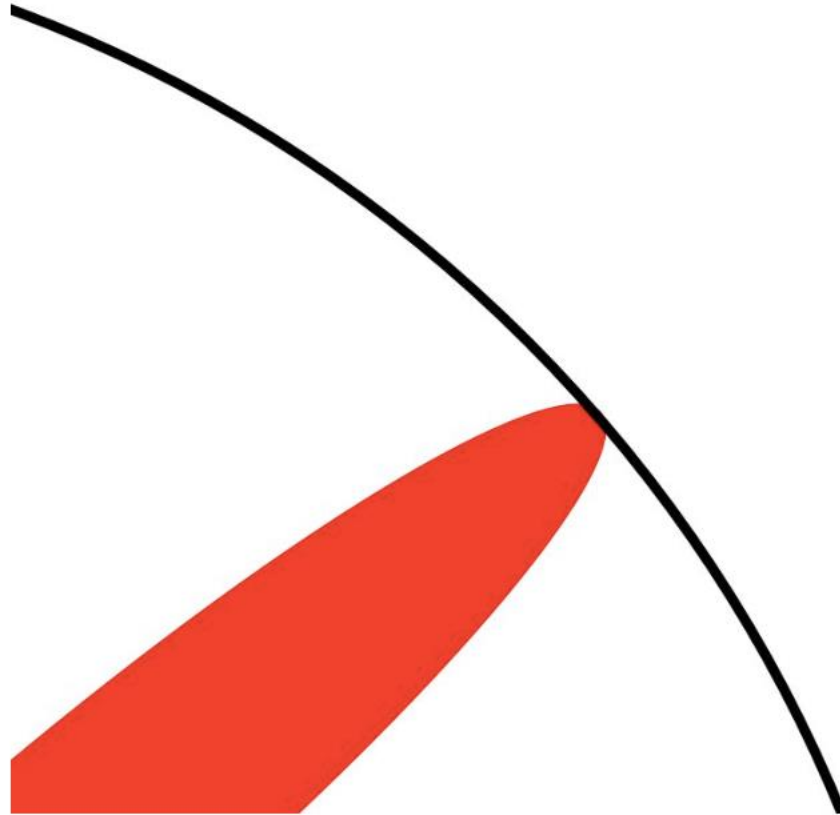
Reading research papers takes you to the edge of human knowledge:



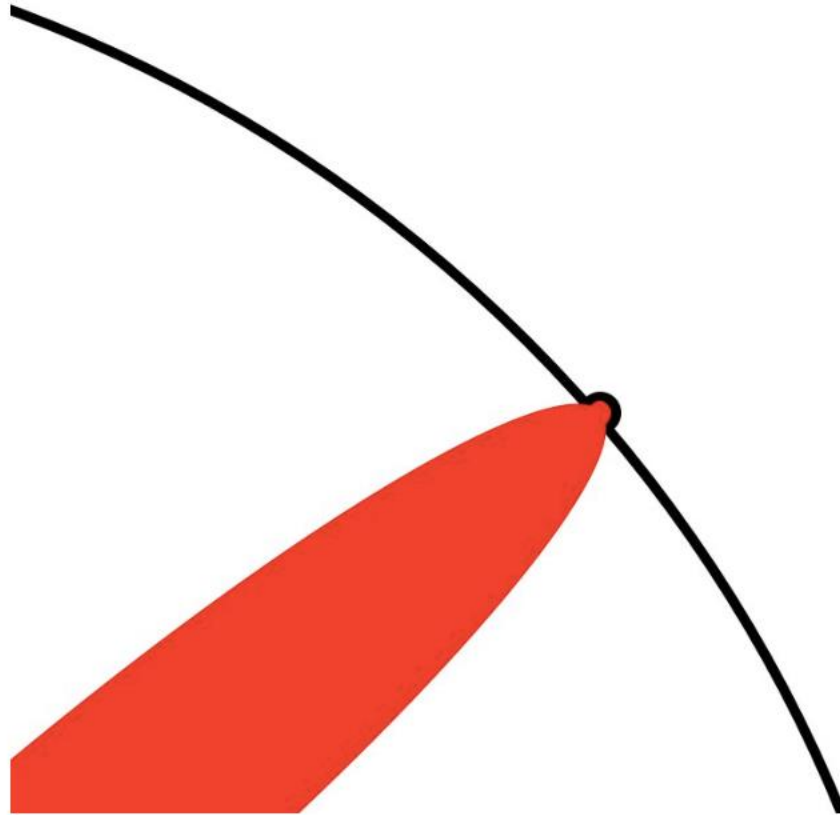
Once you're at the boundary, you focus:



You push at the boundary for a few years:

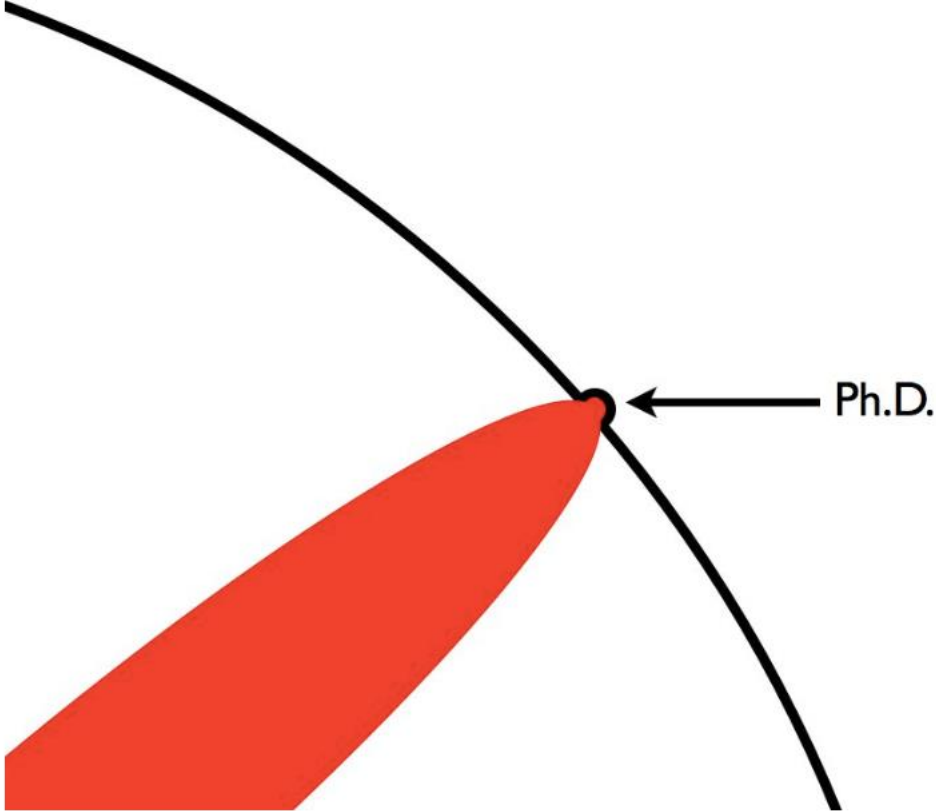


Until one day, the boundary gives way:





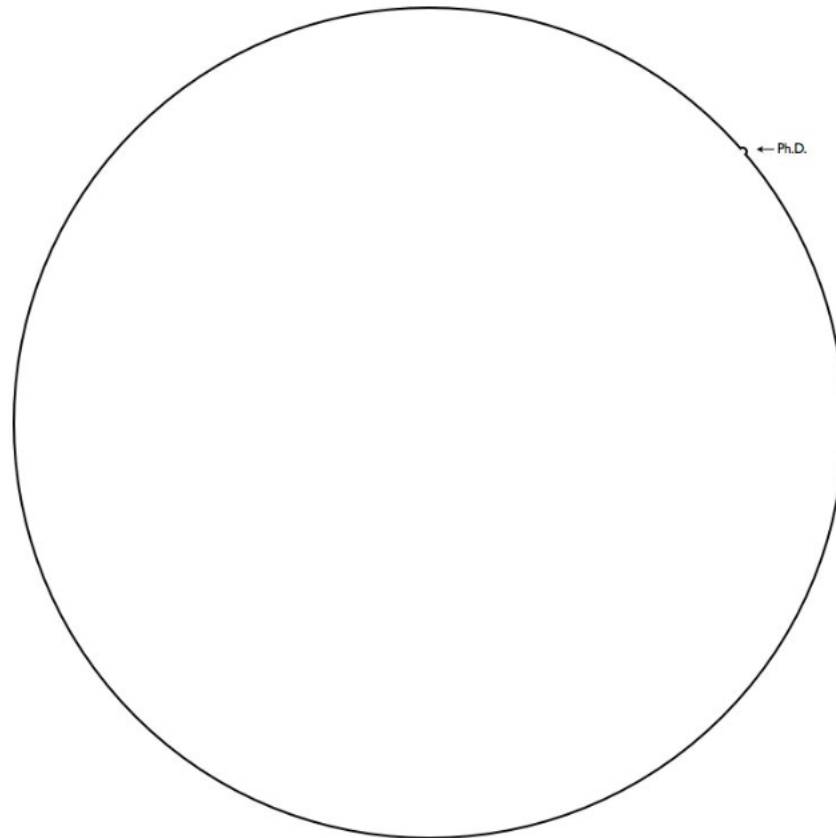
And, that dent you've made is called a Ph.D.:



Of course, the world looks different to you now:



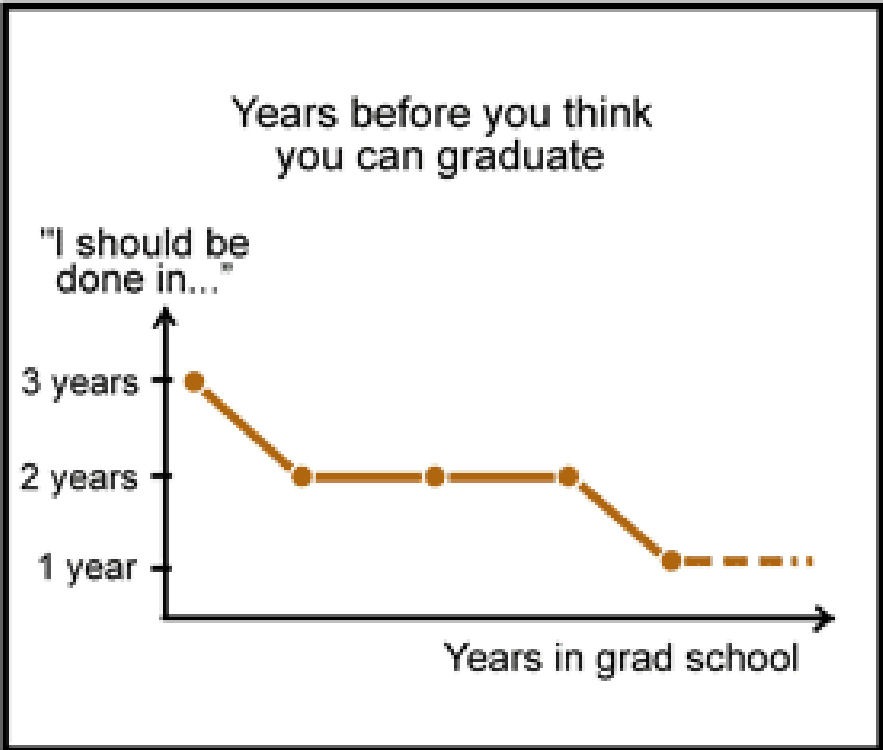
So, don't forget the bigger picture:



Keep pushing.



**How long does it take to get a  
PhD?**



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*“Effective writing (of systematic review) is about **discipline and time management** NOT creativity or natural gift”*

*22<sup>nd</sup> Cochrane Colloquium  
Hyderabad, India, 2014*

# Tahapan Pembelajaran



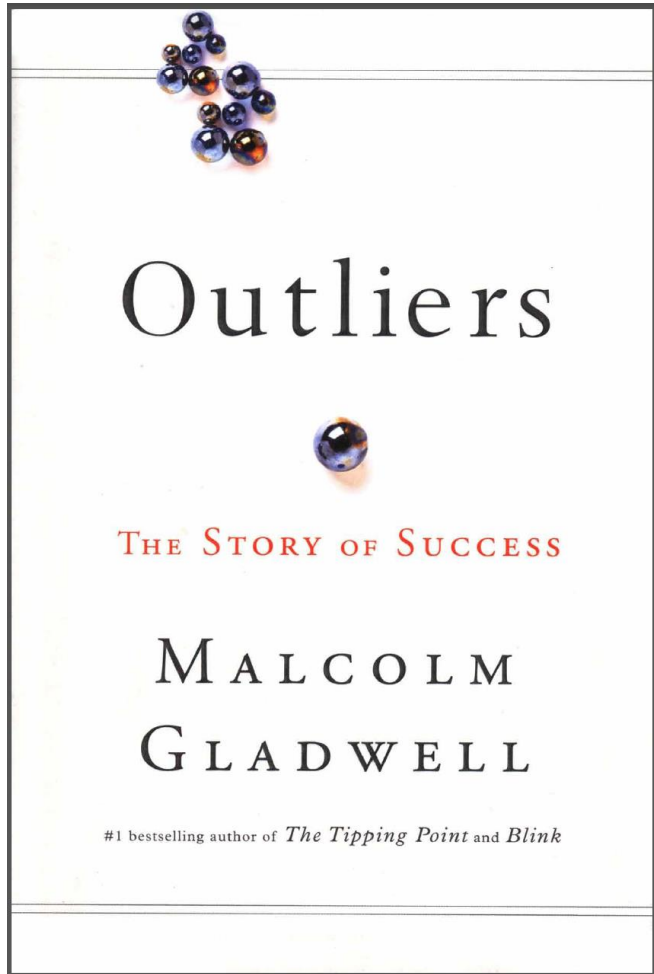
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# Tahapan Pembelajaran Reguler





# Gladwell's ('10 000 hour') rule

# ‘10 000 hour rule’

- This rule implies that it is futile, and perhaps even foolish, to focus on the number of years, months or days that are required to complete a doctorate.
- Rather, the idea that **a solid and tangible commitment of 10 000 hours** is probably a better estimate of the time required to complete the task, should be adopted.

Wingfield B. How long does it take to get a PhD?  
*S Afr J Sci.* 2010;106(11/12).

# '10 000 hour rule'

- The average working day is considered to be 40 hours a week, and allowing for two weeks of vacation per year, this means that there are 2000 hours available for work every year.
- A PhD student who approaches his or her work like an 8-hour-a-day job can then expect to take a minimum of 5 years to complete the degree.

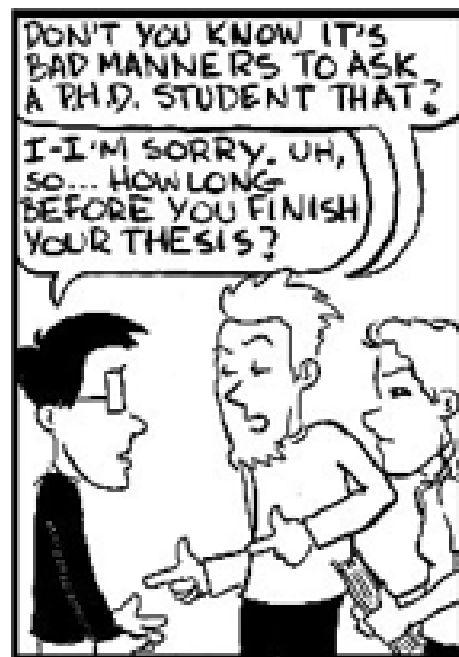
Wingfield B. How long does it take to get a PhD?  
*S Afr J Sci.* 2010;106(11/12).

# '10 000 hour rule'

- Likewise, a student committing 70 hours work a week should complete their degree in 3 years.
- I am constantly advising my PhD students that they cannot hope to complete their degrees in 3 years if they work only 40 hours a week.
- Looking back to past students, the figures fit Gladwell's rule remarkably well.

Wingfield B. How long does it take to get a PhD?

*S Afr J Sci.* 2010;106(11/12)<sub>45</sub>



THANKS TO MIGUEL ...

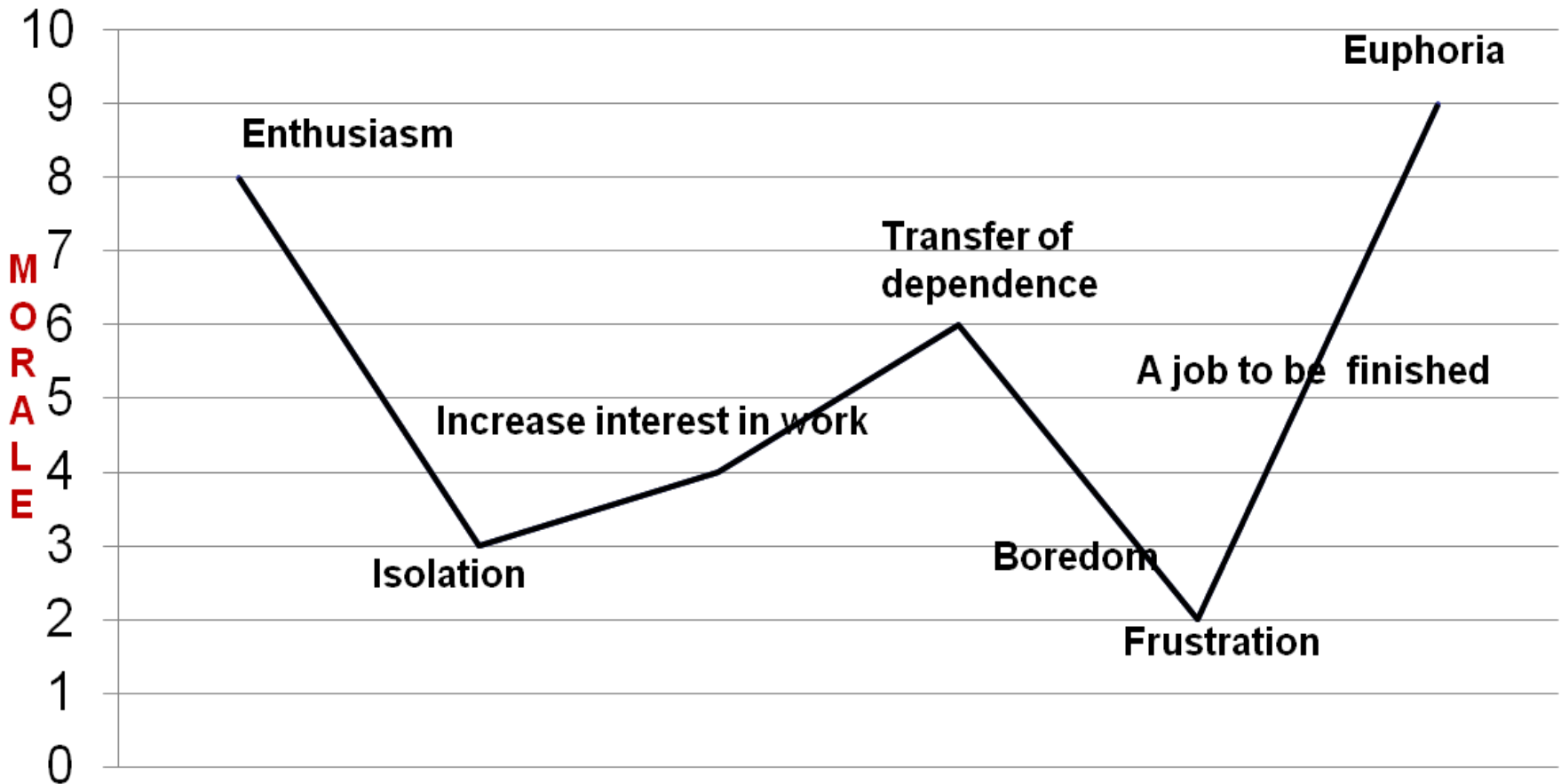
JORGE CHAM ©THE STANFORD DAILY

# The PhD Process

- Psychological aspects
- Others 'getting in first'
- Practical aspects

# Psychological Process

(Philips & Pugh, 1994)





# The PhD Process

## Practical aspects:

- Time management



Successful students do not find time for research (scholarship), they make time for research (scholarship)



# THE EISENHOWER BOX

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<b>DO</b> <i>Do it now.</i> Write article for today.	<b>DECIDE</b> <i>Schedule a time to do it.</i> Exercising. Calling family and friends. Researching articles. Long-term biz strategy.
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>DELEGATE</b> <i>Who can do it for you?</i> Scheduling interviews. Booking flights. Approving comments. Answering certain emails. Sharing articles.	<b>DELETE</b> <i>Eliminate it.</i> Watching television. Checking social media. Sorting through junk mail.

*"What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important."  
-Dwight Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States*

# ONE THING AT A TIME, PLEASE

Cindy MacDonald

*Readers Digest, June 2013*

# A modern-day malady

- So for serious tasks ----- writing, thinking, solving an important problem – the multitasking hurts us. You do worse even as you think you are doing better.”

Dr. Sherry Turkle,

Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

# Making things better

- So how do we better function in a productivity-obsessed world?
- The secret, it seems, is learning how to use our time effectively.

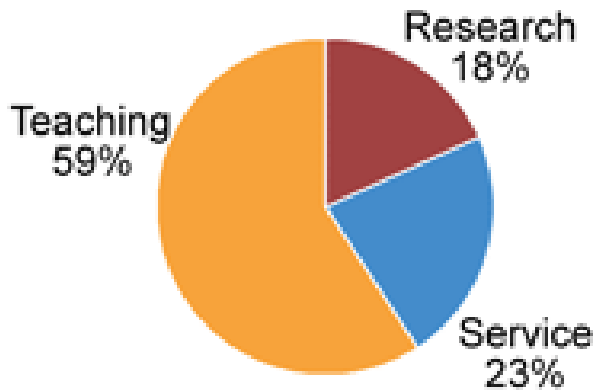
# Making things better

- Sticking to one task for longer periods rather than flitting back and forth is key.
- “The less you switch, the better you do, so teaching people to focus and to do a task is a sustained way is a very effective time-management skill.”

Dr. Clifford Nass

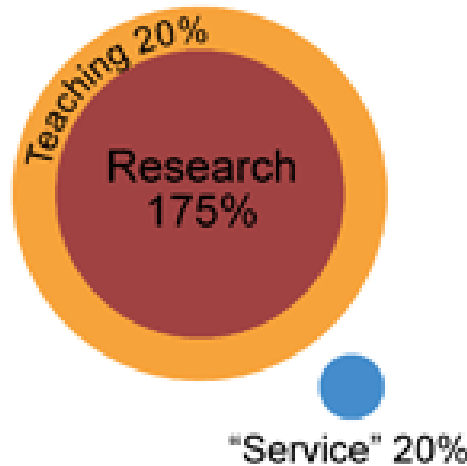
# HOW PROFESSORS SPEND THEIR TIME

How they actually spend their time:



Source: Higher Education Research Institute Survey (1999)

How departments expect them to spend their time:



How Professors would like to spend their time:



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# What Supervisors Expect of Their Doctoral Students

- ❑ Supervisors expect their students to be independent
- ❑ Supervisors expect their students to produce written work that is not just a first draft



# What Supervisors Expect of Their Doctoral Students

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- ❑ Supervisors expect to have regular meetings with their research students
- ❑ Supervisors expect their research students to be honest when reporting on their progress
- ❑ Supervisors expect their students to follow the advice that they give, especially when it has been given at the request of the postgraduate
- ❑ Supervisors expect their students to be excited about their work, able to surprise them and fun to be with!

# How to Manage Your Supervisors

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- The need to educate your supervisors
- How to reduce the communication barrier
- Improving tutorials
- Changing supervisors
- Inappropriate personal relationships in supervision

# How to Manage Your Supervisors

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□ Two golden rules of communication:

1. *Meetings*

2. *Reports*



# The supervisory team's limitations

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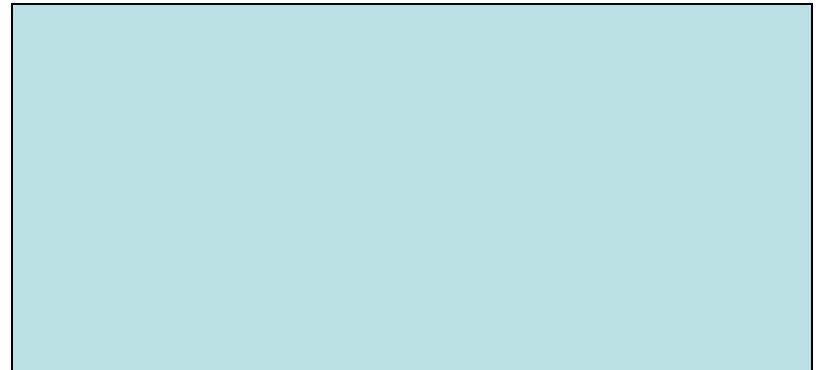
- ❑ *Undue predominance of two supervisors over one student.*
- ❑ *Diffusion of responsibility.*
- ❑ *Getting conflicting advice.*
- ❑ *Playing one supervisor off against another.*
- ❑ *Lack of an overall academic view.*
- ❑ *Lack of the supervisors functioning as a team.*

# How Well Do You Know Your Advisor?

**How Well Do You  
Know Your Advisor?**  
Take the quiz!

1. Where did your advisor go for undergrad? (1 pt.)
2. Where is your advisor's home town? (1 pt.)
3. Who was your advisor's advisor (your grandadvisor)? (1 pt.)
4. How many siblings does he/she have, and what are their professions? (1 pt.)
5. What is your advisor's middle name? (1 pt.)

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5. What is your advisor's middle name? (1 pt.)

**Your Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 4-5 - You know WAY too much about your Advisor.
- 2-3 - You Google-stalked him, didn't you?
- 0-1 - You have a normal relationship with your Advisor.

# What students expect of their supervisors

- Students expect to be supervised
- Students expect supervisors to read their work well in advance
- Students expect their supervisors to be available when needed
- Students expect their supervisors to be friendly, open and supportive
- Students expect their supervisors to be constructively critical



# What students expect of their supervisors

- Students expect their supervisors to have a good knowledge of the research area
- Students expect their supervisors to structure the tutorial so that it is relatively easy to exchange ideas
- Students expect their supervisors to have sufficient interest in their research to put more information in the students' path
- Students expect supervisors to be sufficiently involved in their success to help them get a good job at the end of it all!



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# Getting the best out of your PLP

**“Personal learning plans are a tool to help you get the best outcomes from your doctoral experience.”**

(McCormack, C, Kiley, M, Maher, B, & Cripps, A 2006, ‘Taking charge: Using personal learning plans’, in *Doctorates downunder: Keys to successful doctoral study in Australia and New Zealand*, eds C Denholm & T Evans, ACER Press, Victoria, pp. 76-86).

# Personal Learning Plan

- A personal learning plan—also called a personal learning syllabus—is a self-directed planning tool to help an individual achieve specific learning objectives. It communicates what you need to do to gain the skills you want to develop, when each action needs to occur, and how to measure success.

Harvard Business School <https://online.hbs.edu/>

- Personal learning plans are developed by an individual and may span multiple domains and include education, training, practice and self-learning. For example, a senior high school student with goal to improve their academic performance and soccer skills in preparation for university and acquire new abilities in their free time.

<https://simplicable.com/edu/learning-plan>

# Example

## Learning Plan - Personal

Goal	Plan	Target
Improve math scores to get into an engineering program at a decent university.	Get a tutor to explain difficult concepts.  Spend more time on homework.	Calculus > 85% Algebra > 80%
Improve defensive skills to get onto a university soccer team.	Don't miss any games or practices this season.  Regularly practice with 2v2 drills.	Make a university team.
Gain public speaking experience.	Run for class president.	Deliver at least 2 speeches in front of a large audience.
Learn to sail.	Attending sailing camp in summer to learn the basics.	Obtain basic keelboat sailing certification.

# Three qualities of successful Ph.D. students

## 1. Perseverance:

- persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success

## 2. Tenacity:

- the quality or fact of being able to grip something firmly; grip
- the quality or fact of being very determined; determination
- the quality or fact of continuing to exist; persistence

## 3. Cogency:

- the quality of being clear, logical, and convincing; lucidity

# Six Things I Learned from Being in a PhD Program



Dr. Trishnee Bhurosy holds a PhD in Health Behavior from Indiana University-Bloomington and is now a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey. She is also a WES Ambassador.

- *Learn to Trust Yourself*
- *Listen to Your Advisor*
- *Start Your Research as Early as You Can*
- *Engage in Opportunities Outside of Your School*
- *Stay in Touch With Friends and Family*
- *Find and Maintain Hobbies you Enjoy*

# Closing Remarks



**The key to success is to keep everything in perspective.**

**You run your PhD, don't let your PhD run you.**

**Take action from day one!**