Aspects of your PhD research
No research project is alike....except for some aspects?
It's a learning process:

Doing your PhD is a process in which you and your project are continuously changing, evolving and improving. Do not feel nervous about this, it is ‘normal’. During your PhD you will learn new tools, you will reach new insights and above all, your should be having fun. Science is fun.

It's a learning process:

Doing MY PhD is a process in which ME and MY project are continuously changing, evolving and improving. I will NOT feel nervous about this, it is PERFECTLY ‘normal’. During MY PhD I will learn new tools, reach new insights and above all, will be having fun. Science is fun.
Aspects of your PhD research

**Formal & actual aspects?**

Split up in groups of 3-4 and come up with the ASPECTS as you anticipate them, indicating which characteristic will be dominant.

**Define aim of research**
- What are you trying to achieve?
- Who will this affect?
- What do you need to achieve this aim?
- What knowledge exists and what is missing?

**Make a planning**
- What must you achieve the 1st year of your research?
- What should you achieve each month?
- What should you achieve this week?
- Make a ‘To-Do-list’ for today.

**Monitor personal effectiveness**
- Are you on schedule? Why not? What can you do better?
- Make necessary adjustments to your planning.
- How does/can your supervisor contribute?
Aspects of your PhD research

Perform research

• Science is team-work; *make use of your experienced co-workers and supervisors to help you perform your research*
• Be meticulous in your work and be honest with yourself about ‘loose ends’
• Listen to all the feedback you receive.

Document your work

• Make a clear system for yourself to document your research.
• Document not only your successes, ‘failures’ may provide you with even more information.
• Make a habit out of re-reading your collected documentation.

Make your work visible

• Publish your work in different journals.
• Present your work at as many conferences as you can.
• Personal visibility will make you part of the scientific community and lead to new ideas and opportunities.

Aspects of your PhD research

Have fun during your PhD

• You will perform better research if you are enjoying yourself.
• It is easier to collaborate with others if you maintain a sense of humor about yourself, your work and your environment!
Aspects of your PhD research

Define aim of research

Make a planning

Monitor personal effectiveness

Perform research

Document your work

Make your work visible

Have fun during your PhD

Planning your PhD project

How to plan the unplannable??

Why bother??
Take home message 2

**KEEPING AN EYE ON THE GOAL:**
It is possible that at some time during your PhD research you get stuck in something, spend too much time on it and *ruin* your ‘long term’ planning. Even though it may seem overwhelming to plan a research project, it is important to cut your work up into smaller tasks and goals. Accomplishing such a task will give you a sense of gratification and motivate you to continue to reach your goal. **Keep your eye on the goal but be flexible at the same time!**
Planning your PhD project
How to plan the unplannable??

Why bother??

- To give you intermediate GRATIFICATION & MOTIVATION TO CONTINUE
- To allow you to MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

Make a planning for the coming year

1. What should you have achieved 12 months from now?
2. How do you plan to reach this goal:
   - 3 months planning
   - monthly achievements
   - weekly accomplishments
   - daily TO DO list
Planning your PhD project

How to plan the unplannable??

Make a planning for the coming year

1. *What should you have achieved 12 months from now?*

2. *How do you plan to reach this goal:*
   - 3 months planning
   - monthly achievements
   - weekly accomplishments
   - daily TO DO list

3. *Use any other planning method*
Aspects of your PhD research

Define aim of research

Make a planning

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Document your work

Make your work visible

Have fun during your PhD
Aspects of your PhD research

Define aim of research

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Take home message 3

BECOME AN EXPERT ON YOUR TOPIC:
Presenting and writing about your research is of great importance for the visibility of your work and the joy you have in your research. Meeting the leading scientists in your field can help you with this. Do not underestimate the value of being able to transmit your research to all audiences.
Take home message 3 & 4

BECOME AN EXPERT ON YOUR TOPIC

SCIENCE IS TEAMWORK
The classical image of the ‘nerdy scientist’ is hardly relevant anymore. Most problems to be solved need expertise from different scientific areas. Being able to communicate with people that may speak another (scientific) language than you is therefore important. You do not need to know everything about everything, research is predominantly teamwork in which various researchers make their own contribution to reach the final goal.
Performing Research
Individual expertise vs teamwork!!

Define which characteristics are needed for EXPERT vs TEAMPLAYER

Can EXPERT be TEAMPLAYER?
Performing Research

.....reflect individually on the following:

• Who are the important researchers in my field?
• How does my work relate to theirs?
• What are the main scientific and industrial conferences in my field?
• How good am I in presenting my work?
• Which Technical Committees and Associations exist in my field?
• Who are the other people/scientists I will be working with/for?
• What can I do for them and visa versa?
• Am I good in team working?
• How can I make the most of my expertise in the project-team?

Performing Research

.....discuss with a colleague

• Define your responsibility for your project.
• Define things you can do to give visibility to your research.
• Define who are the important people to have ‘on board’.
• Define things you can do to be effective in your research group
**Phases of your PhD research**

1. Define aim of research
2. Make a planning
3. Monitor personal effectiveness
4. Perform research
5. Document your work
6. Make your work visible
7. Have fun during your PhD
Phases of your PhD research

Define aim of research
Make a planning
Monitor personal effectiveness
Perform research
Document your work
Make your work visible

Have fun during your PhD

FINAL Take home message

SCIENCE IS FUN
Working towards your PhD will be hard work and may require a lifestyle which will not be understood by everyone in your environment. Keep in mind that it is a very special time in your life and career which is quite unique in terms of scientific freedom and personal time management. When you enjoy working towards your PhD you will stay motivated and have a better chance to be making a significant scientific contribution
Working towards your PhD
…it’s a unique period of your life!!

Questions?
Remarks?

Own your PhD project
….and have some fun in the mean time

School of Computer Science and Communication Breakfast Seminar - Part 1

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