

Common Mistakes in Graduate Research

Makoto Johnstone

Disclaimer:

This presentation features “wisdom” from:

- Websites/blogs of science faculty

Disclaimer:

This presentation features “wisdom” from:

- Websites/blogs of science faculty
- Confessions from **reddit** users

Disclaimer:

This presentation features “wisdom” from:

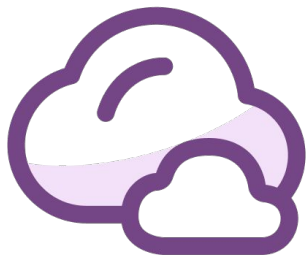
- Websites/blogs of science faculty
- Confessions from **reddit** users
- Some beloved postdocs

Disclaimer:

This presentation features “wisdom” from:

- Websites/blogs of science faculty
- Confessions from **reddit** users
- Some beloved postdocs

But first....



What are some common mistakes in graduate research?



1. ____ management

Time management

- Procrastination
- Underestimating timelines
- Rushing writing/analysis

Data management

- Backups!
- Lack of documentation
- Organization of files

2. Mishandling feedback

listen to feedback and apply that feedback

Listening

a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

Please don't try to hide when you mess up. We expect you to mess up,

Knowing what you know, and knowing what you don't know

2. Mishandling feedback

listen to feedback and apply that feedback

a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

Listening

Please don't try to hide when you mess up. We expect you to mess up,

Knowing what you know, and knowing what you don't know

Don't be this guy!

What is your biggest regret from graduate school?



Listening to feedback from other grad students. Everyone wants to comment on your project, while having no ideas for their own. Just read a lot, and do good work.

3. Poor Communication

Asking questions if things are unclear.

Ask questions!

If you're unsure, ask.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

3. Poor Communication

Asking questions if things are unclear.

Ask questions!

If you're unsure, ask.

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

ACTUALLY COMMUNICATE.

Communicate. Your. Mistakes.

at least communicate when you won't be on time

3. Poor Communication



Zelamir • 3y ago

Communication.

Running late? Tell me. Having issues with a protocol? Tell me. Can't make a training? Tell me.

Didn't read or protocol or paper? Tell me!

Hate the lab and want to try a new one? Totally cool just Tell me.

Something went terribly wrong? Dear God PLEASE tell me.

4. Not reading!

- Not keeping up with the current literature
- Missing key studies
- Not knowing the research gaps



5. Not having a clear research plan

- Science questions that are too vague/broad
- Overcomplicating the project
- Sample biases

Some photos from grad admission websites (BYU, UEI, York University):



Takeaways:

- Seek feedback
- Plan ahead
- Document + save your work
- Communicate with your advisor

References

Lantsoght, Eva. “Nine Mistakes to Avoid during Your PhD.” *PhD Talk*, 16 Feb. 2023,
www.evalantsoght.com/2023/02/nine-mistakes-to-avoid-during-your-phd.html.

Camuti, Alice. “Hate Graduate School? Avoid These Common Mistakes Students Make.” *Graduate Studies*, 27 Aug. 2019,
blogs.tntech.edu/graduate/2020/03/25/hate-graduate-school-avoid-these-common-mistakes-students-make/.

“8 Grad School Mistakes You May Want to Avoid.” *Graduate School at The University of British Columbia (UBC)*,
www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/blog/8-grad-school-mistakes-you-may-want-avoid.