How to Have a Successful Graduate Life?

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Outline

• About graduate study
• The role of a supervisor
• How should a graduate student do?
• How to learn effectively?
• Conclusions
About Graduate Study

• Undergraduate
  – Learn and master the basic knowledge and skills of a major

• Master
  – Learn and master some advanced knowledge and skills of a field
  – Learn to handle complex situations in reality
About Graduate Study

• Ph. D.
  – To *advance* the state of the art on a valuable topic
    • *New* problem, *new* theory, *better* algorithm, …
    • *It is about depth, not breadth:* 博士？？专员！
Why Graduate Study?

• Incorrect answers:
  – I want to have a diploma to hunt a job
  – I need to solve the Hukou issue
  – I think being a Master/Ph. D. is glorious
  – Most of my schoolmates are pursuing Master/Ph. D.
  – My parents hoped me to be a Ph. D.
  – …

• Correct answer:
  – To achieve my career goal
About Academic Research

• It is luxury
• It is competitive
• It is stressful
• Happy only after truly solving a problem
  – Research ≠ Publish Papers
• Enjoyable only if you can excel relatively easily
  – Rewarded by peer respect
• Are you rich?
Role of Supervisor

• Supervisor is not your babysitter
• Supervisor is busy
  – Teaching, fund application, paper writing, academic activity, …
• Supervisor is your career tutor
  – Help you achieve your career goal
  – Not do for you
How Should a Graduate Student Do?

• Set up a reasonable career goal
  – No one, except yourself and your family, cares about your career
• Be prepared for the busy graduate life
• Be proactive in your study and research
• Do physical exercises to keep you energetic
• Communicate with your supervisor moderately
  – Supervisor is passive [《礼记•学记》: “善待问者如撞钟，叩之以小者则小鸣，叩之以大者则大鸣”]
How to Learn Effectively?

• Have interest in your topic
• Devote yourself to the topic
• Learn from whatever sources
  – Supervisor, classmates, senior schoolmates, papers, paper authors, seminar, talks, conferences, internet, social network, …
• Critical thinking [《论语•为政》：“学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆。”]
• Practice, get your hands dirty
• Collaborate
Conclusions

• It is you who should be responsible for your career
• Excellence builds on hard work and correct ways
Ask Yourself

• What is your career goal?

Charles Ling and Qiang Yang, Crafting Your Research Future.