

Not how to do a PhD

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April 12, 2020

Gabriel “gasche” Scherer

2010-2012: Master programme (MPRI, Paris)

2012-2015: PhD at Gallium, INRIA Rocquencourt, France, with Didier Rémy

2012-2013: ML module systems

2013-2015: Which types have a unique inhabitant?



2016-2017: postdoc, Northeastern University, Boston, with Amal Ahmed

- Multi-language programming systems
- Speculative optimization in JITs (also with Jan Vitek)

2017-∞: researcher at Parsifal, INRIA Saclay, France

This talk



Matthias Felleisen (approximative quote):

*Junior researchers talks at PLMW are terrible.
They don't have the perspective to tell students
how to do a PhD.*

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Not how to do a PhD

You can find better advice.

This talk: remarks and side-comments that you may not have all heard before.

Please ask questions!

After this talk



Matthias Felleisen (approximative quote):

Besides, they should be ashamed of themselves because they don't even stay around students after the sessions.

Come talk at lunch time.

Relativity of experience

North America and Europe, completely different experiences.
(South America, Asia, Africa: I don't know)

Advisors

Advisors are all different. Ask a previous student.

Advisors are incomplete: $\not\vdash X$ and $\vdash \neg X$ differ.
Take initiatives!

Low low times

Low morale during part(s) of the PhD is *common*.

(manuscript)

- “research is when it can fail”
(Ben Greenman, from Matthias Felleisen from Dan Friedman)
- review chances: several rejections in a row (even for good work)

(Jonathan Protzenko)

We speak publicly about our success much more than our failures.

When you feel like shit, talk about it!

Know this is not just/about you.

Listening and talking – during your work

Talk to the people in your lab!

Isolation is bad.

(library)

Feel free to ask questions.

(Chung-chieh)



Ron Garcia:
Talk from your heart.

Listening and talking – about science

Attending talks is important. (within reason)

Getting in touch with people, giving talks is good.

+ Summer schools

I like local events (JFLA, NEPLS, SNAPL...):

meeting the people around you is nice. I attend and talk there.

Apply as Student Volunteer.

Consider having a lab blog!

Publish your work

Do have a webpage.

Please put your papers on arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/>

(Don't wait for an advisor request)

You may subscribe to daily abstracts.

If you have a paper accepted, put the draft online *asap*.

You can update the preprint as you make further changes.

(Don't wait for the conference to release it.)

If I cannot read your work, you are not doing your job correctly.

Programming matters

Please start/keep writing programs.

Good to keep in touch with our subject matter.

Can be a fun distraction, soothing activity.

Thanks

Any questions?