

So, you are thinking about a PhD. . .

Reflections on the PhD process and options post-PhD

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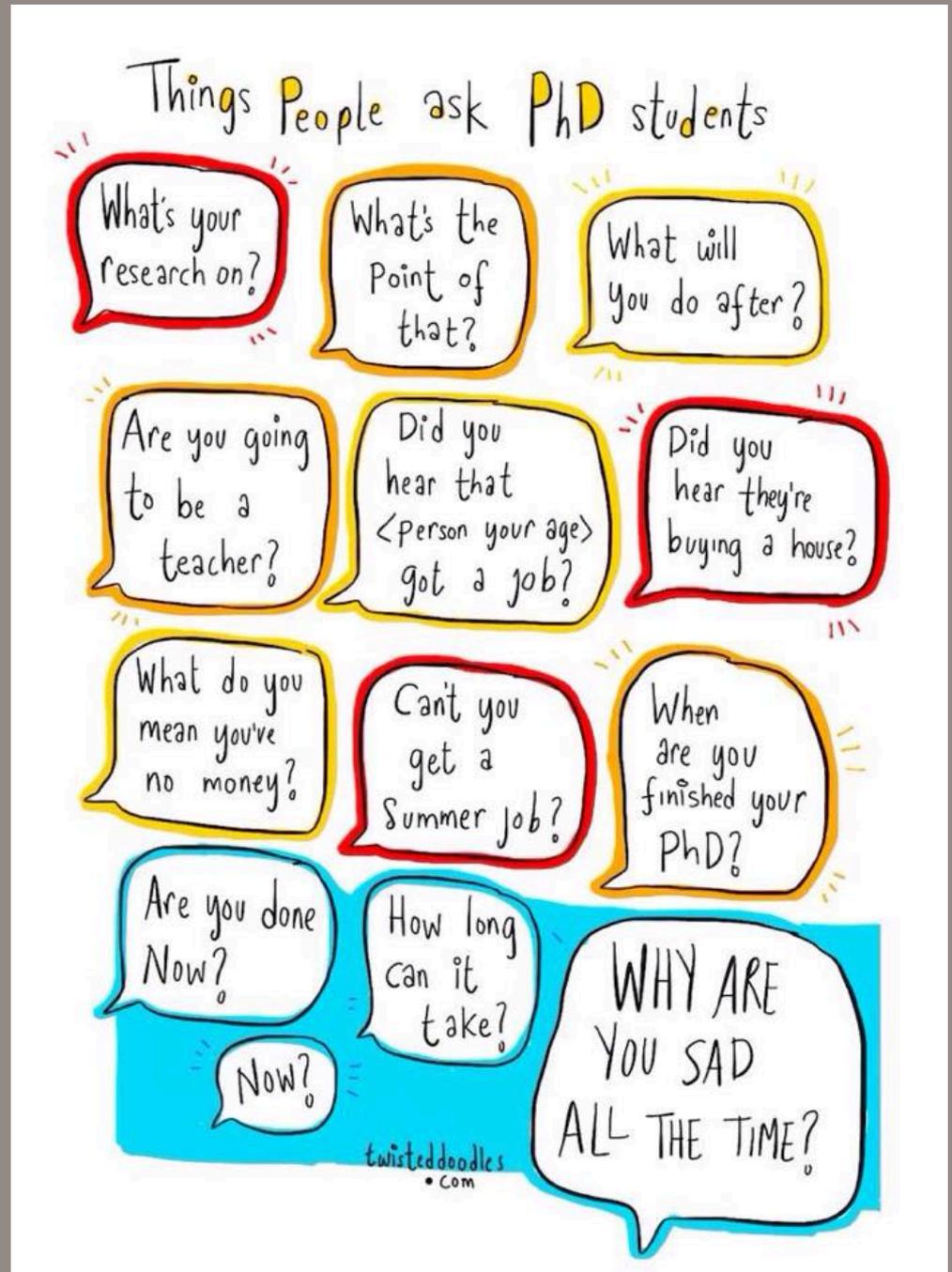
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Are you ready?

A PhD is not for everyone.

If you do not know what you want to do next, that is ok, but it suggests that a PhD may not be for you.

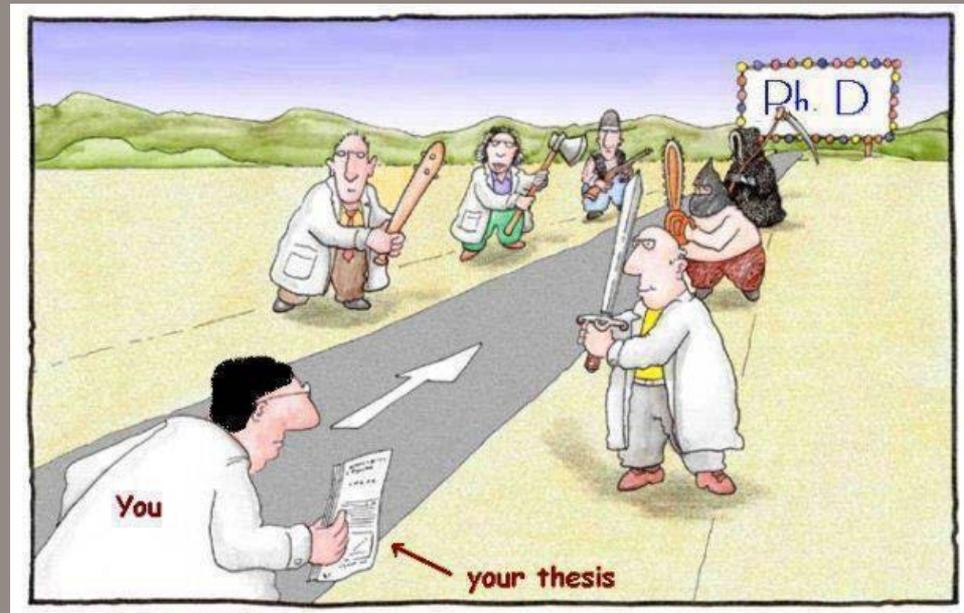


What is a PhD? It's a process

"A PhD thesis isn't a book...it's an idea. But the process of formulating that idea changes the idea itself just like it changes you. Your PhD won't change the world but it will change you and your place in the world. I'd do it all over again in a heartbeat."

Summary of advice at

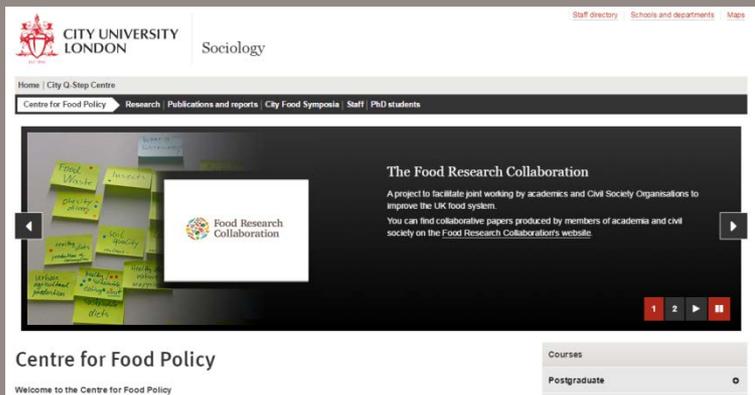
<http://foodgovernance.com/2015/06/16/the-earth-is-mud-be-calm-reflections-on-the-phd-process/>



There is a lot of advice out there!

Here is what worked for me

- Identified my goals and reasons for doing a PhD
- Developed a proposal with a research question I could spend 3+ years thinking about
- Found supervisors who care
 - It helps if they have a big name but this is secondary
- Found funds!



The screenshot shows the City University London website. The header includes the university logo and navigation links for 'Staff directory', 'Schools and departments', and 'Maps'. The main content area features a video player for 'The Food Research Collaboration' with a description: 'A project to facilitate joint working by academics and Civil Society Organisations to improve the UK food system. You can find collaborative papers produced by members of academia and civil society on the Food Research Collaborator's website.' The video player shows a slide with the 'Food Research Collaboration' logo and several sticky notes with handwritten notes. Below the video player, there are links for 'Courses' and 'Postgraduate'.

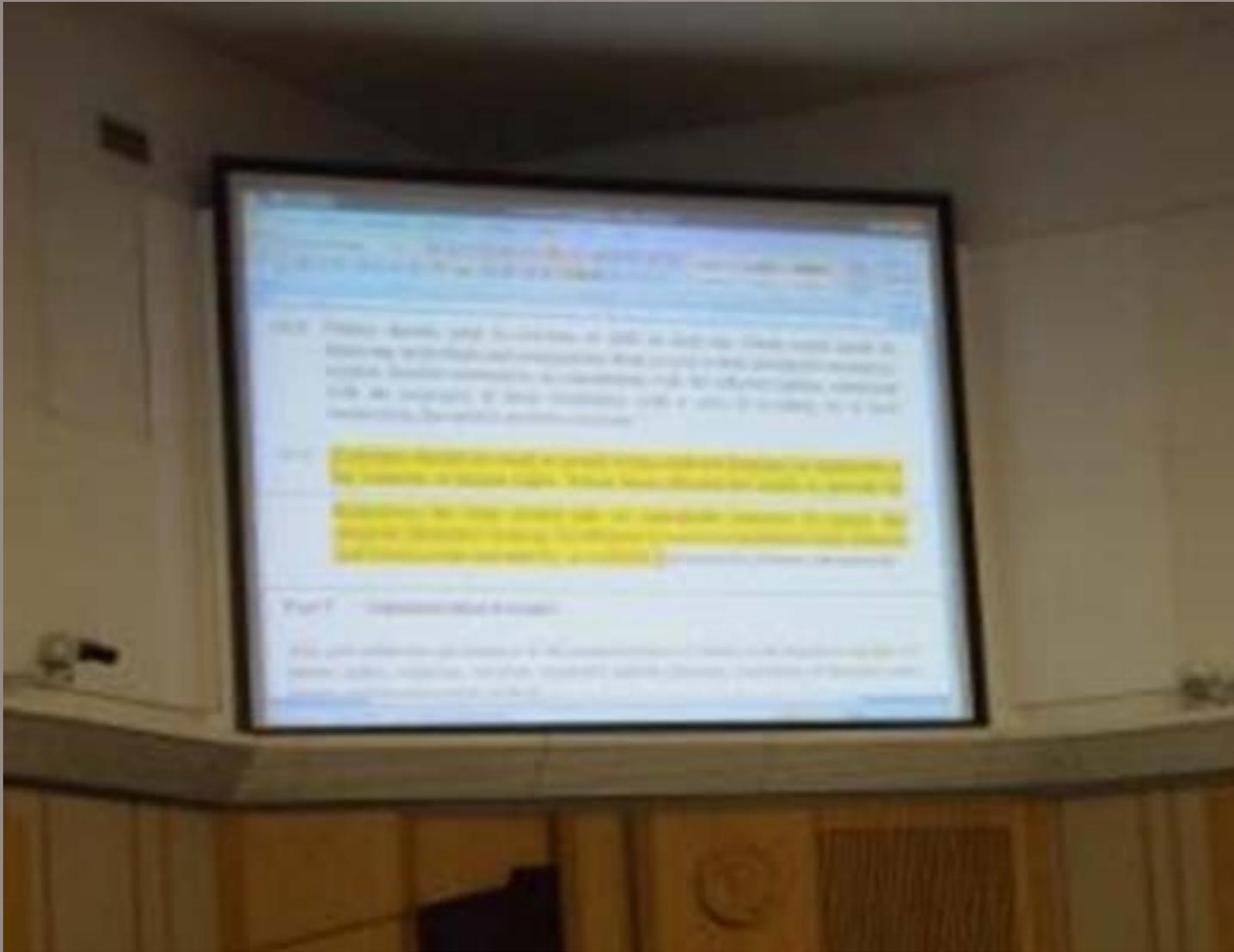


My process

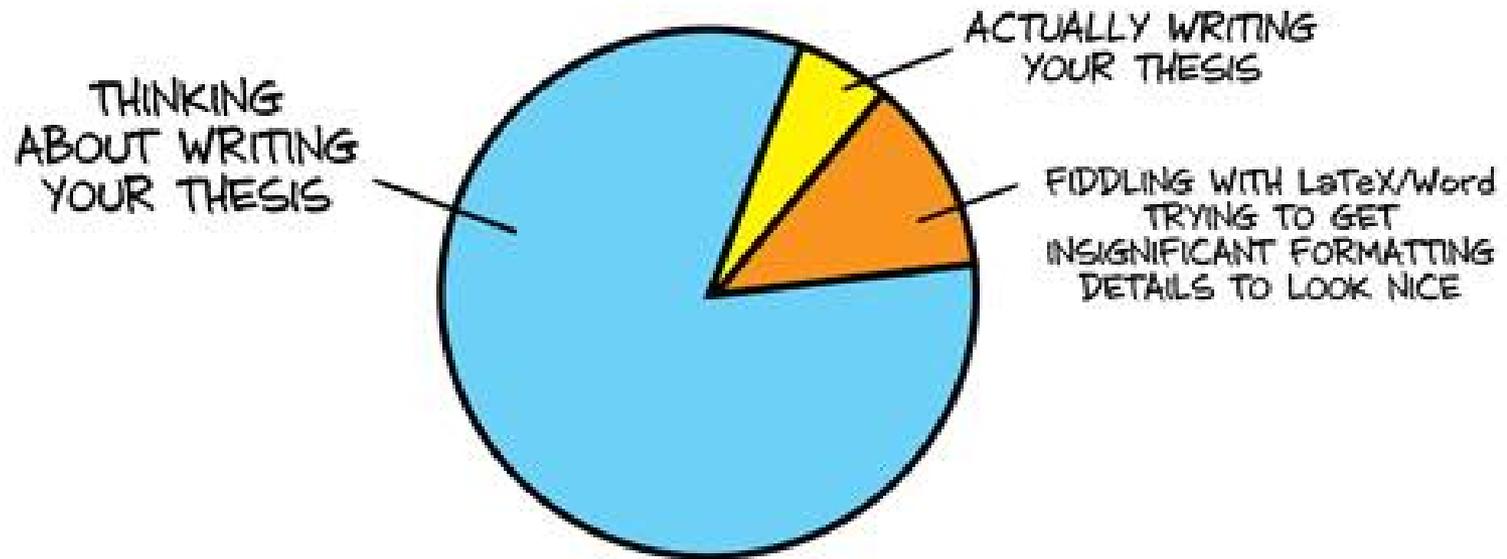
- Developed proposal and started applying for grants in 2009
- Started PhD October 2010
- Started research to examine the reform of a UN committee
 - Launched into field work (data collection)
 - Rome October 2010, India November 2010, ... and more (2011-2012)
 - Analysis (2012)
 - Applying for post-docs and jobs (2013)
 - Writing (2013)
- Started at WUR September 2013







WRITING YOUR THESIS:



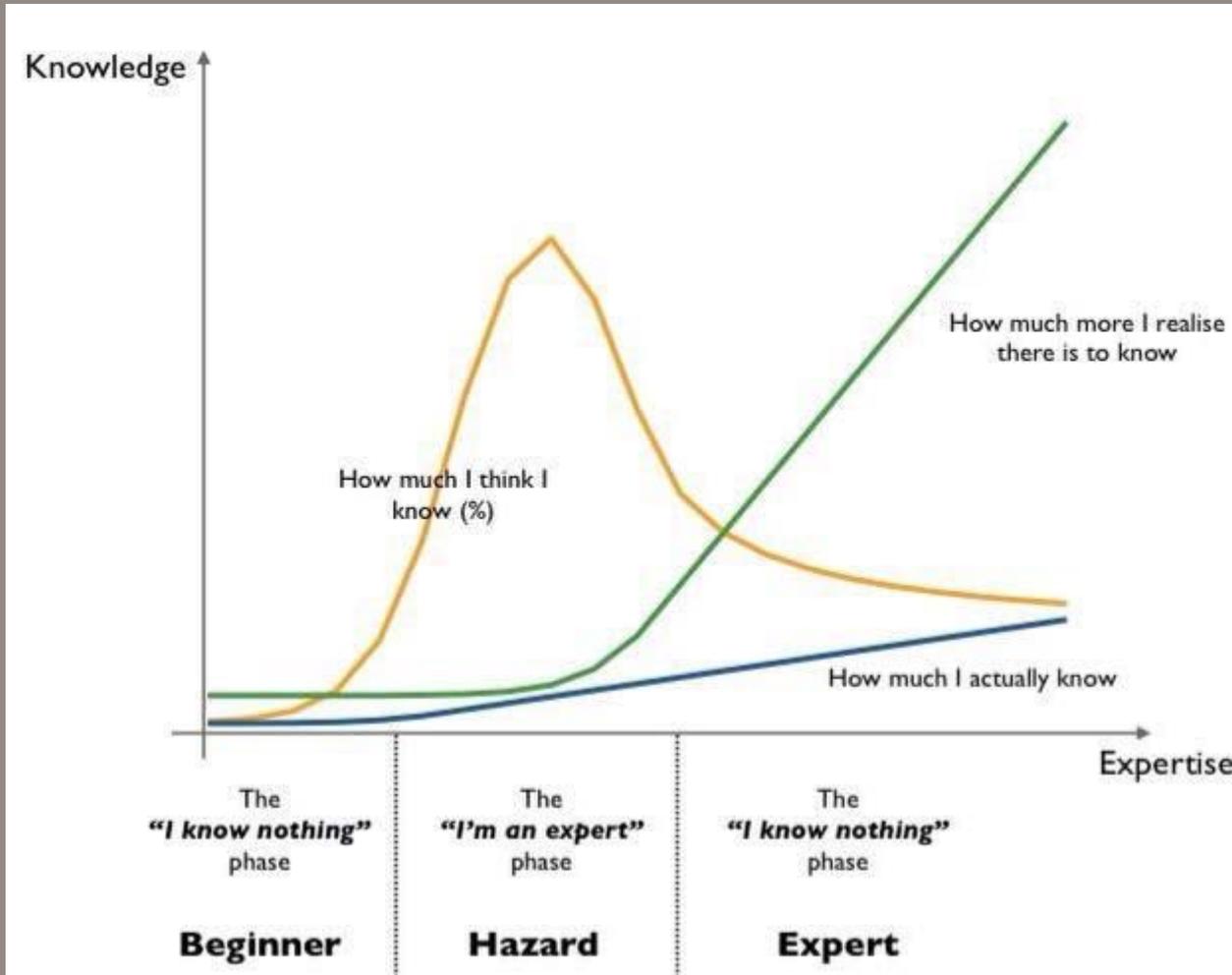
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“Write whenever able. The sheer size of the thesis was as daunting as the intellectual task so having bits written out - even if they were rough - really helped.”



Spiral of emotions



“Imposter syndrome is probably going to get you at some point - you ARE good enough, keep the faith.”

How did I get through it? (1)

- Made sure it was the right time and the right decision
- Got my finances sorted out
- Abandoned the "survival" lexicon
- Stayed healthy
- Made friends in my department and across my subject area
- Went to conferences and presented whenever I could
- I did not forget the bigger picture...it's just a PhD



How to get through this? (2)



- Made time for friends and family
- Found a routine that worked for me
- Read outside of the borders of my research topic (but maybe not too far)
- Wrote, wrote and wrote some more (blogging!)
- Made time for deep work/thinking
- Remembered why I started the PhD journey in the first place



So you are a Dr. (!!!). Now what?

- **Burn out**

- Try to avoid this

- **“Real job”**

- **Post-doc**

- This is an awesome option
- Often need to apply 1 year in advance
- Great if you want to continue with an academic career or advance your research

- **Academic job**

- Good luck



Good luck!

Don't be afraid to
change your mind.

It's not for everyone
but if you think it is
for you, know that an
academic career can
be rewarding and
exciting!

