

**Evaluation of Seven Secrets of Highly Successful RHD  
Students Seminar  
Newcastle University July 2007**

**1. What specific steps will you now take towards completing your PhD as a result of this program?**

- Structure in a daily 'writing' regime – AND – check those emails last thing at night! Seek and get appropriate help when needed
- Not expect it to be brilliant. Try to get my supervisors to read what I've already written. Keep the internet/email distractions until after working
- Start writing the first two hours of the day, then make adjustment to objectives or programs. Have fruitful meetings with supervisors – mainly discussing research
- I'll definitely do more writing! I feel much more motivated to do it now. Doing nothing but writing first thing in the morning is a great idea.
- Time management – morning, writing; displacements = reward only
- Writing more
- Plan on working more structured hours
- Set up PERMANENT workspace at home and not worry that it's a mess. Give away (to my supervisor) my most finished chapter. Disconnect my computer from the network – set aside 'internet time'.
- Spend first 2 hours of tomorrow WRITING.
- Set a specific time probably 10-12 each day and write more. Get help from other experts.
- Start writing, setting regular meetings with my supervisor, cut down on my tutorials
- Be focused and persistent with my PhD & in consultation with my supervisor
- Start writing in earnest (only 5 months in but I realise how important it is to start now!). I already meet my supervisors weekly in whole lab meeting to discuss experiments which is great, but I am going to start regular meetings on my writing/progress on my own.
- Start writing and minimise distraction

- Set a regular working time for PhD tasks eg: writing up 2 hours/day (9-11am everyday)
- My supervisor has been on leave for the first semester, but I've already organised regular meetings. I also need to remove internet temptations and organise solid working hours.
- Regular supervisor-student meetings. Write as I go.
- Routine meetings, write as I go, avoid distractions – emails.
- Try not to be demoralised at the setbacks, write.
- Print out schedule, 'JafPhD' and borrow my supervisor's thesis!
- Stop reading and start writing! Organise a meeting with my supervisor.
- Contact my supervisor. Make an action plan for completion. Write for 2 hours per day – 9-11am.
- Contact my supervisor. Submit 3 draft chapters on my computer. Allocate 2 hours each morning for writing.
- Saying no. Treat it like a job.
- Be more persistent. Write more. Do things regularly.
- Stay focused and look for help when necessary
- Concentrate on working. Avoid distractions. Check emails at end of day.
- Specify my questions. Have regular meetings with my supervisor. Focus on writing rather than reading.
- Start the writing and try to arrange regular meetings with the supervisor.
- Try my best to follow the rules especially writing up my drafts and submitting to my supervisor – at least between 9-11am (daily).
- Ask supervisor for a meeting. Establish a routine for writing. Close the door.
- Do more writing, have more fixed working hours
- Allocate specific times each day for writing
- Treat it like a job. Seek more help from experts
- Contact supervisor immediately re: feedback on submitted work. Contact expertise advice re: database development. Cancel all social engagements at the weekend.
- Use the seven steps

- Have to start writing
- Talk to my supervisor and write
- Limit email, set regular hours so no guilt, keep starting papers to remind me of achievements.
- Make meetings with supervisor. Drop Spanish lessons as don't have time
- Start writing tomorrow
- Write more freely. Write, don't stop writing.
- Ask for help more often – especially when things aren't going well. Be more open with my supervisor. Continue writing up background, hypothesis, etc.
- Follow the seven secrets
- Writing for 2 hours at the start of the day. Formal fortnightly meetings with supervisors.
- Stop checking emails/internet when I should be writing
- Meet my supervisor regularly, regardless of how I feel.
- Structure day to include real writing (8.30 – 11.30am). Afternoons – spend on transcribing, structure plans, computer literacy and Endnote.

## **2. What specifically have you learned from this program?**

- That I am not 'alone' on this journey and that my major strength lies in my persistence!
- How to identify things that are keeping me back and a few things to prevent them. That it's very probable I will get out 😊
- Better time management. Work with supervisors.
- It's just a flipping PhD! Seriously, the advice on writing is probably the most useful for me.
- That I'm going pretty well for my stage of PhD but I need more structure. My supervisors are great and approachable, but are the type to say 'let's not have a meeting unless we have something to talk about'. I am going to set an agenda for meetings so I can be self-driven and therefore drive my supervisors better.
- Tactics to be more productive. That I could/should be more forward about what help I need to do my work.

- To have more realistic expectations
- That it's ok, I'm normal ☺ there are things I can do to solve this problem that I'm in.
- Tip about how to ensure I write more. That I should talk to my supervisor more. I should ask for more expert help.
- Managing PhD. Consider PhD as a job.
- It's a training process = researcher
- Don't take this the wrong way, but nothing I couldn't have worked out for myself – BUT what was truly invaluable was bringing it ALL together and making a real plan and forcing me to acknowledge my procrastination.
- Ask for help when you're tackling a problem
- Put action in my everyday PhD life (example: to write up after read references)
- I really need to start writing and cut down distractions
- Priority – writing first thing in the morning is a good idea. Jobs – even though it's critical if a student has a financial crisis, but balance is important too.
- That the PhD experience is common for most candidates. To get help and not to worry about criticism.
- Nothing new but it has served to remind me not to give up at this point and to know that overall the troughs are part of the journey.
- I need to stop reading my emails every half hour. Write and hand in for feedback – something written is better than nothing! You can't get feedback on an empty piece of paper.
- That everyone feels like I do!
- It's just a flipping PhD!! I am learning – it's ok to ask questions and get help with the process
- 7 steps – all useful. 1<sup>st</sup> step – looking after your supervisor is crucial
- Be persistent. Don't give up at the moment (I'm in a trough now!)
- Some great techniques like work 9-11. Write as you read.
- A range of successful PhD student criteria.
- Writing is an important element that creates creativity for problem solving.

- Tips on how to complete and being realistic
- The seven secrets of highly effective PhD students
- Time management, treating PhD like a job, etc.
- Getting help from supervisors and colleagues
- Persistence
- Relationship with supervisor, expectation
- Most people obtain a PhD if they persevere
- Mostly revival of many things that I gave a thought to earlier
- JafPhD
- PhD is not to be a totally consuming ordeal
- Do it
- Avoid distractions
- That I'm not as bad as I thought
- I'm not alone
- Balance between being a doer and a thinker
- Structure/organisation; belief; take it seriously; Just Do It (apologies to Nike)
- Tips for commencing/continuing writing. How to improve my professional relationship with my supervisor.
- How to arrange and manage my relations with my other commitments
- To step back a little from the swirling ideas and start to get strategic
- I can do it
- Persistence
- To be much more disciplined with my time. Have specific tasks @ specific times.

### **3. What personal insights or awareness have you gained?**

- That I am not 'imagining' all the difficulties and now know – have learnt – constructive ways in which to deal with them
- That the things I worry about are really common but I'm completely opposite to others in some areas
- I'm a pragmatic doer! I liked that diagram.
- I am lazy but only when I don't have deadlines

- I have much the same experiences and concerns as other PhD students
- That I'm okay with showing work in progress – I just need to write more
- I need to get over my 'fear of supervisor'/'fear of criticism'. It's just a thesis. Doesn't have to be perfect.
- I'm not a doer. My pragmatist skills are the worst.
- Taking support for PhD. Writing and persistence are important
- I'm not alone
- It will never happen unless I do something now
- To be more focused and confident
- To defeat self-sabotage
- I'm a reflector and spend too much time not writing
- Planning and priority. Distraction – I am usually distracted not only by colleagues but also supervisor's work
- I'm excited because I only started this PhD four days ago and this workshop has pointed out PhD bad habits emerging. Also is nice to know that everyone finds it hard at times.
- Just a reminder not to let the down points become the key focus. It served as a motivator that I knew I needed.
- I'm a 'doer' – I need to do a little more thinking!
- That I have very clever distractions...(pragmatist!)
- Insight into my fears about embarking on this process.
- I'm a procrastinator and a reflector. I'm avoiding my supervisor
- Renewed belief in my capability to do this.
- That I need to focus more
- Be more realistic
- Aim towards the end by prioritising
- Awareness of PhD student responsibility
- A lot more, such as not to check email every morning.
- Being able to persist with my study for PhD.
- How much I am like other students.
- PhD is not about coming out with something very outstanding.
- Confirmed previous thoughts – and that's good! Must be on track.
- Most students do struggle with various stages

- I need to be more persistent; doing so is 90% of job.
- I'm doing okay. Seek help more regularly. Start writing now.
- Keep things in perspective
- It is a job and needs to be my first priority (or in the first three)
- I do waste lots of time and call it work
- Accept my own limits and to be realistic
- Reinforcement of the things I (intuitively) already knew, but didn't readily admit to myself.
- Increased awareness of lack of realism and fear of failure
- I can do it
- Overly perfectionistic
- I am a perfectionist/reflector
- I am a perfectionist
- Not to be so intimidated by the overall task, break main task into smaller job lots

#### 4. Would you recommend this course to other PhD students?

**Yes – 49**

**No - 0**

- Definitely!!! Should be a compulsory PhD induction workshop at EVERY university
- Definitely
- Yes, timing for me is a bit late, but I recommend early PhD study
- Absolutely. The content, as well as the presenter, were fantastic. I'm very glad I had the opportunity to come along.
- Of course!
- Yes
- Yes – entertaining and insightful
- YES – I would recommend it to me 3 years ago...
- Absolutely!
- Yes. And [www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com) for when you have free time
- Yes, especially new ones like me

- Yes, especially recent/new PhD students @ the beginning of their candidature to set up good working habits from the start
- Definitely! It should be mandatory 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. I wish it'd happened earlier for me
- Definitely – we probably need it once each 12 months
- Yes, indeed
- Very much so
- Yes, strongly
- Yes – 100%

##### **5. How would you rate this workshop?**

Mean rating: **9.2** on a scale of 0-10 where 0 is of no use and 10 is excellent.