

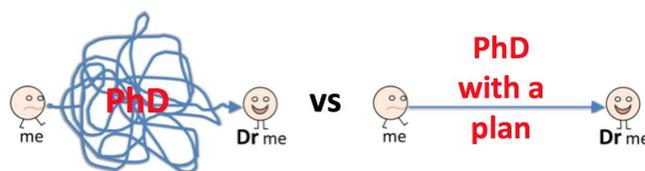
The research and thesis plan

Mike Starr, PhD
University of Helsinki
Dept. of Forest Sciences

1

Success depends on...

- A good, well thought through **thesis plan**
 - *"If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!"* — Benjamin Franklin
 - *"Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential."* — Winston Churchill



2

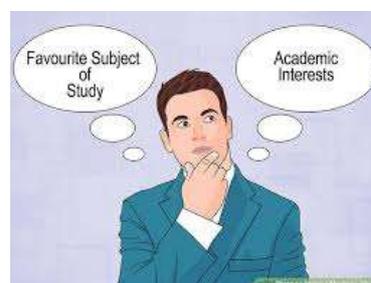
Continued success depends on...

- Student's attitude, motivation and commitment
- Relationship between you, the supervisor, and the student
- Responsibility for the progress of the work rests primarily with the student, who is expected to stay in regular contact with you, the supervisor

3

Importance of choosing a subject that is..

- of interest to the student - motivation
- "about something", i.e. focused
- "do-able", i.e. feasible, not too ambitious



4

Master's thesis plan agreement

- Consider making a thesis plan that is agreed upon by both the student and supervisor(s),
- The agreement could include:
 - the objectives and implementation of the thesis
 - how the progress of work will be followed
 - the role of the supervisor(s)
 - a detailed schedule for the thesis



"Sign here to indicate you have no idea what you've signed."

Master's thesis seminars

- Thesis **plan** seminar:
 - An introduction to the topic, the background and sense of the problem/purpose
 - Objectives/aims/hypotheses
 - What material/data is intended to be used/collected and from where
 - Intended methods to analyse the data
 - If possible, what kind of results are expected
 - In summary, the **What, Why, Where** and **How** of the planned research

Master's thesis seminars

- Thesis **results** seminar:
 - Start with brief introduction of research topic, theoretical framework, and objectives/aims/hypotheses (revised if different from original plan)
 - **However, the main emphasis should be on the data and results**, e.g. material/data collected during the field work, how it was collected, how it differs from what was initially planned, practical experiences (e.g. difficulties faced), methods used (or intend to use) to analyse the data, any tables or figures of results, or then in what form the results are intended to be presented

Safe guards

- The thesis agreement
- After submission of the thesis, consider holding a written test in order that the student can:
 - demonstrate their familiarity with and knowledge about the topic and content of their Master's thesis (authenticity check)
 - proficiency in academic writing