Doctoral Learning Strategies

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**Introduction**

There are many learning experiences an individual faces prior to getting in a Ph.D. course along with many obstacles and challenges. Sometimes previous learning experiences and the challenges that Doctoral studies offer can cause serious performance issues. Many studies have shown that many students at Ph.D. level experience fatigue, disconnection, and cynicism. Many have revealed that they face serious struggles and clashes with the scholarly community. The elementary and general data concerning experiences preceding doctoral education is mostly about struggles related to departmental problems, the deficiency of supervisors support and even lack of funds. For instance, according to a study, many nursing learners preceding doctoral education experienced numerous responsibilities, financial problems, difficulty in connecting with the faculty which resulted in lack of courage to pursue their Ph.D.'s (Sverdlik, 2018). Another study revealed that only a little above half of the Ph.D. program students are granted the Ph.D. degree, this is another worrisome thought that a student face prior to the getting into the doctoral degree. This research will discuss some previous learning experiences of a P.hD. Aspirant, how they may affect the studies and, what are some helpful strategies that can be followed to overcome the challenges of the Doctoral studies.

**Discussion**

Theory of lifelong learning indicates the significance of learning during the course of one’s life. The course of learning life is highlighted in almost everyone reflections. A person sees a situation in a certain way based on what that person has learned throughout his or her life experiences. Therefore, one should take a deep insight rather than simply what they are learning or have learned previously in order to comprehend the shift from learner to a hopeful professor or P.hD. Degree holder. The period of a Ph.D. program has been termed as a shift period from student to professor , and thus, it is a significant period for thinking on personal development, change, and constructing one’s self-identity. Those getting into Ph.D. studies need to learn from their past experiences and come in with a developed self, motivated and willing to take on the studies independently and optimistically.

Ph.D. research is autonomous in nature and therefore the individual needs to be willing to work independently and not lose the motivation. While pursuing Ph.D. studies, the students need to be self-dependent and perform a lot of explorative work (Klein & Rowe, 2008). It is important to bear loneliness and learn to be independent in research work in contrast to previous education where there was not much independent work. Ph.D. studies require initiative and taking charge compared with Master’s and bachelor's study. Prior to Ph.D. students usually lack time management, act carelessly, depend on the lecturers more often, whereas in Ph.D. Such actions can lead to failure.

There are many strategies that can be recommended to overcome potential obstacles during doctoral studies. Solid time management skills are of paramount importance especially in the [doctoral program](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study), hence, treating ones Doctoral studies as a full-time job is crucial. Time management is also essential when [writing a thesis](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/applying-for-university/university-life/how-to-write-a-dissertation).

Relationship with the supervisor holds supreme importance to one's Ph.D. degree. There are many issues that can arise regarding supervisors such as, the absence of supervisor due to several commitments; for this, the student needs to keep in touch and demand time consistently. In some cases, a supervisor may retire or go on a long leave, and when this happens, the student needs to talk to the management and seek help immediately (Noonan et al., 2007). Also, some supervisors may take more than necessary interest in one's research which can halt the process or de-motivate student from doing the research as effectively, in this case, one can discuss this with the supervisor and make them know that they should leave some room for you for self-experimentation or interest. If any of these or related problems occur and becomes difficult to handle, one should consider [changing the supervisor](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/phd-study/choosing-your-phd-supervisor).

Moreover, beginning one’s thesis can be awfully challenging. It is, therefore, advisable to initiate work on something that you find easy and do not let the initial phase of thesis discourage you (Adham et al., 2018). A Ph.D. aspirant should recognize that he or she, usually have to work single-handedly or with less cooperation from the teaching staff and colleagues. This should not de-motivate them, and they should not feel isolated instead it should be taken as a challenge and learning experience. In addition, Doctoral students should always accept any provision that is accessible and should try to be in contact with other Doctoral students. [Joining appropriate societies](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/the-importance-of-extra-curricular-activities) and developing one's network of Ph.D. students can be of great help in the thesis work.

Attending the seminars and workshops is another way to help yourself, they can be a good investment of time, and this will also allow you to come across people with the same interests as yours. In addition, providing assistance to a faculty member or your professor in their research work will substantially increase your chance to get letters of recommendation and publication along with improvement in your resume (Mantai & Dowling, 2015).

Lastly, it is imperative to take your time and in deciding who your mentor will be. You should go for the supervisor or advisor who is engaged in a study that will be near to your research interests (Odena & Burgess, 2017). It is the responsibility of the student to make the relationship with the advisor work. Regular schedules with the supervisor and keeping him or her up-to-date with your research progress is also the responsibility of the student as most of the supervisors are busy with many other students at the same time.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, previous experiences may help or halt the P.hD. Experience, most of the times it's later that plays a major part. Because of the new challenges that a Doctoral study represents and the prior study experiences that are unlike Doctoral studies may confuse and de-motivate an individual and may result in failure or giving up on the degree. For that reason, it is essential for the students and researchers to take help from other students, keep in contact with the supervisor, change the approach of studies from dependent to independent and take charge of the process.

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