

The Twelve Years of Grad School

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Grad school is a wonderful experience. Finally, after years of living at home and then college dorms, in grad school you are almost out in the real world, forced to make important decisions, like "Do I spend use my meager stipend to pay the rent or buy food?" But it isn't quite the real world—there's always the thesis advisor to turn to for advice about the research project. I fondly remember my first year of grad school...

In my 1st year of grad school my mentor gave to me
 A project for a degree.

*I worked hard but the research plan didn't pan out.
 Maybe it's because I was busy taking classes,
 Or maybe it was because my advisor
 Didn't want to waste a really good idea on
 just a 1st year student.
 But, by my 2nd year, it looked like things would improve...*

In my second year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*So the 2nd year was much like the 1st,
 But then again I did pass my quals.
 And then in my 3rd year,
 It looked like I was going to make some big discoveries,
 with the help of my advisor...*

In my 3rd year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Three fresh pens,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*Still without success I looked forward to the 4th year.
 And further help from my advisor...*

In my 4th year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Four data pads,
 Three fresh pens,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*No need to panic, yet—many people take 5-6 years
 to finish.
 But it was time to get some serious advice,
 and my advisor complied...*

In my 5th year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Five bold ideas,
 Four data pads,
 Three fresh pens,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*But this 5th year passed by just like the others,
 and I was desperately in need
 of a project guaranteed to work.
 It's a good thing I had such a helpful advisor...*

In my 6th year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Six perfect projects,
 Five bold ideas,
 Four data pads,
 Three fresh pens,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*With all this help I was certain I would succeed,
 But somehow, against all odds, nothing worked.
 Yet again, I met with my advisor...*

In my 7th year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Seven hot hypotheses,
 Six perfect projects,
 Five bold ideas,
 Four data pads,
 Three fresh pens,
 Two latex gloves,
 And a new project for a degree.

*And the years passed by in a blur.
 I vaguely recall getting
 a hint of a positive result in my 9th year,
 But this could not be reproduced.
 Year after year I met with my advisor,
 Until finally, I entered my 12th year of grad school...*

In my 12th year of grad school my mentor gave to me,
 Twelve months to finish,
 Eleven lame excuses,
 Ten ways to waste time,
 Nine major migraines,
 Eight different deadends,
 Seven hack hypotheses,
 Six pointless projects,
 Five old ideas,
 Four crumpled pads,
 Three dried pens,
 Two ripped gloves,
 But no hope for my P - H - D!