

1. **NEW IDEA:** Idea is born – you have a question, you have some hypotheses, you may even have data...!
 - i. Disentangle your main research questions from the idea/topic that you are interested in. Research ideas do not equal research questions. Actually write down ideas in research question form. (Launch writing)
 - ii. If applicable, try writing down hypotheses you are interested in testing. Even if you are doing inductive/qualitative work, this can be helpful in getting your mind around what are the kinds of mechanisms you are on the lookout for.
2. **START WRITING:** Write it up. Never stop writing! Start a list of potential questions. Maybe even start organizing your folders into potential project folders. Memo. Make annotated bibliographies. (Launch and Internal Writing)
3. **DATA WORK:** Even if the data are not perfect – you need to start figuring out what you can/can't do. Work backwards – if you don't have your ideal data, what's the next best thing? Study design is important. (Internal writing)
 - i. Collect/analyze data.
 - ii. *Iterative process:* Does this change your research question? Move back and forth between research question and data. YX's golden trio – the right question, the right data, and the right method.
 - iii. *Pros and cons of your approach vs. others* – start keeping a list. This will help you think about new projects, or write your limitations sections later.
4. **SHOW IT TO SOMEONE:** Once you have something that displays how you are thinking about your question, the literature, and your data, **SHOW IT TO SOMEONE**. Don't just sit on it until it is perfect. Workshop it. Start from low stakes workshops and move up. Ping your peers. The more feedback and the more you talk about it earlier on, the better prepared you will be for later stages of the process.
 - i. *Journal selection* – pay attention to what people are saying in terms of where they think it might get published.
 - ii. Work on "*The Argument Outline*" (Connell)
5. **SEND IT OUT:** Start thinking about where you might want to submit drafts. Writing is a social practice (Connell)
 - i. Conferences – PAA for winter/summer papers, ASA for winter/spring papers.
 - ii. Larger university-wide workshops
 - iii. Other presentation spaces
 - iv. Faculty feedback
6. **WRITE A COMPLETE DRAFT**
7. **GET FEEDBACK**
8. **SUBMIT, SUBMIT, and RE-SUBMIT! You will not get a publication if you don't send it out.**

Related tips/tricks:

- If you are co-authoring with someone with secondary data, often times you get through steps 1-3 much faster. But you might spend longer time between 5-7.
- Working on your own data collection means that you might have steps 3 and 4 somewhat more overlapping, and you might spend much longer in steps 1-3.
- While making this a “timeline” or “life course” makes it seem like there is an easy step-by-step process for research, in reality, research is a messy messy messy process. You will flip between stages, you will scrap something and start over at 1, you might be in the middle of step 3 and realize you have to go all the way back to the beginning. This are rough guidelines, but by no means the only way to do it. Certainly makes you understand why it’s called (re)search.
- Don’t underestimate the emotional side of the writing/research process
 - Do not assume you can start graduate school with some grand plan of what you are going to study and that that plan will be carried off smoothly. Dismiss that assumption *immediately*. Holding on to that assumption will just lead to emotion work later when you do have to change plans, which will slow down your progress.
 - A lot of work that you do in graduate school is *think*. Ideas percolate. And you never know when the idea will come back and be useful. So adopt an attitude that you are sponge. The time that you invest in one idea may not result in useful publications or a presentation during your time here, but may be useful eventually. What matters is that once you learn something, you can’t unlearn it. And at some point your brain will start applying it to things that could be of use to you.
 - On peer review – I never start a revision right away. Some people might be different. I almost always give myself at least one or two weeks before trying to address reviewer comments. Your brain needs time to adjust to getting comments. Many times you might take comments personally. It will hurt, and you will forget that people (generally) make comments to make the work better. Read the comments (from an editor, from reviewers, from faculty, from peers) then tuck it away for a week. Work on whatever else you were working on. Then come back with a clean slate.
- Being a graduate student is a delicate dance between knowledge pursuit and practical reality. There are real trade-offs for early career scholars between big ideas/big potentially meaty projects and countable publications in top-ranked journals. No one can tell you which strategy will do better (though everyone will have strong opinions). The most important thing is to always be doing something that you are passionate and interested in. Otherwise, your sweat and tears will probably be better spent elsewhere.