

# Career Planning

## (Part 1)

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# Overview

- **Career planning**
- **Planning your doctoral studies**
- **Choosing an advisor**
- **Composing a dissertation committee**
- **Concluding remarks**

## Guest lecture: Dr. Kenneth Olden



**“Some Keys to a Successful Career”**

**An invited lecture given at a Survival Skills and Ethics  
Program workshop around 1995**

## Career planning

### Kenneth Olden's talk ...

- **Decide early on that you want to make something out of your life, that you will make a difference to the society.**
- **Decide what it is that you want to become, find out what it is that will get you there (draw yourself a road map).**
- **Have vision, know what you want. Otherwise you don't know where you are going and every destination will seem a success.**

## Career planning

### Kenneth Olden's talk (continued):

- Think big (National Academy of Science, Nobel Prize).
- Ask important questions in science. Have a list of questions to answer, order them in the order of importance, address the first three on the list.
- Do not hesitate to challenge accepted truths.
- You will need a network to succeed, so create it at every opportunity. Find the “movers and shakers” in your community and make sure that they know who you are.

## Career planning

### Kenneth Olden's talk (continued):

- Do not arrive too soon. Perhaps a couple of years as a post-doc might help.
- Benchmark yourself against the best, have a gold standard, pick role models, emulate them.
- Plan 5-7 years ahead, pause, recalibrate.
- Do not take too many directions at the same time.

## Career planning

### Kenneth Olden's talk (continued):

- Treat every job as a stepping stone, never accept lower, less prestigious jobs. Do not worry about tenure!
- Have a vision. Go where things are going, not where they are now. Otherwise by the time you will have learned the problem, people will have solved it and nobody will be interested in it. Do not follow the crowd.
- Have the courage to challenge things and change them.
- Be perceived as a “playmaker.” Have playmakers around you.

## Career planning

### Kenneth Olden's talk (continued):

#### Rozgrywający (piłka nożna)

— Brak wersji przejrzanej

Rozgrywający (ang. *playmaker*) - w piłce nożnej zawodnik, na którym spoczywa główny ciężar rozgrywania piłek, rozpoczynania poszczególnych akcji, wykonywania ostatnich podań. Przez niego przechodzi większość akcji zespołu.

Zazwyczaj rolę tę przyjmuje na siebie jeden ze środkowych pomocników. Rozgrywający decyduje o obliczu gry zespołu, na nim spoczywa szczególna odpowiedzialność za jego grę. Umiejętności taktyczne, zwłaszcza ocena sytuacji na boisku, kreatywność, umiejętność zwolnienia bądź przyśpieszenia tempa gry świadczą o jego wartości.

- Be perceived as a “**playmaker.**” Have playmakers around you.



## Planning your doctoral studies

### In addition to career planning:

- Don't wait for your "lifetime" topic - this is an illusion.
- Don't think that hanging around for five years will give you a degree.
- Freedom of choice is also an illusion.
- Make a commitment to your career, organize your life, make sacrifices (no TV, no newspapers, no newsgroups and web surfing).
- Have a role model, be careful whom you are following and who you are listening to. Avoid crowd mentality.
- Get involved in research as soon as possible, preferably during your first semester here.

## Planning your doctoral studies

### In addition to career planning (continued):

- Don't jump around in terms of research groups and advisors. Make a commitment and follow it up (unless it really does not work out).
- Consider quitting your job so that you can focus on your studies.
- Work hard, spend time on things. You can't go around the 10 years 80 hours a week baseline. (Perhaps, if you are exceptionally smart, 9 years and 75 hours a week will suffice.)
- Stop working in the “course and exam” mode. Everybody knows that you are good at it.

## Choosing an advisor

**See and talk to every candidate advisor. Go to Brown bag seminars, colloquia. Ask around (but use your common sense and watch out for advice coming from idiots!). Ask yourself a few basic questions.**

- Is he/she a good scientist?
- Does he/she have a good track record in terms of publications and funding?
- Has he/she been a good advisor for his/her students (ask around)? Have there ever been problems in his/her interactions with students?

## Choosing an advisor

- Is his/her research style fitting my expectations? Can he/she be my role model?
- Will he/she have enough time for me?
- Can I get along with him/her personally?
- Is his/her area of research something that I want to get into?
- Does he/she have (prospects for) money for me?

**Follow him/her, take his/her classes, read his/her thesis and papers.**

# Composing a dissertation committee

## As social as it can get

- The committee should be strong in the area of your proposed work and should be able to contribute something meaningful to your thesis (they are your secret weapons).
- Choose the committee together with your advisor.
- There should be no fundamental scientific disagreements between your advisor and the other committee members.
- They should be no personal animosities between your advisor and the other committee members.
- They should be reasonable (ask around). Every committee member potentially pulls in his/her direction and can mean more trouble for you.
- Try not to have more than three or four people in your committee. If the requirement is higher, take the minimal number.

## Concluding remarks

- Planning is very important and effective
- You need to find time for it (what about every evening, every Sunday night, every 1st of the month, every 1st of the year?)
- Be careful who you are listening to!
- Role models make things easier – being first is not easy.

