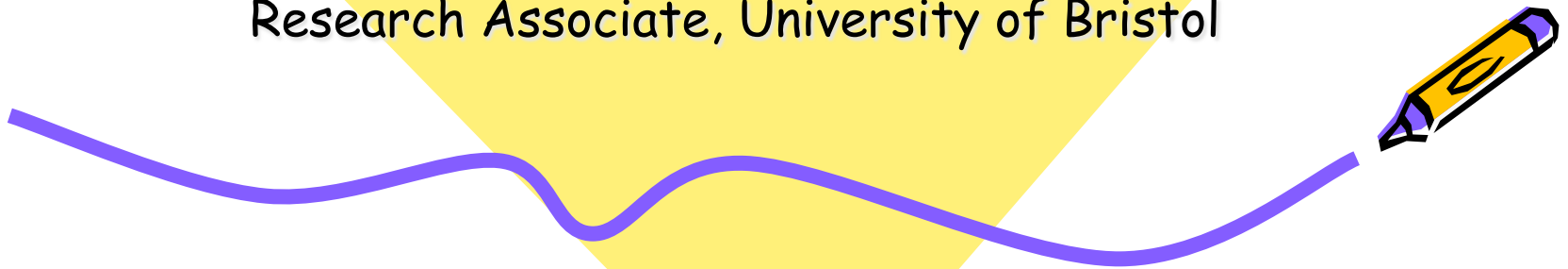
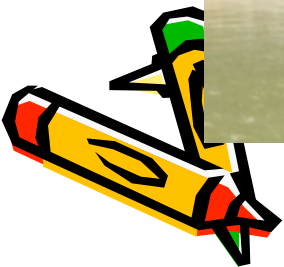




# Tips from an ex-PhD student

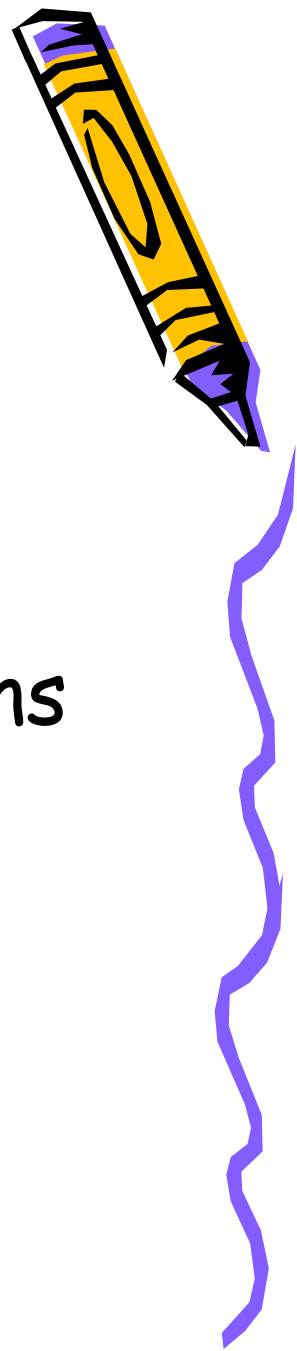
Dima Damen  
Research Associate, University of Bristol





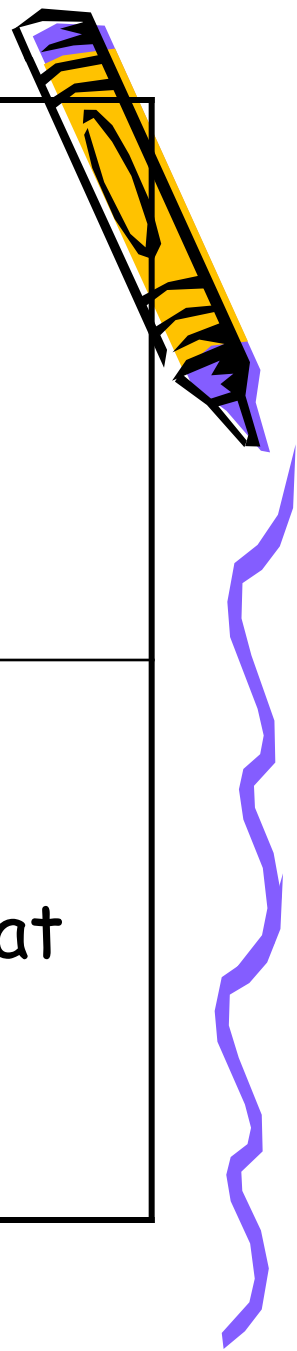
# “Perfect” path?

- Submission within 3 years
- 4 conference publications
- → followed by 2 journal publications
- Job as an RA on EU-FP7 project



**Anyone can do a PhD**





A:

- 5.5 years to finish
- worked assistant on 2 big projects

A:

- 6 years to finish
- enjoyed his life: sports, learnt a language, travel

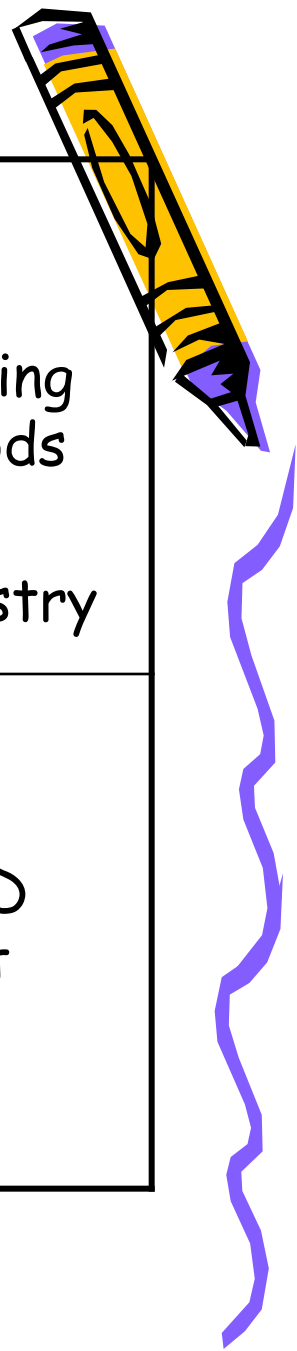
O:

- 4 years to finish (by the book)
- exam invigilation
- teaching assistant

M:

- 4 years to finish
- 90% of his time at home talking to no one

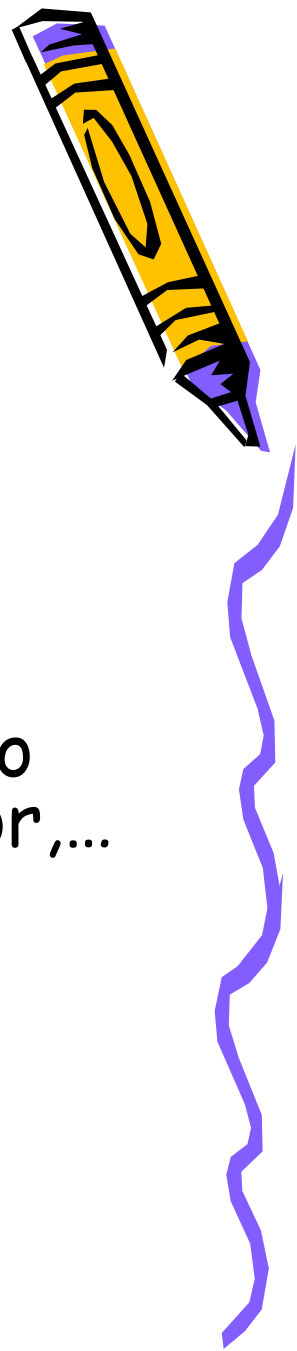




<p>M:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 4 years to submit + 1 year of corrections</li><li>- Smart</li><li>- Always in the lab...</li><li>- Not interested!</li></ul>	<p>T:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Quitted on year 3</li><li>- Spent all his time coding already available methods and refining them</li><li>- Fits perfectly in industry</li></ul>
<p>G:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Failed 1<sup>st</sup> year exam</li><li>- Extremely poor mathematical background</li></ul>	<p>G:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Quitted on year 2</li><li>- Really started the PhD because it was the best option at the time</li></ul>



# Do not compare!!!



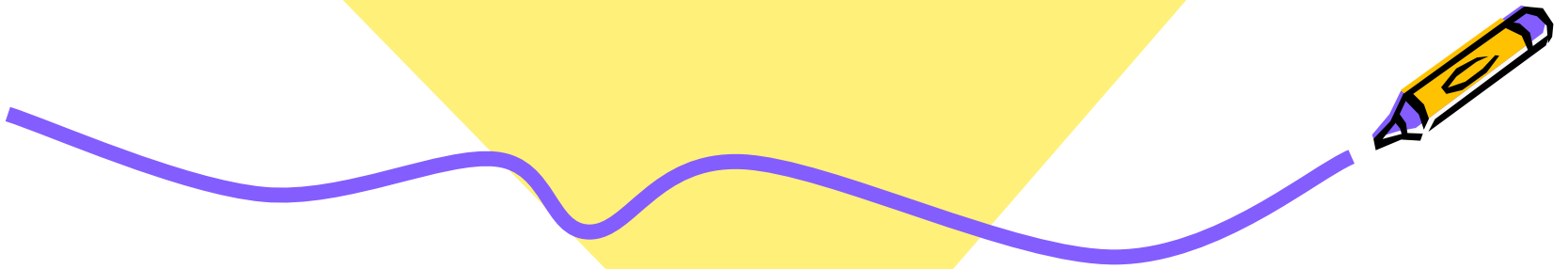
Required effort depends on:

- Scientific background: Mathematics, programming, research experience, research papers read/written
- Familiarity with the environment: new to the city, getting to know your supervisor,...
- Responsibilities
- Part-time job
- Support, support and support...





# ESSENTIAL SKILLS





# 1. Patience



- “The PhD is an exercise of patience”
- Avoid doubts
  - makes no sense - should I quit?
  - I don't understand - maybe I should quit?
  - My supervisor has no time - quit?

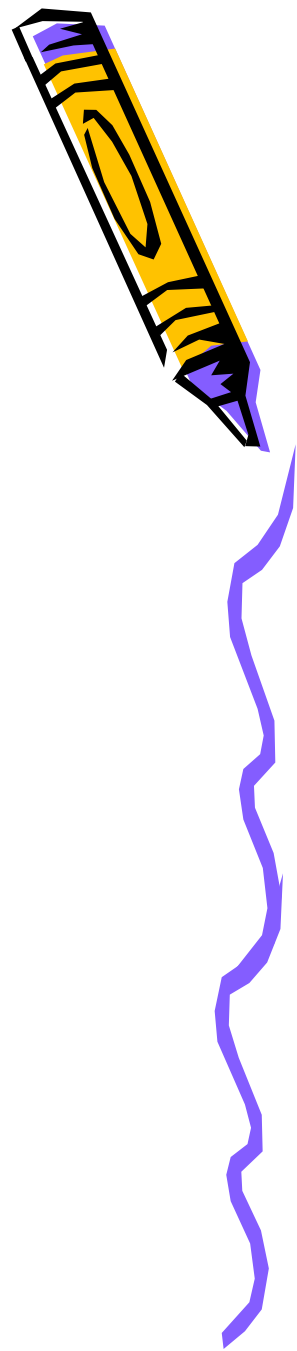


**This way it will take forever**



## 2. Self-Discipline

- Regular Schedule
- Don't say: "It can be done tomorrow"
- Keep track of time



# Vitamin Suggestion to Dima's Day ©

Date: 28/8/2008

Day: Thur

Time	Plan	Job
8:35-9:35	Edit document about prob size	5mins 3an.
10 minutes		
9:50-10:50	11:00-12:05	5mins Ahmad
10 minutes	= then	5mins emails BMVC
11:00-12:00	order desk paper	
10 minutes	Break	Exc.
12:10-12:40	Post-seg graph fixed	
10 minutes	Break	
1:50-2:50		
10 minutes		
2:55-3:45		
10 minutes	Break	Emails
3:55-4:45		5mins 3an.
10 minutes	Break	Olga
10 minutes	Break	
10 minutes	Break	
10 minutes	Break	

6 hours 45 mins



# Vitamin Suggestion to Dima's Day ☺

Date: 19/2/2009

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Plan	
8:40-9:35	Continue Ground truthing data & discovering connections	
10 minutes	Break Tea	
9:45-10:40	then list ① Multi-IDS	
10:45-11:40	② correct conn+sequences	
10 minutes	Break	
12:00-12:25	writing code for REBY	5min
10 minutes	Break	
1:30-2:25	-check code -manual labeling	5mins chat with Rawan 5min -
10 minutes	Break FIRE ALARM	
2:40-3:30	Manual labeling -compare colour profiles	
10 minutes	Break Exercise WAWA	
3:35-4:30	Continue manual labeling, didn't start yet	5min tea
10 minutes	Break Walk - Nadia	
4:50-5:45	! Taking Ages	
6:05		5min
10 minutes	Break -	
6:15-7:10	Still COUNTING	5min
7:30		
10 minutes	Break Exercises	
7:35-8:25	① look at remainder ② store data ③ copy colour comparison files	5min 5min
10 minutes	Break	

10 mins - reading Guardian

I have a code prob

5min - 5min day dreaming

Break

FIRE ALARM

= ! Taking Ages!

5min Roberto

Break

Still COUNTING!

5min apple

8 hours + 20 mins

DEAD!

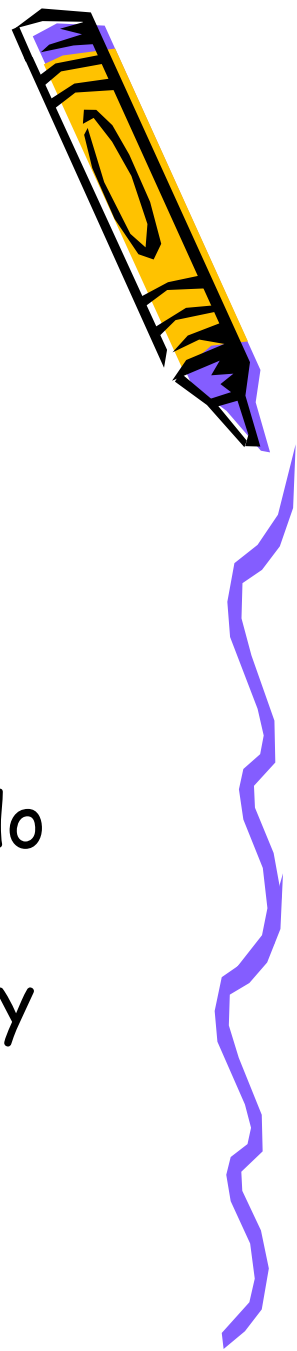
# 3. Planning

- Reformulate your targets
- Where are you going to? → Thesis
- Conference deadlines → Always try
- Keep discussing your progress
- Take the lead of your PhD... It's yours not your supervisor's



# First year of the PhD

- You typically are:
  - Enthusiastic - I will have fun!
  - Confused - I can hardly understand what I read
  - Feel everything is slow - what did I do today?
  - Lonely - can I talk to anyone about my feelings?



# First year of the PhD

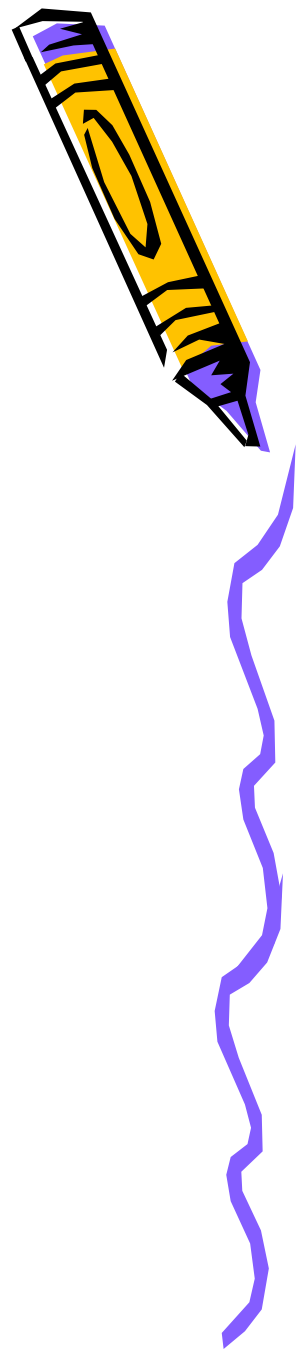


- To deal with it:
  - Keep going
  - Read as many papers as you can
  - Use your first year report to examine yourself properly
  - Have “something” done! - worth a workshop publication
  - Talk to fellow PhD students or postdocs (It helps to know your feelings are VERY normal)
  - Subscribe to PhD Comics





# Second year of the PhD



- You typically are:
  - Lazy - days just pass, don't they?
  - Looping vicious circles
  - You think: "I cannot do more than I already have done"
  - Disappointed with your supervisor
  - Need attention...



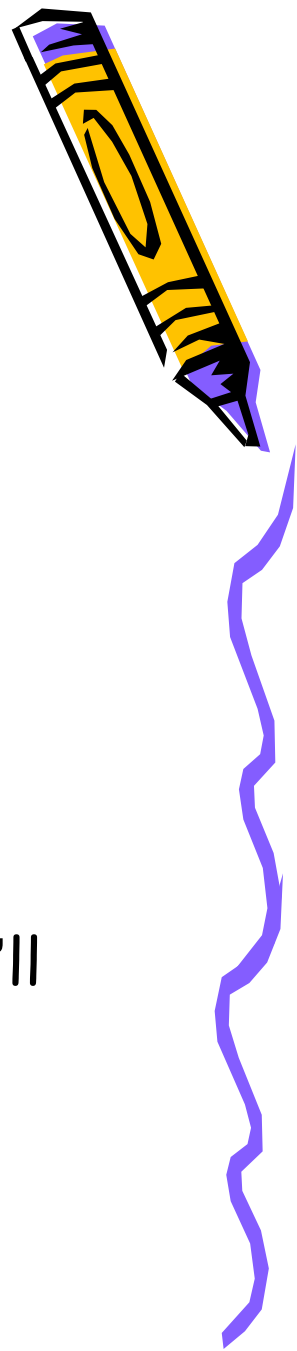
# Second year of the PhD



- To deal with it:
  - Keep track + planning
  - Make sure you go to conference - know what it all is about really
  - Read interesting papers in the field (relevant to your work)
  - Propose ideas to your supervisor and try some out
  - BELIEVE IN YOURSELF



# Third year of the PhD



- Or fourth year
- You typically are:
  - About to lose your mind
  - Time just flies!!
  - Stressed and easily irritated
  - Envious of those who finishes/finished
  - About to kill anyone who asks you when you'll finish
  - Afraid of the big monster → VIVA



# Third year of the PhD



- To deal with it:
  - You cannot do much now → KEEP GOING
  - Keep track of the latest in your field
  - Revise your plan more often
  - Discuss your thesis chapters and examiner with your supervisor early
  - AVOID DISTRACTIONS.....



# Third year of the PhD



Inbox... May 2009 (4 months before submission)...

Basically, I am now writing my PhD thesis which will take the next 3 months. Writing everything you have been working on for the past 3 years (nearly) in a consistent and readable manner takes a lot of time, let aside making the figures, etc. I can not say it is the hardest part in the PhD as it's less vague, but for sure it requires more focus. When you are writing, you wish to keep track of all the aspects, chapters, sections, ideas, etc. By the end of the day, the last thing I want to do is to check my email or write emails.

Thus if you've called and didn't find a reply, messaged and still waiting a response, emailed and wondered where the reply was.... hmm... the PhD is my only excuse! Hope this is a good one for you... Unfortunately, I can not promise you a better response within the next few months either! Your friend is on hold for now :-P



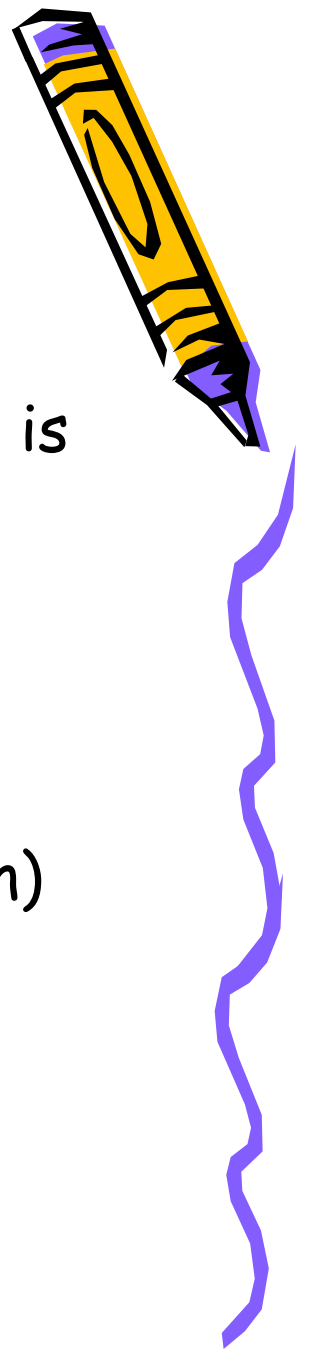
# Writing up...



- TOTAL MEMORY LOSS... I cannot remember any of it...
- Background Review chapter takes longest - expect to re-read papers you were confident about
- Be ready to abandon chapter drafts and re-shuffle
- Find the correct environment for you



# VIVA



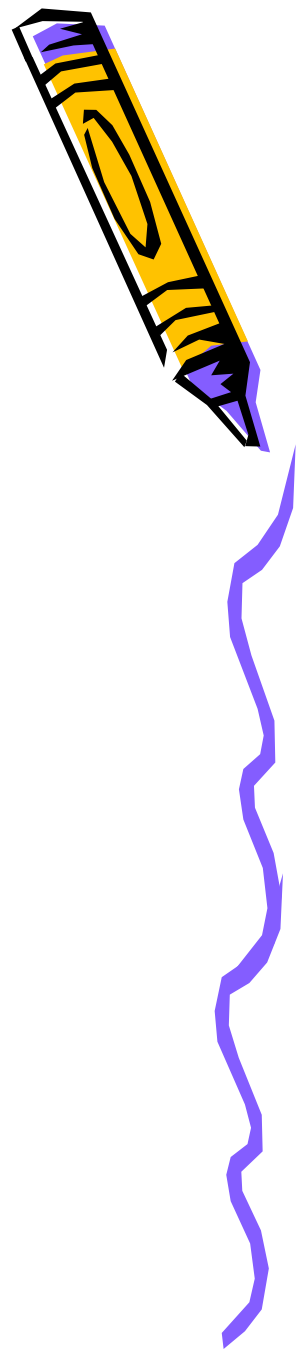
- It is NOT scary... It is not an exam! The exam is finished the day you submitted.
- Get the best examiner you can:
  - CV
  - Chance for further collaboration
  - Enjoyable VIVA
- Prepare typical questions and answers (written)
- Read your thesis once the day before
- Have good amount of sleep



**ENJOY!**

# Not enough!!

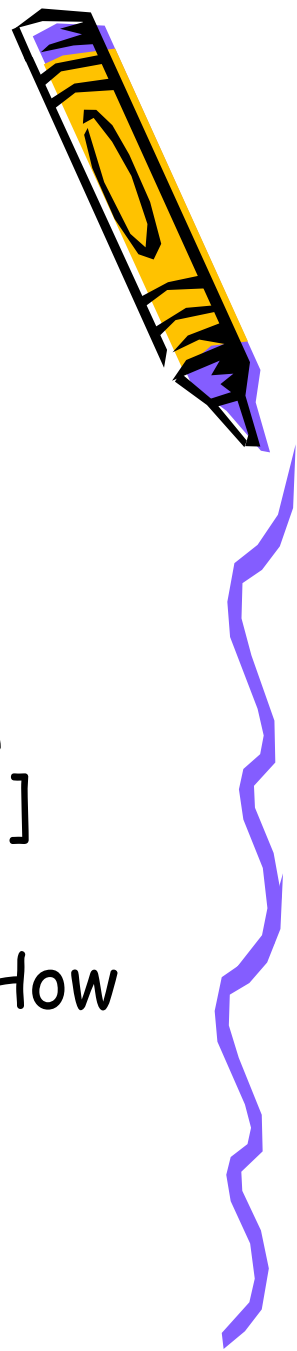
- This gets you from joining to graduation, but NO FURTHER...
- After the PhD??





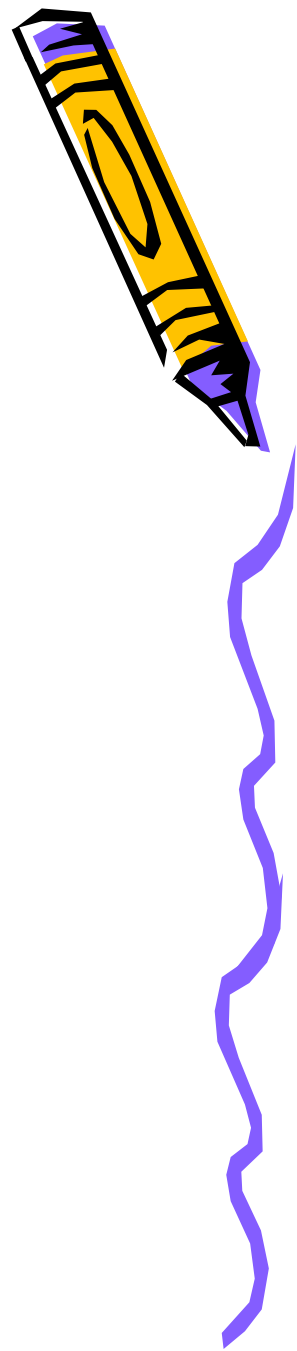
# After the PhD

- Equip yourself with:
  - Publications in known conferences (quality not quantity)
  - Knowledge of the important people in the field, famous groups, ... [contacts]
  - Knowledge of the field... You will probably not work in the same area. How confident you are about the basics?



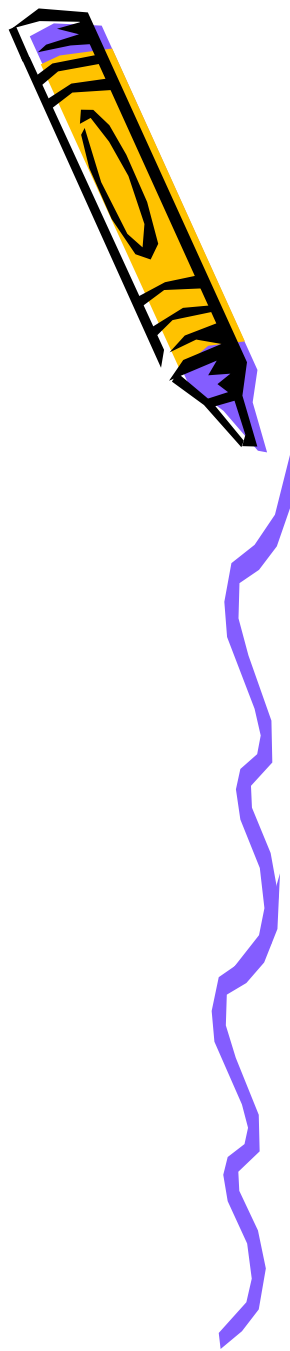
# Getting a job

- When to apply for jobs?
- How? [contacts are not the way]
  - Mailing lists
  - Stick to your institute?



# Finally

- Take a picture... this is a life-time experience







GOOD LUCK!

