

Hiring and managing people

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Recruiting

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Make sure your CV stands out
for the right reasons....

Top Questions from Poll

- Why have you applied to work here?
- How do you think the project would benefit from your expertise?
- Where would you like to see your career in the next 3-5 years?
- What are your future research goals?

(43% of responses)

Top Questions from Poll

- Why have you applied to work here?
- How do you think the project would benefit from your expertise?
- Where would you like to see your career in the next 3-5 years?
- What are your future research goals?

(43% of responses)

- Describe how you dealt with a difficult situation?
- Do you have questions for us?
- Experience with teaching/student supervision?

Recruiting (I): students

- Grades \neq research ability

But don't ignore poor grades!

- Do they have research experience?

Have they used astronomy tools?

- Why are they applying to do astronomy?

Do they know what they are letting themselves in for?

- Why do they want to work with you?

Have they done homework?

Have they worked with you?

Where else are they applying and why?

Recruiting (2): postdocs

- Do you know the letter writer?

If in doubt – ring them up!

- Did their PhD research have impact?

How much was original/creative?

What do letters say about independence?

- Do they have a good research plan?

Do you want a ‘super star’?

- Have they heard of you?

Again have they done their homework?

Managing People



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A new student...



- Be prepared for the time commitment
 - At least 4–5 hours a week
- Should have a **WRITTEN** thesis plan
 - Ideally a 1 page summary before you start
- Should **SCHEDULE** regular meetings
 - ‘My door is always open’ – Really?
- Won’t save you any time
 - (or your not doing your job right!)
- Should have > 1 supervisor
 - And a senior student mentor...

Management: The Basics

- Your behaviour

Look at your own habits? How would you react?

How do you react to bad news?

- Achievement

YOU set the targets – make them achievable

- Recognition

Everyone wants to feel appreciated

- Motivation: leadership and vision

Research should be CHALLENGING. Share dull tasks around – and do them yourself!

- Responsibility – assign it!

- Advancement – what happens next?

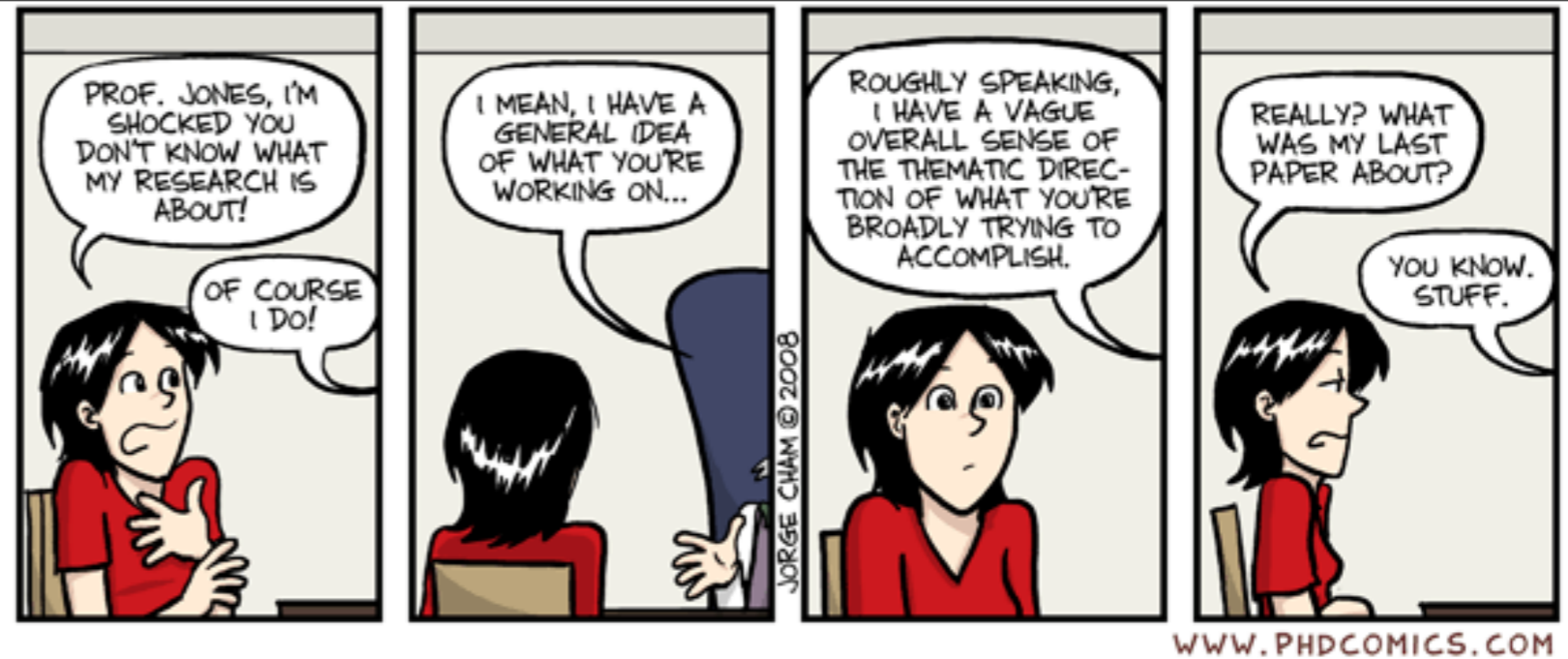
The dreaded 'progress meeting'

- Highlight the positive and accomplishments
- Praise this, err on the side of too much
- Point out what needs improving
- Be **SPECIFIC** with advice and be **CONSTRUCTIVE** with criticism



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Styles...



- Control:

plans / action items / progress reports

- Laissez-faire:

‘Go away and do something interesting’

- Something in-between?

Different time-scales and styles for students and post-docs

ANNUAL REVIEW systems ARE helpful (if they work)

- ‘Style tension’ is inevitable – live with it
- Look at yourself in a mirror

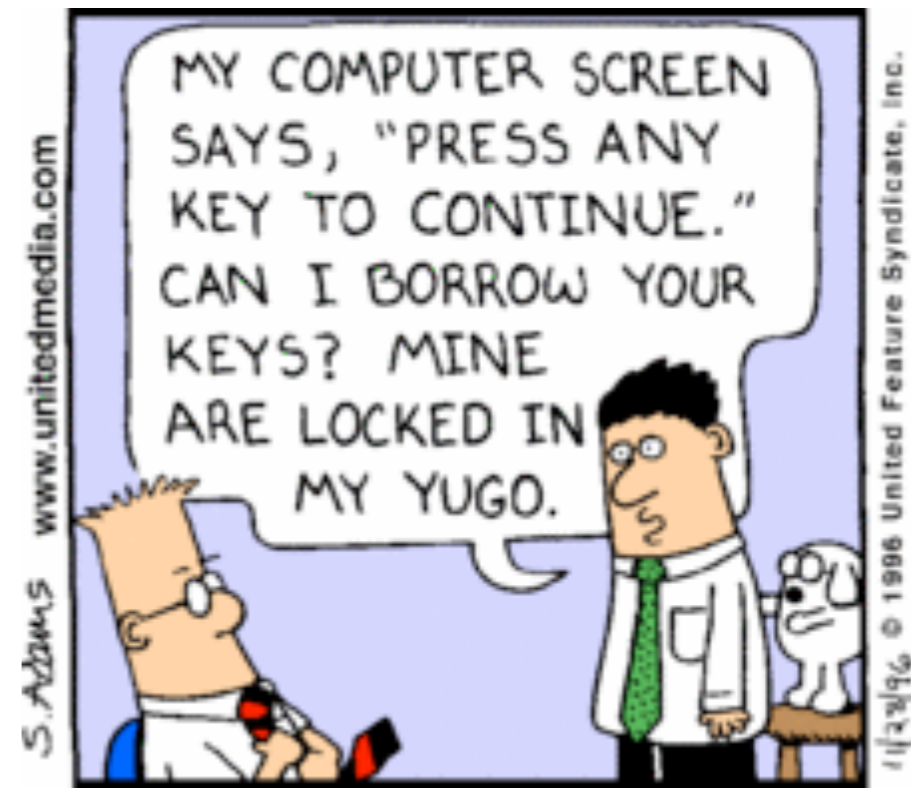
You CAN!

- Provide pointers to the literature
- Give them good ideas
- **Enthusiasm and motivation**
- **The scientific big picture**
- Help with the small details
- Show them how to run software/read papers
- Fund them – pay *detailed* attention to budgets
- Feedback on papers and thesis chapters
- Give career guidance and mentoring
- Build a group/team – strength in depth



You CAN'T!

- Be a parent
- Be available at all hours
- Write their papers for them
- Provide detailed step-by-step research guidance
- Teach them how to write/program etc.
- Solve their life problems
- MAKE them write their thesis/papers on time
- Guarantee them a job
- Be a tyrant... or a saint.



Difficult situations

- Students that can't progress
- Proposed research is not being accomplished
- Personality / resource conflicts
- Unethical behaviour



TIPS:

Avoid EMAIL to resolve situations

Avoid getting personal / making defensive: focus on the specifics and the FACTs / engage person in solution

Formal systems and structures can help you

Practice 'prevention' rather the cure (recruitment!)

You can't solve everything

Astronomy isn't life & death

Remember the *Kobayashi Maru*

Thanks!

