



UNIVERSITY OF TM
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Graduate School of Business and Leadership



Supervisor's perspective

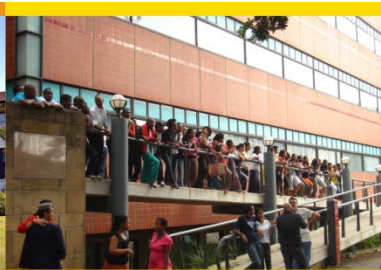
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EDGEWOOD CAMPUS



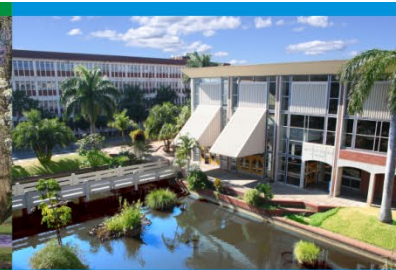
HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS



NELSON R MANDELA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

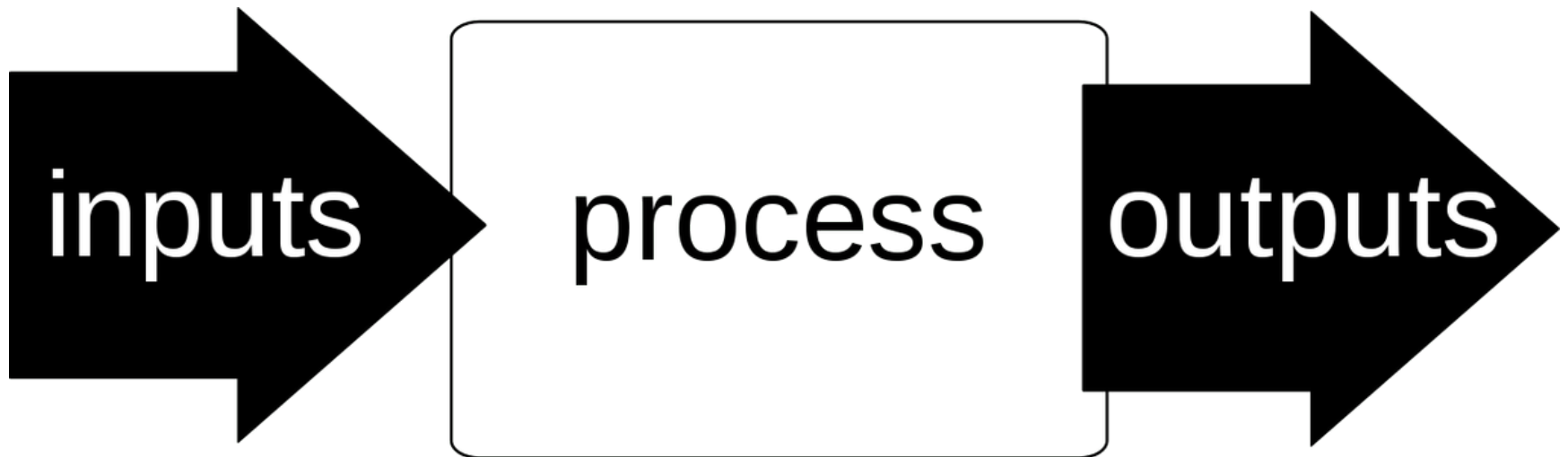


PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS

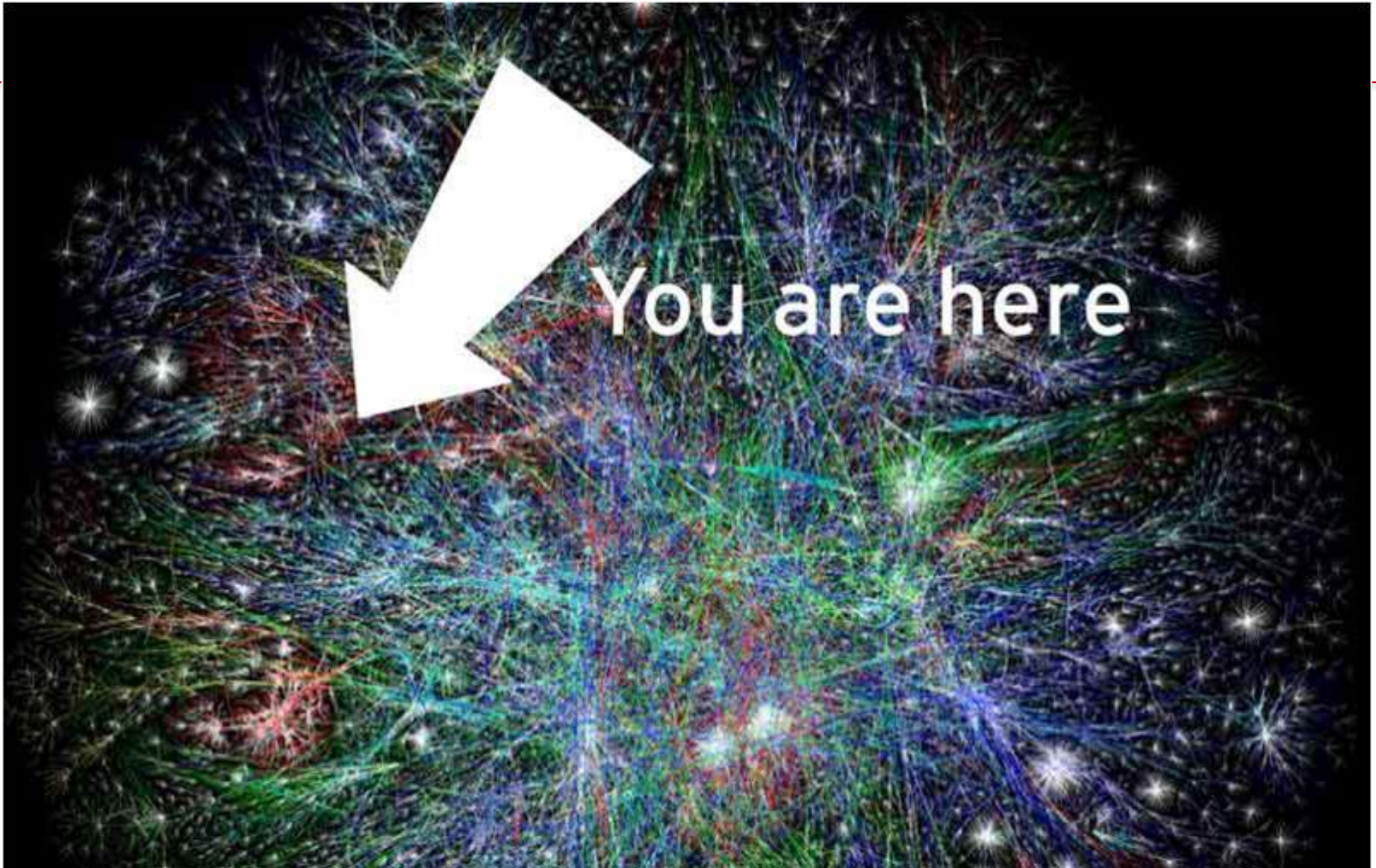


WESTVILLE CAMPUS

INSPIRING GREATNESS



Source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/informationliteracy/chapter/computer-devices/>



Source: <https://oxfamblogs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Internet-as-complex-system.jpg>

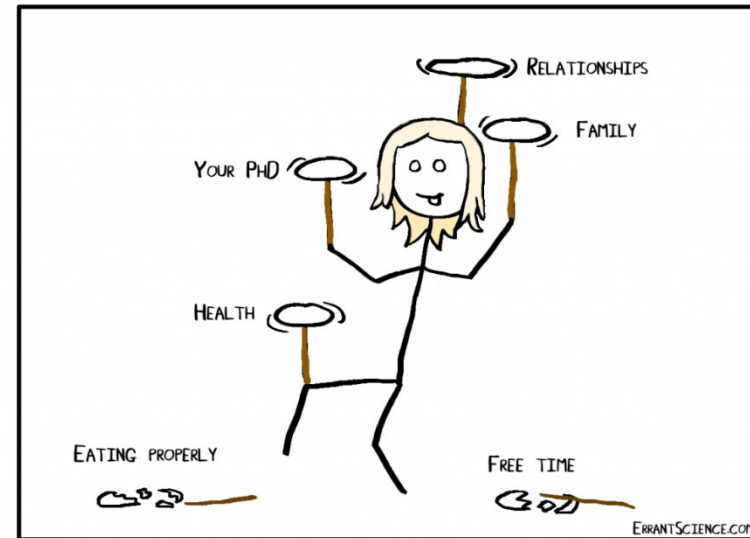
INSPIRING GREATNESS

Introduction

- Aim to present:
 - Research journey that postgraduate, working students may face
 - Potential challenges
 - Suggestions to ensure a more productive and pleasant research journey
- Primarily based on perspective of having supervised postgraduate students in a Business School
- Value for postgraduate students and supervisors

Context

- Complex
- Mature, working students
- Often in management positions in private and public sector
- Families, busy lives
- Diverse backgrounds and disciplines
- Adult learners
- Not typical undergrads
- Fairly motivated



TRYING TO DO EVERYTHING DURING
A PHD CAN BE A BIT TRICKY

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/DataAnalysisGSS/photos/trying-to-do-everything-during-a-phdmaster-can-be-a-bit-trickyfeel-free-to-like-1115356451933714/>

Observations

- Three stages
 - Grasping the very process of conducting research
 - Commencing the actual research
 - Immersion in the research... in the thick of it

Stage 1: Grasping the very process of conducting research

- Various emotions
 - Excitement, new opportunity
 - ROI (promotion, salary increase, new job, self-growth, personal development, Dr...)
 - Uncertainty about research process, working with a supervisor, studying again, questioning self
- Change – new field, discipline, university
- Often break in progression
- Mind-set change to make transition from coursework to independent, self-managed research

Stage 1: Grasping the very process of conducting research

- Working with supervisor(s) – “*boss / manager*”
- Balancing various aspects of their lives
- Language – academic language, language of research and home language
 - “*Why do they write like this?*”
 - “*It’s not fun reading these journal articles*”
 - “*Find your own voice / critical writing...?*”
- Transition from being in control and being expert in workspace – to being a learner
- Major disruption, sacrifice
- Need high levels of motivation, self-discipline
- Support (home and work) and inner strength

Stage 2: Commencing the actual research

- Challenge in selecting topic and developing research proposal
- Meaningful research, as opposed to merely *quickly* putting together an assignment or work report
- Conducting research in the field of Business or Management Studies – potentially challenging for those from other disciplines
- Need for and process of ethical clearance
- Approval from gatekeepers in organisation
- Finding time...



www.phdcomics.com

Source:

http://phdcomics.com/comics/archive_print.php?comicid=545

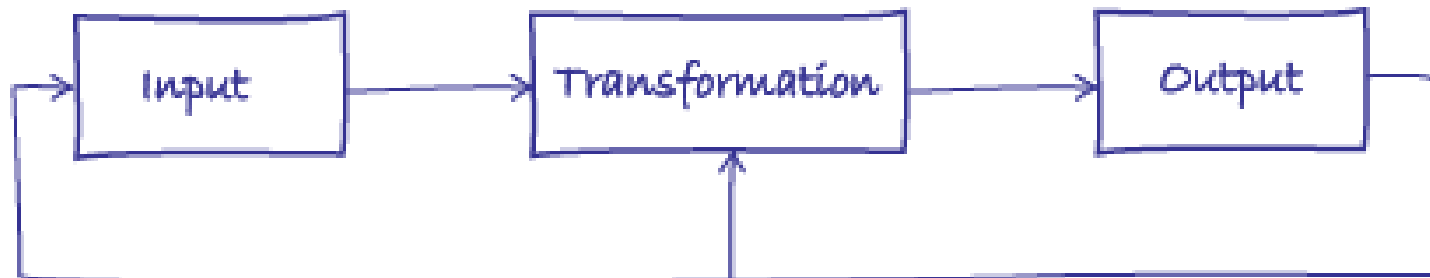
INSPIRING GREATNESS

Stage 3: Immersion in the research... in the thick of it

- Reviewing literature
 - EbscoHost, Google Scholar, Endnote, etc.
 - Making sense of “boring” journal articles
 - Writing critically
- Data collection and analysis
 - Grappling with understanding quantitative and quantitative methodology
 - Taking scientific process seriously
- Write-up
- Multiple skills required

Stage 3: Immersion in the research... in the thick of it

- Development of sense of researcher identity and pride
- Researcher emerges – different from typical full-time students (who have come through the system)
- Capable of grasping the “big picture”



Feedback loop

Source:

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/nature-environment/environmental-management-and-organisations/content-section-11.1?all-comment=1>

Recommendations for supervisors

- Attend supervision courses or training
- Be familiar with university policies and processes
- Understand the context and student, life stages
- Massive investment to develop students into researchers
- Your own style of supervision
 - Task-centered
 - Person
 - Leadership vs. management
 - Authority and power
- Role of supervisor – teacher, mentor, counsellor, manager, leader

Recommendations for supervisors

- Guide students:
 - Extra classes for research methodology – introduction and advanced
 - Value in bringing in former students to share perspectives
 - Involve colleagues
 - Topic identification, research process, exam process, etc.
 - Enormity of research (and consequences)
 - Time management
 - Preparation for the disruption
 - Dealing with pressure, stress, anxiety and fear derived from balancing work, home and study
 - Change for the student (personal and professional)
 - Help with terminology we take for granted – e.g. ethical clearance, Turnitin, Moodle, Endnote, critical writing, intention to submit form, permission to submit, etc.
 - Critical qualities for the student include awareness of one's self, ability to adapt to change, resilience, humility, open-minded, able to listen and learn, high levels of emotional intelligence

Thank you!