

How to fail?

Wang-Chiew Tan

University of California, Santa Cruz





Bad research ideas: How to recognize them, avoid them, and abandon them.

- ▶ Read more papers.
- ▶ A research idea is **excellent** if you enjoy working on it ~~and it has impact.~~
- ▶ A research idea is **terrible** if you don't enjoy working on it ~~or it has little or no impact.~~
- ▶ **Reality of life:**
 - ▶ Pressure of tenure, pressure of funding, pressure of proving yourself: chose among all the excellent ideas, the ones that are most promising.




Bad research ideas: Can you transform a bad research direction into a good one?





Whom should you ask for advice and should you always follow it?

- Anyone you feel comfortable asking.
- Don't be afraid to ask for advice or help. Worry less.
- Should you always follow it?
 - **NO!**



How should you balance your time across different responsibilities? Which responsibilities should you say “no” to? Is it OK to drop tasks that you committed to?

- Life in the academia:
 - Research, Teaching, Service, ... Family
- Family duties take priority.
- University and professional service. Do your share and more if you enjoy it but do not overcommit yourself.
- OK to drop tasks provided you have a **really** good reason.



What is the proper level of multitasking? How many research directions should you pursue at a time?

- In terms of research, 1-3. 1-2 is optimal for me.
- CRA's new Best Practices Memo: *"Incentivizing Quality and Impact: Evaluating Scholarship in Hiring, Tenure, and Promotion"*
 - "For tenure candidates, decisions should be based on the quality and impact of their top three-to-five publications."



When should you give up on a student, an advisor, or a topic?

- When should you give up on a student?
 - When research interests do not match well. (co-advising)
 - Inadequate academic progress.
- When should you give up on an advisor?
- When should you give up on a topic?
 - ???



How to fail?

- Work **only** on things you enjoy doing. The less the better.
 - Talk to people. Worry less.
 - Don't be afraid to have children before tenure.
 - Personal: two is enough.
 - OK to say no.
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