# Ryan's Problem Solving Checklist

AKA "My code is not working! What do I do?"

1. Take a careful look at the error message. Does it help you narrow down the scope of the problem? Error messages vary by context/language. In Python, error messages are often very informative. In Excel, they're mostly useless.
2. Look carefully at the code. Are there any typos? Logical flaws? Misplaced punctuation? Missing parentheses/brackets?
3. If the error is related to the use of a function or library, read the documentation. For example, Google "python matplotlib boxplot" to find the documentation on making boxplots using matplotlib.
4. Paste relevant aspects of the error message into Google. See if someone else has solved this problem. This strategy is more likely to work if your error message contains detailed information.
5. Look for relevant examples of working code. Class activities, online examples, coder blog posts, and other sources have working examples that you can reference.
6. Post a question in Slack. Be as specific as possible. Provide as much context and details as possible. Paste code snippets, or a link to your GitHub repo with the code. Maybe a classmate has solved the issue or can spot what is going wrong.
7. Submit a help ticket in BCS/Canvas.
8. Ask your BCS/Canvas tutor.
9. Ask in office hours before/after class. Students outnumber the instructional team, so you may be (figuratively) fighting for airtime.