

Graduate Toolkit Mastery:

Planning, Monitoring, and Project Management for Success



About this series

In these workshops, you will:

- Learn about program and project management for graduate students.
- Create a monitoring and evaluation plan for your studies.
- Organize all your school knowledge and projects in one place.

Who am I?

My name is Typo, but some people call me Damian.

I am an incoming PhD student in Education.

I have some experience in grad school, both great and not so great.





Why these workshops?

Your grad school experience is greatly affected by how you organize your schoolwork.

Unfortunately, very few of us graduate students get to invest time developing grad school-specific skills. After all, it's just a few years, right?

I created a methodology to help me streamline all areas of grad school, and I believe it can be useful to all of my colleagues.



What does this methodology involve?

- Creating a writing and knowledge ecosystem that grows with you and your studies.
- Writing two small documents to monitor and evaluate your progress. These will also get molded by you as your grad school experience moves forward.
- Using tried-and-true project management tools for your academic activities.



Questions I have received so far

- 1. I understand you will show us the tools you work with. Can we use our own tools though?
- 2. Do we need to come to all three of these workshops?
- 3. I am already in the middle of my studies. Will this methodology still apply to me?



Organize your grad school life: Tools and strategies





Today's plan

I'll show you all the pieces of the machinery for how I manage my academic journey.

We'll also cover:

- 1. A very broad overview of key tools like *Theories of Change* and *Logic Models*.
- 2. The tools I use to manage my projects.
- 3. A practice called "Chunk Writing".



A writing and knowledge ecosystem

In my previous experiences as a grad student, I used to:

- 1. Have a folder on my computer for every semester.
- 2. Create a folder for every class.
- 3. Have a folder for every assistantship.
- And I kept adding folders as needed.



It would look like this:

```
MyGradFolder/
    semester1
    — class1... notes, pdfs, research...
    — class2... notes, pdfs, research...
    — class3... notes, pdfs, research...
    └─ TAship
   semester2
    — class1... notes, pdfs, research...
    — class2... notes, pdfs, etc...
    └─ TAship
   semester3... class1, class2, etc...
    Exams, Dissertation, Own research, etc...
```



What is the problem?

• In this way, your knowledge gets siloed.



Today I organize my knowledge like so:

```
MyGradFolder
├─ 0_chunks
├─ 1_templates
├─ 2_topics
├─ 3_sources
└─ 4_notes
```



How is this different?

- 1. All of the folders besides chunks and notes are functional.
- 2. The bulk of my knowledge goes into my notes:



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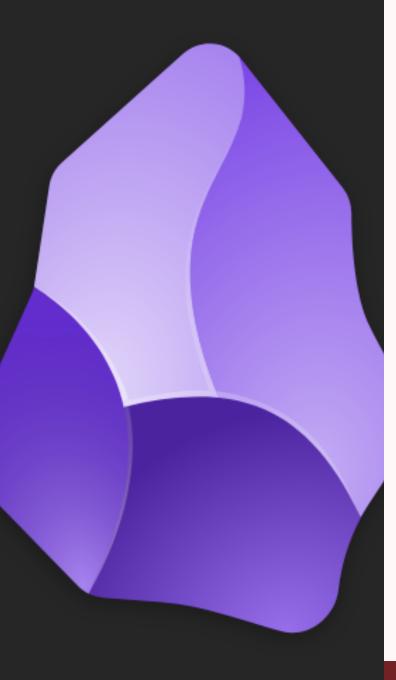
Do you need more folders? No problem!



Or you could do this:

```
MyGradFolder
├─ 0_chunks
├─ 1_templates
├─ **3_other**
├─ **4_etc...**
├─ 5_topics
├─ 6_sources
└─ 7_notes
```

• Questions?





The secret sauce:

Obsidian

- A note taking app that lets you sort all of your knowledge in a single place.
- It is free, designed by two very talented women, and available for all platforms.
- With Obsidian, you are the sole owner of your work.



What is chunk writing?

- Take a single document
- Pick a topic or a thought that has been on your mind
- Write without editing
- Write only what is on your mind without looking at source material



There are two stages:

- 1. Write your chunks
- 2. Sort your chunks

Your writing will emerge from these.

Let's practice

https://bit.ly/3VTml





Next: Monitoring and evaluation

Program monitoring and evaluation is a systematic discipline focused on assessing the design, implementation, and outcomes of programs to improve effectiveness, ensure accountability, and inform decision-making.



What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change is a comprehensive framework that outlines the process of achieving a long-term goal by identifying the necessary preconditions, interventions, and causal linkages.



What is a Logic Model?

A Logic Model is a visual representation that maps out the resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of a program to illustrate the logical sequence and connections between these components in achieving the program's goals.



Project management tools for your academic activities

Let's take a look at three different project management tools that companies use to deliver goods and services around the world.

- Project Roadmaps
- Kanban Boards
- GitHub Repositories

GitHub offers project roadmaps and kanban boards for free.



Next time

We will focus on program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies. Specifically, we'll:

- Discuss how to effectively plan your graduate journey.
- Share and set our objectives.
- Create a personalized **Theory of Change** and **Logic Model**.



Resources

Will be sent to you later today. Please drop your emails in the chat!



Thank you!