

How can international students prepare best for their SUPER project?

I am an international student from China. My major is Environmental System Science and Sustainability. I participated in the Super project of 2020-2021 and learned a lot from it. Now I would like to share some of the problems I encountered in the project and how to overcome them, so as to provide some useful information for future students in my situation.

Choose a research project and mentor

Choose a project that interests you and look closely at the mentor's requirements for students, whether there is a language level requirement or a certain technical requirement, and make a choice according to your situation.

At the same time, you can email the mentor to ask for specific information about the project, so that you can make a better choice.



Photo credit:
<https://medium.com/@yanncramer>

Pre-study for project

Once you've decided on the topic of your project, be sure to do detailed background research on it. As we are international students, we don't have a good command of the English language. Especially when we are met with a large number of professional vocabularies, we are more likely to not understand the meaning of the mentor very well. So, it's important to do your background research ahead of time. In this way, when communicating with mentors and peers, obstacles can be reduced as far as possible.

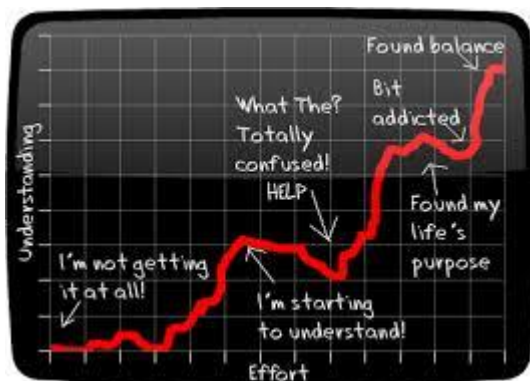


Photo Credit:
<https://www.theedublogger.com/using-online-tools-to-create-simple-graphs-for-blog-posts/>

Generally speaking, a project will consist of 2-3 partners and a mentor. Before the experiment starts, we can communicate with the mentor as much as possible. It is important to ask questions about the experiment or to communicate with each

other and develop a tacit understanding of cooperation.

Data collection and analysis

My project was set up to have a field component and a climate data analysis component. My partner, another Chinese student, and I were responsible for the climate data analysis. In terms of data research, we encountered some challenges; here are some of the problems we encountered and how we solved them.

Problem 1: The data which we were looking for was either not available or very hard

to find. We tried to collect data from various websites but encountered several problems. We finally found a suitable data set, but the data for our location was mixed with another location. Unfortunately, we didn't realize the problems with the data until we were in the late stages of the analysis, which also led to our late progress being slow.

Solution: It is recommended that you discuss this with your mentor after you have found the appropriate data. No matter how much data you find, regular discussions help you make sure you're on the right track.



Photo Credit:
<https://undergradeasier.com/3-steps-total-confusion/>

Problem 2: In the analysis of data, I met a variety of problems, such as: unclear analysis of data, the chart does not meet the requirements, and the chart evidence is insufficient. Which were the kinds of things we needed to answer the questions that we have in our research. We were always trying to do it ourselves, which caused a lot of problems to pile up.

Solution: Be sure to communicate with your mentor all the time! If you're not sure what you're doing is right, be sure to check in and ask your mentor or a peer for help. Studying alone in silence is a waste of time and an unwise choice. For chart questions, have your mentor record a video demo that will show you how to analyze the data. Obviously, this is what we found to be the most useful method!

Result, discussion and something about the i-poster

In this part, the main problem is your time management. First of all, we worked together to complete the entire poster and the discussion of the results afterwards. However, because we did not schedule the task in advance, some of our partners were busy with other things and could not take care of our homework. So, it is necessary to plan the tasks in advance.

Secondly, since we are in China, there seemed to be a bug in the system of editing poster, which makes it easy to empty all the contents if we made edits to the poster. So, we created a Google document in order to edit the contents of the poster together. This was also nice because then the foreign partners are responsible for the formatting of the poster content.

In addition, when recording the speech, we utilized Google docs to write a script together and let the mentor edit it. Finally, we practiced reading the speech before making the recording, ensuring that the task is completed successfully.

To sum up, this is all my experience and advice for this project. I learned a lot from the SUPER project, and gained a lot of knowledge that I could not learn in a typical class.

Always Communicate!!!

"If you're not sure what you're doing is right, be sure to check in and ask your mentor or a peer for help. Studying alone in silence is a waste of time and an unwise choice."

It was an enjoyable learning experience, and I hope you can learn from my experiences.