

The story below is mostly true. Some details have been changed to protect the client's privacy, and s/he gave us permission to tell the story as it appears below. We share it so you can become familiar with us and feel comfortable enough to request a price quote.

"Chuck" confessed his dark secret: He did not know how to do his data analysis!

Chuck did not need us to research his topic. He did not need us to write anything. He only needed someone to show him how to do the data analysis for the results of his survey research, which he had completed by using *SurveyMonkey*.

Chuck had struggled through his entire proposal without any help, and his professors gave him a lot of criticism. When he came to us, Chuck said he had "run out of confidence" because he had been criticized on almost every section of the proposal. More than half of it was scrapped and rewritten. Chuck was beginning to feel like he was not someone who could succeed in graduate school.

Chuck was dead wrong. We told him something every graduate student should know:

You will be criticized no matter how well you write your paper. Some advisers are brilliant, while others are more trouble than they're worth, but they all share one common trait: "Experts criticize!"

Regardless of whether he is actually an expert or just pretending to be one, your adviser has a responsibility to criticize. You could hand him a paper co-authored by Noam Chomsky and William Shakespeare, and he would still give it back to you with a lot of suggestions for improvement. The criticism is not so much an assessment of your performance as it is a way of improving this paper. After all, the institution must attend to its primary interest in the situation – which is to keep a high standard of quality for the paper associated with the degree they are selling.

Chuck was relieved. He asked us if we've ever received criticism on papers we wrote, and we told him we absolutely have. We give and receive criticism all the time, because it is fundamental to the process of academic writing.

Next, Chuck made his solemn confession: He did not understand anything about statistical analysis. He completed a whole class about it, and he somehow earned a passing grade, but he said he literally did not know how to do any of the calculations that had been taught, not a single one. Sometimes, people can be mentally "blocked" about some aspect of their studies.

Chuck sent us all the data, and we talked on the phone about his survey research. He said he didn't know if anyone could help him because his research requires the use of SPSS software for statistical analysis. We told him SPSS was the most popular software for quantitative research and that we'd used it countless times. Again, Chuck was relieved. He told us we had decreased his stress level by 80% with one phone conversation.

We asked him how he was able to calculate the percentage of that fluctuation without understanding quantitative analysis.