

PhD Vlog Week 4: Paulette Toppin Transcript

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| 00:00:07 | Paulette | <p>Here we are at the end of week four and it's an ever very busy week. In my blog for week three, I advised that one ought to take every opportunity possible to engage with the research community. So taking my own advice, I've done two things this week. The first thing I've done is to join two academic associations, one here in Britain and one international. I have also had the opportunity to attend a seminar put on by my research centre, a seminar led by a visiting Professor from the USA. Although the subject wasn't directly related to my PhD topic, I think it was worth attending, in terms of just seeing how an established academic put together a story, if you like, in terms of the research they'd been involved with and it's kind of application in practice. It was also very interesting to just think about and look at the kind of language used, the kind of discourse of the research discussion and just how the Professor was able to engage with the academic community that she was addressing. So all in all, quite useful for me in thinking about and looking at what established academic research and work, kind of starts to look like and sound like in terms of it's presentation. I have also had the opportunity to have a Skype session with my buddy and we placed two items on the agenda, that of research philosophy and that of time management, and we had a bit of a discussion about research philosophies and just how far our preferred philosophies actually chimed with our kind of preferences in terms of how we go about our professional</p> |
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| 00:03:00 | | business and the stance we take on particular kind of aspects of practice. So that was again, really quite useful in terms of kind of using the language to have a discussion about kind of purpose and preference and all of that sort of stuff. It was also useful to think about time management, because of course we're both working and actually we're working full-time, even though we're doing our PhD part-time. So we just talked through kind of how we were managing with that, the kind of different approaches we were taking, in that my buddy is looking at dedicated time every day and he is looking at creating dedicated time very first thing in the morning, so that he is doing a little bit of something every day. Whereas at the moment, the approach that I'm taking is looking at dedicating whole days. Of course, the kind of options we've chosen very much are around kind of what works for us. We're going to test those methods out and talk again about how we're getting on the next time we meet. I have also had the opportunity this week to meet with the third member of my supervision team. Again, a very helpful process. Not least that the third member of my team has a shared passion with me, in terms of leadership development and the member of the team has been engaged in leadership development both in terms of an academic sense and in practice through business. So that really chimes with myself and my experience. We had the opportunity to talk through what I'm doing and how I'm starting to approach my task with regard to literature review. |
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| 00:04:00 | | The third member of the team was able to share with me, an article that she thought might be helpful for that review and |
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| 00:05:30 | | luckily for me, my Director of Studies had also done similar the previous week. I was given a really good tip and that tip was that, in reading an academic article, if the article particularly speaks to you, or perhaps perplexes you, or perhaps kind of really makes you sit up and think it impacts in some way, the advice I was given was to make contact with the author. What that will do, it will provide an opportunity to start a dialogue that will then encourage you to look at the subject in question perhaps in a new light or to consolidate kind of the direction you're going in, but it just provides an opportunity to start another academic conversation and who knows where it might take you. So overall then, what I've tried to do through my blogs is to kind of share with you, the particular journey that I have been on as a mature part-time student and of course my reflections have also been as a result of being attached to a specific research centre, rather than simply being a PhD Student across a faculty, if you like. The tips that have been generated as a result of my experience are definitely around kind of getting organised. I think that's really important and will be going forward. The other tips have been around finding a buddy and finding a buddy early, particularly at the very early stages when you're just beginning to relationship build. Finding a buddy with whom you can start to have academic conversations in a safe space, is something that I have found particularly helpful. Other tips I've also included, to immerse yourself in the research community as far as you can and to take every opportunity to do so. I'm also advising that you get to know your Director of Studies and Research |
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| 00:08:00 | | Supervisory Team as soon as you possibly can. This gives you an opportunity to meet your supervisors and get some sort of sense of who they are and how they work, but it also gives them the opportunity to see similar in you. I think having a view of each other as human beings as well as research professionals, if you like, is important. Other tips have been with regard to treating your PhD study as a project and engaging with the principles of effective project management, so that you manage the PhD in a proactive way rather than it managing you. The final tip from this week has been about making contact with the author of any academic article that kind of speaks to you for whatever reason. So I hope you have found my blogs helpful in some small way and I wish you all the very best with your studies, wherever you may be. |
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END OF TRANSCRIPT