

PhD Vlog Week 1: Emma Cole Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:07	Emma Cole	Good morning everyone, it two weeks and one day until my Viva today and it has suddenly dawned on me that I am absolutely insane agreeing to film the lead up to my Viva! I am suddenly so nervous! I really hope that everything goes according to plan and I haven't just kind of documented my failure! Anyway, today I am starting full-on preparation for my Viva. It's a little bit tricky because my Viva falls three days in
00:00:37		to my new job. So I teach on Monday and Tuesday, my first lessons for two subjects, and then I have my Viva on Wednesday! So I've currently been splitting my time between teaching prep and Viva prep but today I'm devoting the whole day to Viva prep. I'm starting the big read-through. So everyone says the best Viva preparation is to read through your Thesis really, really carefully. My plan is to read through the whole thing from cover to cover and then go back and read the introduction one more time
00:01:07		as people say that your Examiners tend to concentrate the most upon the introduction. Today's plan is to get through the introduction and chapters one and two. Fingers crossed I can do it! I'm ready to go!
00:01:37		Hey, it is now 12:30, I'm about to break to have some lunch and I have so far read my introduction and my first chapter of my Thesis. Probably doesn't sound like an awfully complex task that I've got ahead of me just kind of reading over my Thesis but it's actually really time consuming reading through everything really carefully and it's mentally taxing going through everything so carefully. I'm finding it quite cringe-worthy as well already; there's things in my introduction which I'm like, "Oh I can't believe I
00:02:07		wrote that! Oh I'm quite embarrassed that my Examiners are reading that!" Just sometimes

		<p>when I'm being a little bit too forthright about what I think I'm doing differently and I think maybe it might have worked in my favour if I was a little bit more meek. Okay, so it is now 15:45 and I have just finished reading chapter two. So I'm really happy with my progress today. It's quite unusual that I have met my goal before 16:00! So I'm going to try and make the most of that and have a coffee and keep reading. It's</p>
00:02:37		<p>now 18:00 and I am halfway through the third chapter of my Thesis. I'm really, really pleased with how far I've come today. As you can see I'm looking a bit dishevelled after reading all day, I'm feeling exhausted and I'm definitely going to call it quits there. It's been a tough day really. I know it probably seems that I'm just doing very easy, mundane things, reading over the Thesis, but when you're writing it, you're so embedded within it and you're so passionate about it and ready to defend the Thesis to the hilt but once you've got a bit of space</p>
00:03:07		<p>from it, suddenly it starts to become a lot more difficult to be so confident with it and all of a sudden you start to see it in a different light and it's quite stressful reading it like that. Good morning and welcome back to the second part of the Vlog. It's now Thursday, one week and six days until I submit my Thesis and I'm out walking, can you see him, my little dogs and myself and then I'm off home to finish reading the Thesis. So I'm reading chapters... The second half of three and chapters four and five and the conclusion today. Wish me luck!</p>
00:03:37		<p>It's a lot of work. Okay, it is now 10:45 and I am finally up to chapter four. It struck me actually as I've been reading just now that this kind of period prepping for the Viva is a) quite weird but b) most like actually just starting a PHD, it's like you kind of end where you begin because when you're first starting a PHD essentially you spend a lot of time just in the library reading, just going over all the literature and making sure you work out how</p>

		your ideas are positioned in relation to that kind of
00:04:07		wider pool of scholarship and it's... I don't know if I've been kind of at a stage since that beginning period where I have just been reading all day. So it's quite bizarre but whereas when you first start a PHD, you have very little direction and you're just kind of drowning in this sea of scholarship – now I have a lot of direction and a lot of pressure on me! So it's quite weird seeing the kind of evolution and the full circle. Okay, it is literally just gone 13:30 and I have just turned the page for the beginning of chapter
00:04:37		five, finally my last chapter! My brain feels like utter mush but, you know, I am getting through the Thesis, I'm hitting my schedule which is quite rare! Usually I'm running behind schedule and I'm just making lots of notes about the most important bits, the vague bits, the kind of page numbers with quotes that I really should memorise so if something comes up in the Viva I know exactly where to turn. I definitely don't think this is wasted effort. It is quite monotonous and it is quite hard working home alone
00:05:07		no one to talk to, on just one task for such a long period of time but I'm getting through it. I've realised I'm not going to get through this final chapter without another coffee so I'm heading out, get a bit of fresh air and a caffeine hit! It's now 17:45 and I've just finished reading my conclusion. I'm really happy that I've managed to finish reading everything today so I'm going to sign off the Vlog here, do a couple of emails and then maybe have a glass of wine!
00:05:37		For those who are watching not in the U.K., you might wonder why I'm putting in these really long hours in the lead-up to the Viva. The Viva is kind of a peculiarity of the U.K. system because in the States, for example, it's more of a celebratory event where your friends and family are invited and in countries like Australia there isn't even a

		Viva. You just get an Examiner Report in the post. In the U.K. however, a lot rides on it and according to my Supervisor, often Examiners won't have made up their mind about what grade to give the Thesis until they've
00:06:07		actually sat through the Viva and talked to the candidate. So they might have a recommendation, they might go in to the Viva thinking that they are minded to pass with minor corrections or something like that but actually the exact way in which you are passed, whether it's minor corrections, major corrections or no corrections is often determined by the candidate's answers to the questions in the Viva. So it's really important to take it very seriously and to put in all these long hours which might be a bit boring and monotonous but hey, hopefully it will help me pass in the end!
00:06:37		I will look forward to coming back to you next week for another Vlog in which I'm going to focus a bit more on my new job, what I'm doing to get ready for the new job and how I ended up getting a job before I finished my PHD, you know, just a couple of weeks before the Viva. Thanks for joining me! I'll look forward to speaking to you then! Bye for now!

END OF TRANSCRIPT