

PhD Vlog Week 4: Emma Cole Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:04	Emma Cole	Good morning guys and welcome back to my PHD Vlog. Well I left you all waiting at the end of my last video and I'm pleased to report back that the Viva went as well as I could have hoped and I passed! Yay! So how did the Viva go? Well it went for about two hours and after saying in my first video that examiners often concentrate the most upon the introduction, in fact what happened in my Viva was the examiners concentrated most upon my first chapter. So we
00:00:34		started with some kind of more softball questions about why I was interested in the topic, what led me to choose the thesis before I kind of descended into more of a close investigation about why I structured my first chapter the way I did, the type of argument that I was creating and then kind of moved onto more specific questions about bits and pieces in the rest of the thesis. So my appendices, a very specific kind of one paragraph in chapter four when I talk about political issues as they relate
00:01:04		to my thesis topic. So it was a mixture of broad and specific things. The examiners told me from the very beginning that they were going to pass me, so that took a little bit of the pressure off me but it still wasn't easy, it doesn't completely relax you because they're still asking you very difficult questions and just because I didn't have any, you know, substantial corrections to do, I didn't have to add anything to my thesis, didn't mean that they didn't have suggestions for the future. So there were lots of moments when the examiners kind of said
00:01:34		"Well we think you could have developed this a little bit more. What about looking at kind of French practitioners as well as German practitioners," things like that. So although I didn't have to go away and write anything else for the thesis, I have a lot of kind of food for thought and a lot of things that I can go forward with and put them hopefully into what eventually becomes the monograph. For now

		however, I'm off to work.
00:02:04		Hello again guys! So it is now Friday, I've finished the second week of teaching at my new job and it's also been one week since my Viva and I'm back in London. So it's been a hectic period that I've been Vlogging throughout this month and what you will have in the last two videos especially is me commuting back and forth between my job in Bristol and my home in London. I have got a second apartment now in Bristol and
00:02:34		I'm staying there kind of half the week and then I come back to London on weekends and I thought this would be an interesting to touch upon in the Vlog because it's something that a lot of early career researchers in their first job are going to have to deal with. So the kind of trend in academic jobs at the moment for first post positions is often that the first post will be a fixed-term teaching fellowship or as I explained in one of my earlier videos, a research post-doctoral position of kind of about three years.
00:03:04		The fixed-term teaching positions often are just ten months long so it makes it really difficult to relocate permanently for such a short period of time, especially if you have a family. Now luckily my job is a bit longer than a ten month contract but it still wasn't possible to relocate permanently in the period of time when I got the job and when I started the appointment. So it's quite challenging and you'll find a lot of people get put in these situations where they will keep their current
00:03:34		flat and then get a share house in another place or they will get a studio apartment or if they only need to be in the other place for maybe one night a week, they might even get a hotel. However, it's not all doom and gloom. I'm hoping that it leads to a situation where I have a good work/life balance where I work really hard when I'm in Bristol and I have my evenings free and then I come back to London on Friday's when I don't teach, I have a research day and then weekends off. That might

		be naïve and overly optimistic but we'll see. Also the commute can be a nice buffer
00:04:04		between work and home and it can be really useful to kind of do marking and things like that when you're on a long train ride. So although starting a fixed-term contract can be challenging in terms of relocating and potentially commuting, there are a lot of good elements to it and it is an excellent first post because it gives you all that necessary teaching experience that you need for a permanent academic lectureship. Anyway, I'm off to the library now to do some marking actually and do some lecture writing for next week. So I will speak to
00:04:34		you soon. It's now Saturday morning, it's finally the weekend! Unfortunately I have a little bit of work left to do today but I'm having this evening and Sunday off. I feel like I'm finally starting to get into a routine where I have a bit of a better work/life balance. So given that this is the final entry I'm going to make for the Vlog, I thought I'd let you know where I'm going from here; so what my plans are now I've done my Viva. So the major post-PHD plan that I have is to hopefully turn my thesis into a monograph. I've got two
00:05:04		potential publishers that I'm interested in working with. I identified them at a late stage when I was writing my PHD and I plan on now revising the thesis structure and putting together a book proposal. I was very lucky that one of my examiners is an editor of a series at one of these publishers so I already have an in there which is excellent. No matter which one I go with, there's an extra chapter that I want to write so I think my kind of big plan for the year ahead, especially the summer
00:05:34		when I'm not going to be teaching will be to write this extra chapter and to start to get this proposal put together. It's not something I want to do in the next couple of weeks. It's a long-term plan for the year. I don't think these things should be rushed and I think it's important when you do submit a book proposal for a

		thesis monograph that you can show how it's going to be different from the PHD and why it will stand alone and not look just like a PHD thesis that's been published. The other thing I'll be doing is turning one chapter or actually half of
00:06:04		the chapter into a journal article. So I actually did this over the summer. I got my peer review comments back and now I'm going to submit the revisions and that's something that I want to do in reading week. So that's what I'm going to be doing next. Before I sign off, I thought I'd give you my kind of top tips for the PHD journey. I hope you've kind of gleaned some of these implicitly by watching me throughout the past four weeks but I'd say overall, if it hasn't become clear already, the two most important things you can do during your PHD are firstly to
00:06:34		Seize all opportunities and secondly, to stay organised and to set up a really good routine. I hope these tips help you on your PHD journey and that you've learned a little something from watching the final stages of mine! Thank you again for tuning in and I will look forward to speaking to you in another way, shape or form in the future. Bye for now guys!

END OF TRANSCRIPT