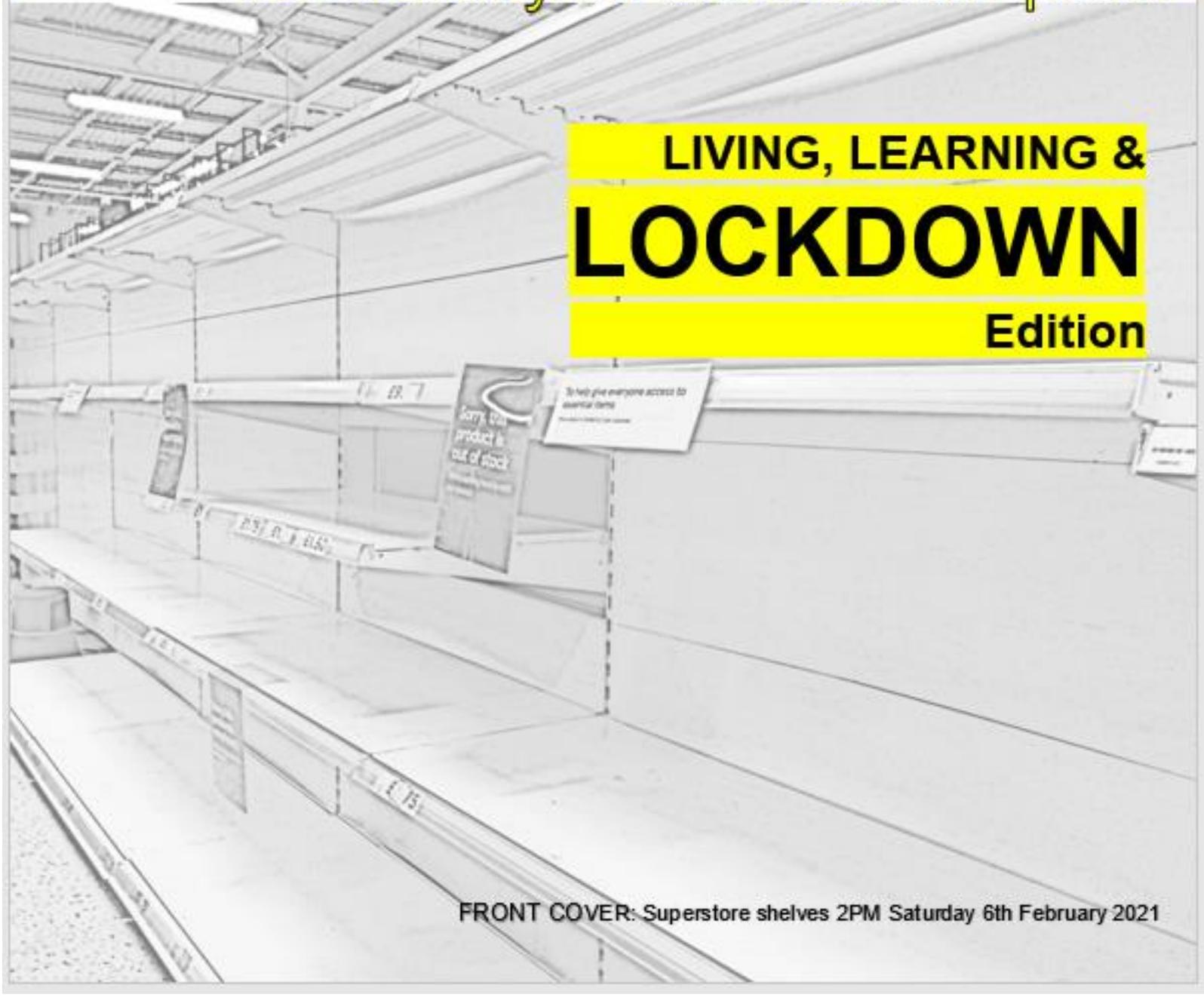# Journal of Health and Social Care Improvement

The Journal of Opportunity

University of Wolverhampton

LIVING, LEARNING &

LOCKDOWN

Edition
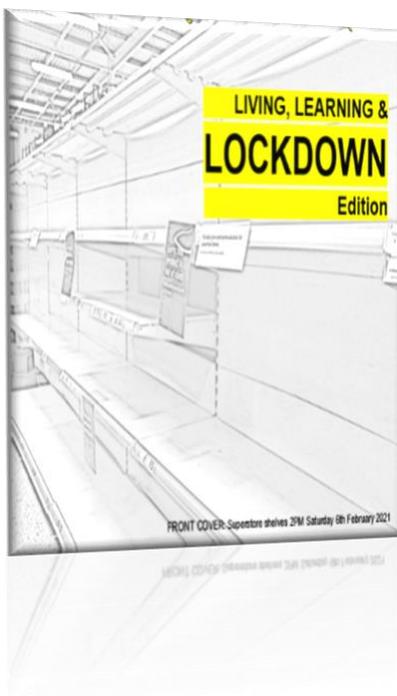
FRONT COVER: Superstore shelves 2PM Saturday 6th February 2021

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EDITORIAL

"Remember before it happened?" She said, "You know the digi-moment thing."
I nodded, but couldn't, "Yeah," I replied and we both stared ahead.

LIVING, LEARNING &
LOCKDOWN
Edition

FRONT COVER: Superstore shelves 2PM Saturday 6th February 2021

At ungodly hours I am now able to see relatives a million miles away. I regularly witness colleague's horrific living room decoration and home furnishing. I marvel at how technology can blur the awful clash of Dralon™ and flowered pattern sofas with electronic party balloon motif and how we apathetically no longer care. I've become ritualistic, routinised and every hour check I've unplugged the webcam, unmute and hate my new waistline. What does she mean 'digi-moment'? This may, in the big scheme of things be just a moment, but to suggest it is over or insignificant just wrong. Lockdown has changed more than a moment. Now, I complete my shopping online, give four-star driver reviews and run fingers through fashionable, but longer hair. My new routines, larger waistline and reluctant transformation a result of superhighways, microfibre and silicon so removed from my human condition that I would hardly call it a digi-moment. Lockdown deserves more than just a passing moment, more like a digi-monument I'd say.

"It's changed the way we all live and learn hasn't it," I said.

Dean-David Holyoake
Developmental Editor

Lockdown Experience

Simon Yosef - Doctoral Student, Health
University of Wolverhampton

Lockdown, lockdown and lockdown!
I feel that I have a life which I don't own
What a dizzy journey walking to the unknown
One minute I am hopeful and next minute I am down

I lost my friends, my resilience and my mojo
I live at home and I work at home as there is nowhere to go
Lockdown! Lockdown! what an embargo!
What a confusion what a vertigo!

Am afraid of the future, am losing "the present"
I have no feeling but like suffering from thirst
Very tricky sphere like surviving in a desert
I lost my confidence if I am completely honest.

But as there is always but there is always another day
That will keep all the muddle at bay
Yes, there is another day
And it will be a safe bay.
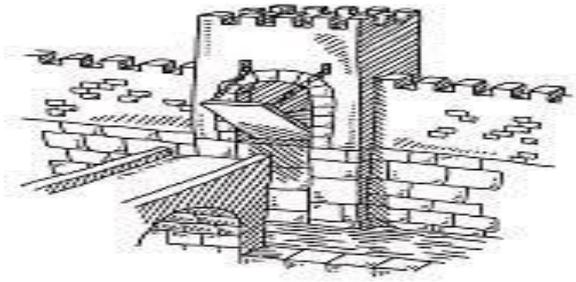
Castles, cars, networks and liberation
Alison Etches - PhD Researcher, Education
University of Wolverhampton

Although I didn't realise at the time, beginning a part-time PhD in early February 2020, just weeks before 'Lockdown 1', was a little like a scene in an action movie where a character leaps over a rising drawbridge of a castle just in the nick of time. Upon reflection, I feel fortunate to have been able to have experienced an on-campus induction, which has served me well in the initial stages of researching my literature review. Living over 35 miles from campus, I always envisaged making use of online library services and possibly meetings, but little did any of us realise just how much these tools would mean to us in 2020-21.

When applying for a PhD, I anticipated that I would learn new skills and improve established ones. As a mature student for whom IT regularly seems to 'fight back' I can confirm that I have now learnt many new things about how IT can assist connectivity with others (Nguyen et al, 2020) and facilitate access to resources, but that from time to time, like a much loved old car, it can and will let you down. I have also learnt that I am not alone in the world of IT 'fight back', and therefore to embrace its benefits, and be less worried by its hitches.

Like a wrongly imprisoned person nearing the end of their incarceration, I am longing for a return to a lively campus, to see my supervisory team and attend real events as opposed to online ones. Nevertheless, I can't help feeling the rush of online, UK wide academic events which emerged during the pandemic have enabled me to meet and make contact (Zheng 2020) with more people than I could ever have imagined in 2020-21 without expensive travel and event fees, and in a timesaving as well as environmentally friendly manner. Beginning to meet and grow into a research network is highly important. Technology made this possible not only for me, but for many others, thus it is only right to celebrate the innovative approaches (Sandars 2020) that evolved as a temporary, pragmatic response to the pandemic, as well as looking forward to all our post pandemic futures.

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Researching through a computer screen: the impact of COVID-19

Kathryn Dudley - BSc(Hons), MSc, CSci, PgCert, FHEA, MIBMS - Doctoral Student, Health, University of Wolverhampton

My proposal for researching perceptions of the role of the Biomedical Scientist within patient outcomes involved face-to-face focus groups and interviews with stakeholders of the profession. Biomedical Scientists were, and continue to be, central to diagnostic COVID-19 testing (IBMS, 2020). Due to the impact of COVID-19, revised ethical documentation was submitted for online focus groups and interviews. The Delphi methodology that I used for data collection is known to be more successful if the researcher can develop a rapport with participants as this reduces the likelihood of attrition between rounds of data collection (Keeney, Hassan and McKenna, 2011). The greatest challenge of conducting focus groups and interviews online was how to build rapport with participants to encourage them to engage in subsequent rounds of the study. Utilising online video call technology in data collection has been considered 'the next best thing' to face-to-face meetings and participants prefer this to using the telephone (Archibald *et al*., 2019).

The laboratory response to COVID-19 was significant, with additional staff and resources required to support the service (IBMS, 2020). In response, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) opened temporary registers for students and former registrants (HCPC, 2020). Laboratory pressures inevitably impacted upon recruitment of participants as I was unable to recruit Biomedical Scientists for a focus group. Instead, I recruited five HCPC registered Biomedical Scientists for online interviews. This was beneficial because the richness of the interview data for the Biomedical Scientist group was combined with the focus group data from the students and academics on the BSc Biomedical Science programme. Integrating focus group and individual interview data can help to enrich conceptualisation of a phenomenon (Lambert and Loiselle, 2008). In addition, attrition rates in the study were relatively low, with 84% of participants completing both rounds of data collection. This is a low attrition rate for a Delphi study with some studies reporting attrition rates greater than 40% (Keeney, Hassan and McKenna, 2011).

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my data collection methodologies, meaning I had to conduct focus groups online rather than face-to-face. This was challenging as I lacked experience of conducting focus groups and was daunted by the need to build rapport with the participants without meeting them in person. Rapport is developed through establishing common ground, developing a bond and showing empathy (Zakaria and Musta'amal, 2014). Professionally, I had common ground with my participants through my role and empathy for the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic within their role. The COVID-19 pressures also provided a topic of conversation to begin establishing rapport with the participants. At a challenging time for the Biomedical Scientist profession, online interviews provided convenience and flexibility for the participants as they were arranged at a mutually convenient time without the need to leave their workplace. This is recognised as one of the key advantages of online data collection methods (Archibald *et al.,* 2019). Despite the challenges of researching online, it was important for me to maintain momentum with the study and not pause data collection. Although I had fewer participants than I had intended, the richness and quality of the data I have obtained means that it was beneficial to pursue data collection using online technologies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time to be a doctoral student and has provided a test of resilience and determination to succeed. However, it has provided opportunities to study with fewer distractions and to utilise technology to conduct research remotely.

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Living, Learning and Lockdown

Ambreen Alam - Doctoral Student, Education
University of Wolverhampton
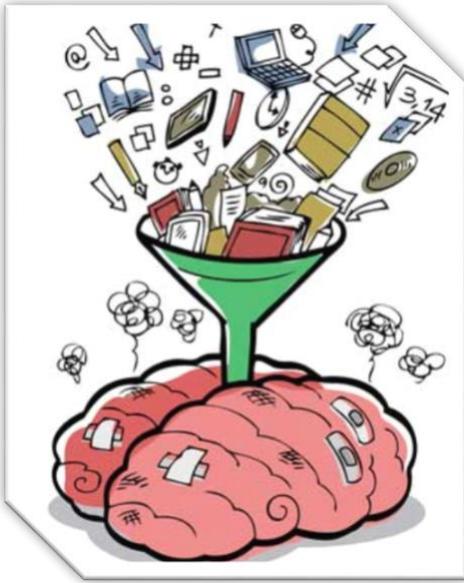
Covid-19 has had substantial suffocating impacts on our lives in diverse ways, be it our day to day lives, jobs, studies, exercise, local recreational activities, travelling abroad, festivities. Strictly time-bound life patterns transformed into less disciplined virtually operated living. To briefly shed light on these elements, I feel the urge to call for a new definition of Living and Learning in line with the altered constituents of our lives. Turning attention to the living aspect, my experienced, teaching professional self, transformed into a foreigner in the field of teaching where the use of conventional teaching methods became unsought. Thus, it became incumbent upon us, as teaching professionals, to utilize fashionable avenues of teaching digitally, and for this acquiring training on fresh or existing technological tools became mandatory. Exploring new virtual methods of teaching and the nonstop professional development through the extensive use of digital tools not positively impacted on health and domestic life.

On the flip side, the lockdown regulations made teaching on-site defunct which provided me with the potential possibility of maximizing my personal commitments and occupying myself in writing literature for my thesis. Naturally, the absence of provision of visiting libraries and the chance to study in a scholarly environment barely reinvigorated. Similarly, restrictions on social interaction with the community of practice froze and disrupted the discourse that has challenged my philosophical underpinning. Embedding the virtual culture for professional demands became a nuisance to an extent that I could not allow myself to engage electronically for my research purposes. However, connections through MS Teams and Zoom have appeared to be effective that gave me an allowance to attend across the borders, Annual Progress Review, conferences and university seminars.

It seems to be guaranteed that even after the departure of COVID-19 from our lives, life will experience a new normal phenomenon. Perhaps a new era, a small revolution in its own way.

Reflections on the incommensurability of social constructionism and My Little Ponies

Mark Elliot **-** PhD Researcher, Education
University of Wolverhampton

Lockdown 3.0 in the UK has coincided with my attempts to write a methodology chapter. This has meant grappling with the complexities of paradigms, ontology and epistemology whilst sharing responsibility for home schooling my daughter. Even when I'm off teaching duty the interruptions are seemingly constant. "Dad, do you want to play?". "Dad, can I have a snack?". "Dad…actually you're not very good at maths, I'll ask mummy". The luxury of having long periods of time to read, write and reflect is a distant memory.

Evaluating the potential incommensurability of post-positivism and constructionism whilst negotiating the hurdles of the primary school curriculum is no easy task, especially when my desk has been invaded by My Little Ponies. I suspect their appreciation of the literature is better than my own. I'm sure Denzin and Lincoln didn't have to put up with this. What I have learnt, with a level of certainty not traditionally associated with qualitative research, is that studying for a PhD and teaching a 5-year-old are *fundamentally incommensurable.*

I feel sure that my frustrations will resonate with parents everywhere who are trying to balance the demands of home working, home schooling and answering the door to the delivery driver. And yet, whilst progress has been dishearteningly slow at times, it has also been a joy to spend so much time with my family. There are other upsides too. Whilst my understanding of interpretivism is probably not what it should be, my phonics have really come on and if you ever want to know about the life cycle of a turtle, I'm your man.

Millennial Generation Apparent Self Care
How Covid 19 Lockdown Changed my Data

Enemona Jacob, Dean Holyoake, Hilary Paniagua - Doctoral Student, Education
University of Wolverhampton

Covid 19 pandemic has influenced health and wellbeing research activities globally with many abruptly shutting down for safety reasons (Ataullahjan *et al,* 2020; Kozlowski *et al*, 2020). In- person participation, where essential studies were still running, was negatively affected (Cardel *et al*, 2020, Padala *et al*, 2020). I had to surmount the challenges posed by covid 19 pandemic by redesigning my doctoral research. Although the millennial generation (MG), my research subjects, are reputed to be digital natives and thus comfortable with the use of technology (Dahl *et al*, 2018; 2018; Fletcher and Mullett; McGloin *et al*, 2016), I had not contemplated the use of technology in the initial design of my data collection method. I wanted to collect "story artefacts" in form of hard copy collages so as to reflex on them and make ethnographic sense out of them (Cross and Holyoake, 2017). But face to face contacts became apparently impossible due to covid 19 lockdown.

Through reflection, it occurred to me that I could collect the same data digitally using Skype. I thus modified my initial research proposal and applied for and was granted ethical approval based on the reviewed data collection method. Collecting data digitally helped to save the time and the money required for the participants to come down to the initially proposed data collection centre. This thus reduced respondents burden, a key reason for non-participation in health studies (Callinan, 2017; Scuderi et al, 2016; Ziegenfuss, 2010).

This image which was digitally collected as a "story artefact" was provided by a participant as their representation of what apparent self-care looks like to them. I am currently working to construct metaphorical meanings from it. Suffice to stay that it demonstrates unequivocally that the data I wanted to initially collect in hard copies via face to face approach could be collected digitally as well. The MG are very busy with study or work and sometimes come across as hard-to-reach (Alsop, 2008; Baiyun *et al*, 2018; Winter and Jackson, 2016; Woodard *et al*, 2000). My experience with collecting data digitally made me to think that the problem reaching the MG may have to do more with the data collection methods utilised than their assumed unwillingness to participate in research. I recommend that even if life returns to normal from the covid 19 challenge, the digital technology should still be utilised as much as possible in health and wellbeing studies involving the MG (Cowey and Potts, 2016; Ransdell *et al*, 2011)
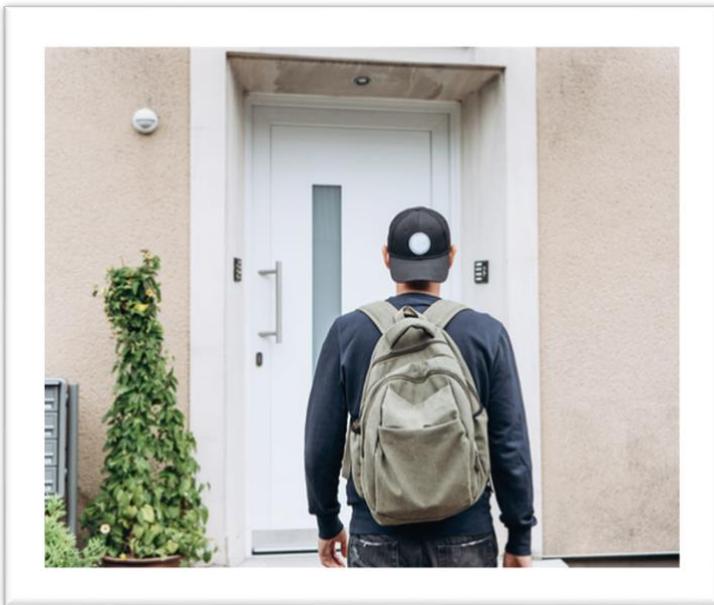

Fig 1: A non-personal collage digitally collected from one of my research participants.

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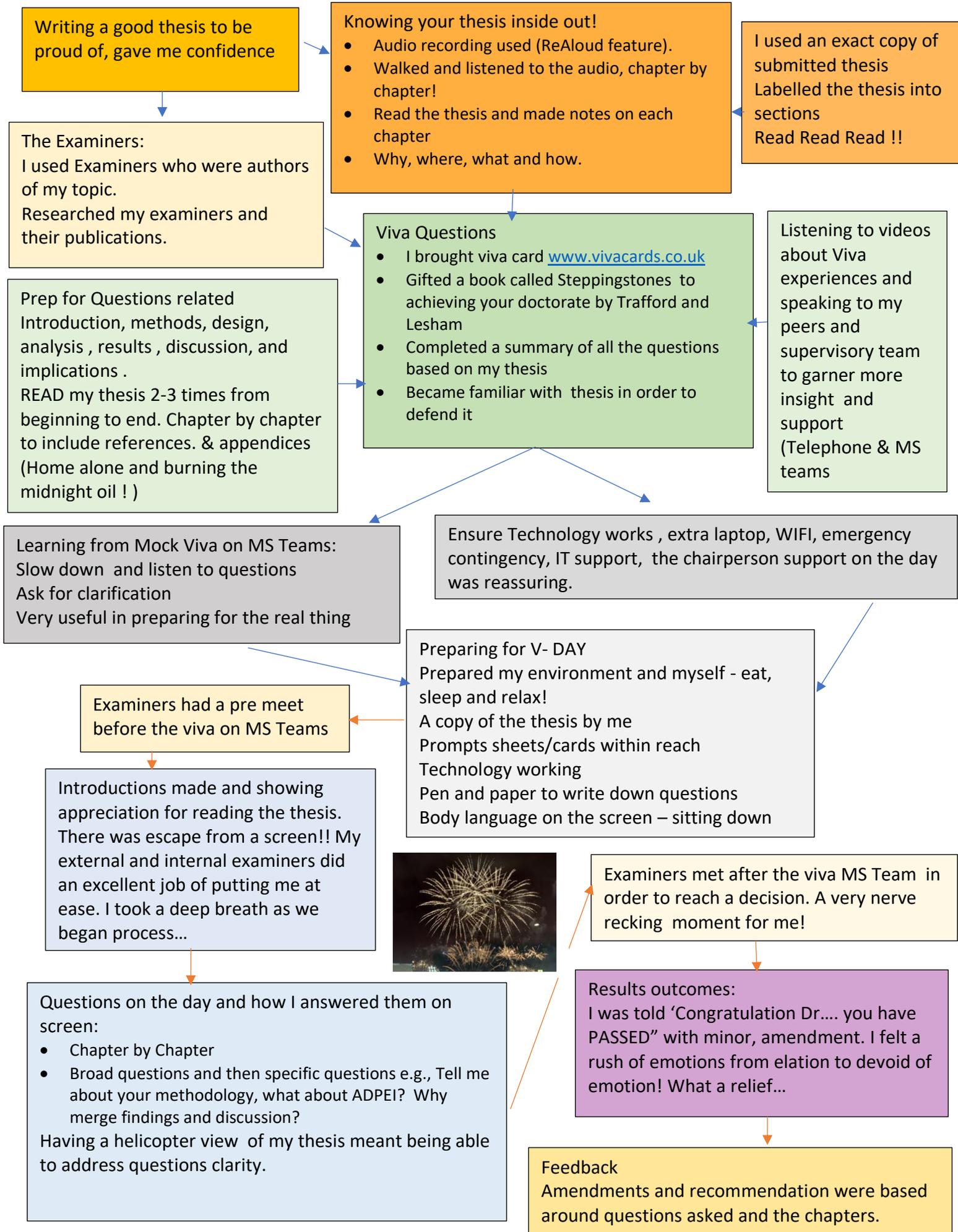
Viva Le Lockdown
Juliet Drummond - Professional Doctoral, Health
University of Wolverhampton

Juliet Drummond - Professional Doctoral, Health
University of Wolverhampton

Writing a good thesis during a pandemic was not easy, I'd say. I was faced with enormous challenges of confinement related to a lack of freedom and social isolation. Working from home provided plenty of welcome distractions away from my study. I stayed focus and motivated as I threw myself into learning my thesis, chapter by chapter. For me, even in isolation, I remained connected to the combined support of my family, peers and supervisory team. The mock viva awakened my fears and may be eager to read and read!! Intertwined in my learning was messages: Stay alert, control the virus, stay safe or stay home, protect the NHS, save lives; a reminder that we exist in very serious times.

I confronted the challenge of a good work-life balance very badly, gained pounds on the scales and had an inferior sleeping pattern as I worked early morning or very late nights. The virtual world and all its technology were a steep learning curve; having a contingency to avoid a disaster was essential. When V-Day arrived virtually on MS Teams, I rose above the emotional roller coaster and hovered in anticipation. The environment was prepared; the laptop charged, spare glasses, my thesis, prompts and cards and oh yes! a drink of water were all carefully arranged! The screen was ready, technology checked and working, the chair and supervisor was there on hand for support and ran through the process before I began my viva. Finally, I was in the moment, no pressure! I was on screen, and there were my three examiners.

Let the performance begin!! The examiners wrapped me in compassion, the very topic of my thesis. I felt tranquilised and very much at ease. Questions were broad and narrow, deeper and deeper, we went. The time went quickly and then went slowly, as I waited for my decision. I didn't and couldn't eat, spoke to family and peers. As I joined MS teams, in those precious moments, I felt alone, although, at that moment, there were faces over all the screen. Congratulations, Dr Juliet Drummond, you have passed with minor amendments. The news brought me close to surrealism; as I received some verbal feedback, I tried to make notes of the amendments. All in all, it was a wonderful opportunity and a unique experience, full of meaningful exchanges of knowledge, to be treasured for many years to come. Merci to all my participants, supervisory team, lecturers, managers, star office, peers, friends and family; you have contributed to making my doctoral journey a positive one.

Writing a good thesis to be proud of, gave me confidence

Knowing your thesis inside out!
- Audio recording used (ReAloud feature).
- Walked and listened to the audio, chapter by chapter!
- Read the thesis and made notes on each chapter
- Why, where, what and how.

I used an exact copy of submitted thesis
Labelled the thesis into sections
Read Read Read !!

The Examiners:
I used Examiners who were authors of my topic.
Researched my examiners and their publications.

Viva Questions
- I brought viva card www.vivacards.co.uk
- Gifted a book called Steppingstones to achieving your doctorate by Trafford and Lesham
- Completed a summary of all the questions based on my thesis
- Became familiar with thesis in order to defend it

Listening to videos about Viva experiences and speaking to my peers and supervisory team to garner more insight and support (Telephone & MS teams

Prep for Questions related Introduction, methods, design, analysis , results , discussion, and implications .
READ my thesis 2-3 times from beginning to end. Chapter by chapter to include references. & appendices (Home alone and burning the midnight oil !)

Learning from Mock Viva on MS Teams:
Slow down and listen to questions
Ask for clarification
Very useful in preparing for the real thing

Ensure Technology works , extra laptop, WIFI, emergency contingency, IT support, the chairperson support on the day was reassuring.

Preparing for V- DAY
Prepared my environment and myself - eat, sleep and relax!
A copy of the thesis by me
Prompts sheets/cards within reach
Technology working
Pen and paper to write down questions
Body language on the screen – sitting down

Examiners had a pre meet before the viva on MS Teams

Introductions made and showing appreciation for reading the thesis. There was escape from a screen!! My external and internal examiners did an excellent job of putting me at ease. I took a deep breath as we began process…

Examiners met after the viva MS Team in order to reach a decision. A very nerve recking moment for me!

Questions on the day and how I answered them on screen:
- Chapter by Chapter
- Broad questions and then specific questions e.g., Tell me about your methodology, what about ADPEI? Why merge findings and discussion?
Having a helicopter view of my thesis meant being able to address questions clarity.

Results outcomes:
I was told 'Congratulation Dr…. you have PASSED" with minor, amendment. I felt a rush of emotions from elation to devoid of emotion! What a relief…

Feedback
Amendments and recommendation were based around questions asked and the chapters.

Living, Learning and Lockdown

Muhammad Zubair - Doctoral Student, Education
University of Wolverhampton

The pandemic that has restricted the movements and froze lives globally was treated diversely in my region, United Arab Emirates. The authorities invested in embedding E-learning's culture and assigned a budget for sanitizing streets, public places and laid easy to access Covid testing services throughout. Formerly, having moderate expectations to teach through the smart technological tool suddenly became mandatory. In addition to that, the non-stop arrivals of branded teaching tools to facilitate remote teaching took my career to the infancy stage. However, the learners' increasing interest made me realize that perhaps now was the time for teaching and learning to be evolved at this revolutionary rate. It seems unlikely to imagine that teaching institutes will revisit those former territories and pedagogies that are overtaken by the digitalized world. Nevertheless, the burgeoning popularity of electronic teaching platforms and the network may anticipate scrutiny in terms of cybersecurity and health-oriented concerns.

Shedding light as a researcher, the lockdown has denied me the opportunities to hold meaningful debates with other professionals who has been providing me with new dimensions philosophically and forced me to explore and ponder my area of research. Reading, writing, preparing lessons and activities for my online lessons, became around the clock job. Ultimately, the designated time to skim through peer-reviewed articles and online research books became a secondary preference. The continuous writing spirit and the art of critiquing became rusty and I found myself in the phase when I have begun my doctoral degree and learnt to adopt academic writing tactics. The enthusiasm and motivation to complete my doctoral journey became an illusion. The positive aspect of this pandemic, however, is the online provision of the doctoral college's workshops, sessions and conferences. Keeping up with social interaction boundaries, I intend to avoid haste in commencing fieldwork and therefore planning to tweak my doctoral development plan.

The Ugliness of Domestic Abuse During Lockdown

Tarnveer Kaur Bhogal - Counselling Psychology Doctoral Student
University of Wolverhampton

My research involved interviewing self-confessed perpetrators of domestic abuse. The interviews looked at understanding why such men, voluntarily attended psychologically informed intervention programmes for the desistance of domestic abuse. I hold a somewhat overly optimistic view that it is possible to end domestic abuse. I am not too sure whether that is something that would happen in my lifetime, but I am hopeful that someday domestic abuse will be a thing of the past. In the most simplistic sense, I believe most people need guidance on how to be in a relationship.

I was intrigued whilst talking to the men and felt a sense of understanding of their experiences. However, this changed when news articles and media reports highlighted a significant increase in domestic abuse related deaths during lockdown. This left an intense feeling of shock and discomfort inside of me. During my research I needed to be empathetic and accepting towards the experiences of the men. Many of the men had lost contact with a child due to their abusive behaviours. It was hard not to be saddened by their emotive accounts of how they missed their children and desired nothing but to be able to see them again. But now I was reminded of the ugliness of domestic abuse and the very real extremes of what domestic abuse can lead to. Being in lockdown, having no escape, having no access to support systems and the fear of what could happen if the wrong thing was said or done. A very bleak image occupied my mind whilst I went over the interviews, transcribed and analysed my research.

It might seem naive, that I was so surprised by the reality of domestic abuse resulting in death. But I also recognise, at times we create a 'box' in which we contain certain information, in order for us to be able to cope with the difficult information which lies ahead. This is what I did while I spoke to the men. How else would I been able to understand a man who had hit, stalked and controlled a woman but also was so very desperately trying to better himself for his child?

"Sharing my vulnerability and creating a space of hope my doctoral research journey during a pandemic"

Sabeela Rehman - Counselling Psychology Doctoral Student
University of Wolverhampton

Earlier last year, the whole world came to a standstill. In March 2020, the United Kingdom (UK) experienced a nationwide lockdown, and society could not go into work, travel or meet individuals face to face. This was due to a deadly virus called "corona, also known as COVID-19". A message from the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson was broadcast daily on national television advising individuals to "stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives". This catchy slogan became embedded in the national consciousness in the pandemic's early days (McGuinness, 2020). The initial approach to communication about the virus was complacent (Sanders, 2020). This rapidly started to feel like a tape recorder set on replay as the words echoed around my household, and my family panicked with anxiety.

Before the pandemic, I had never heard of the online video chat tools called Zoom or Microsoft Teams. These immediately became popular and the 'new norm' that everyone knew and talked about (Marks, 2020). This video chat platform swiftly became the highlight of my day as I was itching to communicate with work colleagues and lecturers to have virtual face-to-face contact with the outside world and structure my working day. Our communication method readily became so different, and I would feel nervous about seeing work colleagues behind a laptop screen; it was awkward to begin with.

As months passed by, the UK's covid-19 death toll had gradually risen, and I began to experience a turmoil of emotions. I felt that things would not change anytime soon, causing me to feel hopeless about my future doctoral career. During this worrying time, I also continued working at HMP Whitemoor to support prisoners in managing their mental health difficulties. Some days felt massively anxiety-provoking, but I could bracket my feelings of worry by utilising grounding techniques and validating my irrational thoughts (Spinelli, 2005;

Benedicto, 2018; Hazlett-Stevens, 2018; Hoffman & Gomez, 2017).

A few weeks later, I began to find ways to self-motivate and reflect on my doctoral research thesis. I recalled research on the back burner as clinical duties and responsibilities were a greater priority within the National Health Service (NHS). I was keen to proceed with my research topic and felt passionate about completing what I had already started. I began to think creatively about making subtle changes to my research project and conducting data collection during unprecedented times, bearing in mind that the main priority was to keep safe and socially distant. As I brainstormed a few ideas around using video chatting tools to interview fellow research participants, I started to feel a sense of positivity entering into my body. I recognised that I had a plan B, and it left me feeling exhilarated.

It was surreal, and I felt excited to virtually conduct research data collection and keen to add a new experience to my doctoral research journey. There was a space of inner enthusiasm and passion about my future which blossomed inside me, allowing me to adapt to a positive mindset. I kept reminding myself "to take one day at a time," these words supported me to manage my worry (Vivyan, 2018; Wells, 1995). In effect, I became my self-therapist, where I had used tools and resources to cope with a pandemic. I felt there was an opportunity to offer self-compassion and practise what I preached as a counselling psychologist in training (Gilbert, 2009).

I am currently in the process of editing my research proposal, ensuring that practicalities have been considered to conduct research data collection in line with the UK's current government social distancing guidelines, alongside adhering to local NHS research and university policies. I hope to safely continue with my doctoral research journey

during a time of uncertainty by utilising creativity and adapting to the unexpected. I have learnt a lot about myself in the year 2020, something that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I have learnt about my inner strengths, ability to persevere and draw upon my resilience. I have practised gratitude and focused on what I need to appreciate in life to strive each day.

I have an image in mind that I would like to share and that "there will be light at the end of the tunnel".

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Living, Learning and Lockdown

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"*I think we all understandably get caught up at times in wanting certainty*
and yet I believe that it can indeed contribute…
to a state of paralysis and lack of creativity"
(Mason, 1993, p. 190).

For my research, my interviews investigating the experiences of online negative comments for adults with learning disabilities were to be face-to-face. Prior to the pandemic, my research interviews had only ever been face-to-face or via the telephone, never using online video platforms. I was aware of my anxiety around online interviewing due to the unknown. However, rather than gripping solely to my certainty and staying in a state of paralysis, I delved into a position of 'safe uncertainty,' encompassing a way of being which prioritises both curiosity and difference (Mason, 1993). Through this, I became curious around the different online video platforms, taking the time to learn and become familiar with them, for example learning how to utilise the screen share function to share my images so I could creatively meet the unique needs of the individual with intellectual disabilities (Prosser & Bromley, 2012).

Yet, further challenges that have emerged, where due to staring at a computer screen all day, I am beginning to experience 'Zoom Fatigue' (Fosslien & Duffy, 2020). In overcoming this challenge, I have prioritised self-care, an area historically neglected by myself, psychologists and those in the 'helping' professions (Rothschild & Rand, 2006). For me, this has taken the form of regular breaks away from my computer screen, walks outside in nature (Figure 1), which has been beneficial in giving me more energy to stay on focus. If COVID-19 has helped me learn anything as a researcher, it is the importance of a compassionate approach to self, others and research (Gilbert, 2010).

Figure 1. Photo from a self-care walk.

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The Deafening Silence of *Loss* in Lockdown

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The transmission of Covid-19 has been rapid through the global populace, invoking fear, illness and death upon millions. Our day to day journeying bought to a rather abrupt hiatus! With little time to process the speed of such drastic incarceration, with the loss to routines, pace and ways of living, time seemed to stand still encased in 'bubbles' of modified yet 'enforced reality'. Rather like the respiratory virus, there was a feeling the world had paused for breath, whilst tragedy unfolded. For many, this existence undoubtedly involved significant periods of loneliness and isolation (Hwang *et al.*, 2020), which may have greatly impacted on mental health (Pietrabisa and Simpson, 2020; Killgore *et al.,* 2020). Conversely, others may have seized the moment to breathe life into new virtual ventures (Maritz *et al*., 2020). However, as I reflect from experience, it is the deafening sense of loss that is prominent; this '*loss continuum*' being felt on a multitude of different levels with varying degrees of intensity and emotion.

Indeed, the experience of loss is undoubtedly subjective, but what was prominent during lockdown were the taken for granted day to day rituals. For example, the school run, journey to work, and those benign corridor conversations with colleagues. Not to mention, the friendly handshake, hug and numerous other tactile gestures that are so integral to being human. Then, there is the loss of a loved one and the grief that ensues and Covid-19 has inflicted this in abundance, with the potential for prolonged impact on the health and wellbeing of those left grieving (Pearce, Honey and Lovick, 2021). Bereavement may bear a profound sense of emptiness, giving rise to a cocktail of feelings such as anger, frustration, guilt and sadness, not to mention a void that threatens to engulf the path. Thus, whatever form loss takes, it may run deep, cutting to the core of existential experience with a sense of 'nothingness'; from which may come healing (Christ, 1995). As I pause and ruminate these emotions swirl, there are ripples of new insight unfolding, the silence lifts; and life appears to become more audible. A circularity of being that at times has been crippling brings clarity of mind, "a reality of metanoia" (Wright, 2005 p.193), bearing forth a renewed sense of hope. It is at the point of this new position that there is an unfolding awareness that the silence may have served to enable a new vision, whilst learning to have greater empathy for self and others.

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