PhD Vlog Week 3: Abigail Robertson Transcript

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:00		[Screen shot – introduction] [Sunday]
00:00:08	Abigail Robertson	Good morning. It's just about noon, so I guess it's afternoon. Good afternoon! It's just about noon on Sunday. I am taking a break from writing camp, so I'm here in front of the fountain, just kind of relaxing. I have about an hour before I need to get back. Basically, the idea of writing camp is that you're sitting and doing nothing but writing. So there are a couple of other grad students in there, all doing the same thing as I am. I did this yesterday, so I did eight hours yesterday and then it's eight hours today. Yesterday I ended up completing a conference paper in the first four hours,
00:00:38		which is crazy. It's a paper that I'm going to be giving a week from Thursday, so I'll talk to you more about that when it gets closer.
00:00:46		[Monday]
00:00:47	Abigail Robertson	Okay, so it's Monday. I checked in with you yesterday about the writing camp that I was doing and talked about my progress that I was making on the paper on the Franks Casket. So before I attended this writing camp, I didn't really know a lot about writing camps in general or that they even existed, to be honest. But this has been hugely beneficial to me. What it basically was, was like a lock in. People showed up around 8:00 a.m. We had some kind of debriefing where we talked in a group about how our work had gone the day before, so that was what we did on Sunday, as this was a Saturday and Sunday writing camp.
00:01:17		And then we had about four hours in the morning to write, an hour break and then we had four hours in

		the afternoon to write before we then met back with our group and talked about what worked and what didn't.
		If your university offers writing camps or something like it, I definitely recommend that you look into it. Also, I feel like making your own writing camp wouldn't be that difficult. All you would really need is to get a group of people and find a quiet corner of a library.
		I think part of the reason the camp was so productive for me is because every time I looked up and felt myself
00:01:47		distracted, there were people all around me who were getting work done, so it was kind of motivating in that way.
		Also, I wasn't at home, like I normally am when I write, so there weren't the normal distractions. I really felt like I needed to stay on task because there weren't a lot of things for me to do outside of actually getting work done and writing.
		My university offers writing camps every month, so this is definitely something I think I'm going to be doing on a regular basis.
00:02:11		[Tuesday – various outdoor scenes]
00:02:11	Abigail Robertson	Tuesdays and Thursdays are busy for me, so I thought I'd give you an expedited version.
		I get up, grab my bag, catch the bus and head to campus. After that, I teach for about three hours and then I head back to my office to prep things for my own courses, which take up the whole afternoon, and hold office hours.
		It gets close to noon, I pack my bag and head off for my own classes, which are in different parts of the campus from where I work.
		After that, I catch the bus home. Typically, I listen to some music before I get on itself.
00:02:41		But I like to use my time on the bus as a time to relax and also sometimes to get some work done.
		So I might flip through a textbook [00:02:48

		unclear] or look at something for research.
		This one is for my new paper.
		[Close shot of book]
		By the time I get home, it's dark. I don't have a lot of time to get any work done, so I tend to take it easy. Tuesdays and Thursdays tend to be really busy, but I thought I'd give you a little snapshot of what I do on those days.
00:03:05		[Thursday]
	Abigail Robertson	I want to talk to you a little bit about how I organise my PhD applications using Google Drive.
00:03:11		I broke everything down into folders. I had a folder for application checklists, deadlines, research, statements of purpose and writing examples. Everything that was here was basically my home base while I was doing applications.
		So in terms of the folders, here's what I used each one for.
		For application checklist folders I had a document I'm going to show you in a little bit, which basically had a list of schools, due dates and other information and I could just check that off as I went.
		For deadlines, I had a list of deadlines for different documents that needed to go to different departments at the same universities.
00:03:41		Research was information about the schools, where they were, who were the people that I wanted to work with.
		I also had a folder for the different drafts of my statement of purpose. Depending on where I applied and who I wanted to work with, that changed from institution to institution, and this was a nice way of having them all in one place so I could look one between the next and see what changes I needed to make at any particular time.
		Finally, I had a folder for my writing samples, which, again, depending on where I was applying, I chose different ones. So let's take a look in the application
00:04:11		checklist folder.

		Here I had a master plan and a list of PhD programs. The checklist I'm going to show you first is the one with PhD programs.
		So in here you can see a list of schools, which I've blacked out, as well as their websites. And along with those, there are other elements. I have deadlines for when the applications need to be in, a list of the schools I attended and whether or not I had sent the transcript to those schools yet, as well as whether I had sent the GRE, and my three letter writers here, I've just changed their names to X,
00:04:41		Y and Z, whether or not they had submitted their letters of recommendation to the particular schools I was applying to.
		I also had a final bar on the far right called "status" which kept track of whether or not the application was in progress, whether I was missing elements or if there were questions I had, sometimes I would write "awaiting an e-mail" for any particular if I had gotten in touch with someone.
		So this was really helpful just because I could check off things one by one. If the letter was missing, I was able to get in touch with that particular professor and be sure that they were sent the full form that
00:05:11		they needed to send their letter through.
		I could make sure that my transcripts that I wasn't mailing myself were getting to the right place. So for example, Ohio State, you have to go through their online submission system. To send a paper ones, sometimes if they were from undergraduate institutions I didn't need it, as well as the GRE.
		The GRE is a kind of complicated way of sending scores, at least back when I took it. You had to enter codes through the phone in order to send them to particular institutions.
		So this was something that I definitely had to stay on top of, and I deferred to this list
00:05:41		all the time.
		Whether you're applying to graduate school for your PhD or masters in the U.S. or abroad, it's

		important to have some system of organisation. If you're someone who works better with paper rather than computers, something like this could be easily replicated through physical folders and printing things out from websites. Google Drive just worked best for me. I was already familiar with the software and I was able to use the share option, which you can see on the right hand corner, that blue box,
00:06:11		to literally share these documents with my committee, the people who were helping me apply, my letter writers, anyone else who might want to see the information. I was able to change it and anytime I made a change, that would automatically be updated so anyone who opened the document would see the new changes. So for me, it kept me in the loop, it kept my letter writers in the loop and it was just the easiest way to take care of things.
00:06:35		[Friday]
00:06:35	Abigail Robertson	Good morning. It's Friday at just about 7:30 in the morning. I'm getting ready to head to the bus and go to campus.
00:06:42		[Outdoor shots]
00:06:48	Abigail Robertson	I am in my office getting some work done. Before that, I'm meeting with the assistant department chair to go over the courses I've taken so far and talk about my progress in the degree. So it should just be a casual conversation about what I've taken and what I'm going to be taking in the future, as well as when comps are going to happen and dissertation, hopefully.
00:07:06		[Saturday]
00:07:07	Abigail Robertson	So it's Saturday. It's about eleven o'clock and I want to talk to you about my week. So generally as someone who's early in their PhD career, typically about the first two years are spent on course work, so that's what I'm doing right now. The course work is set to prepare you for later

		study, as well as your comprehensive exams, which I'll talk more about next week, as I've had some meetings this week that I need to digest a little bit in order to think a bit more about what I might want to do for my comps and get a structure set up.
00:07:37		So I'll talk to you next week about how comprehensive examinations work, what you do to prepare for them and who you need to talk to, to get yourself set up and in the right positioning in order to take them.
		So for me today is mostly a catch up day. I'm going to go to the building right across from mine, which is the library, and work on some things for my courses.
		I'm going to start some searches to help me gather resources for the paper on Bede that I'm giving later this semester, sometime in November. I'm also
00:08:07		going to be putting together timelines of events for saints.
		The general cohesiveness of the story together isn't difficult. It is difficult to think about the movement of each individual person, where they were going, why they were going to all these different places, whether it was somewhere else in England or on the Continent. So I'm going to make timelines to help me keep that organised.
		I'm going to start some preliminary research for the paper that I am writing this month that I will finish next month, and I'm also just going to make sure I'm organised for the next week.
00:08:37		[End title screen]
		So as always, thanks for tuning in and I can't wait to talk to you more next week.

END OF TRANSCRIPT