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A tale tail of PhD surviving and thriving!

by

Dr Tracy Ann Hayes
&
Maisy the Rotten Russell

Thursday 11 July 2019
Introduction

Me: Lecturer Incompetent Human
• Teach on BA Working with Children & Families and MSc Applied Social Science
• PhD in Transdisciplinary Research in Outdoor Studies Making Sense of Nature: A creative exploration of young people’s relationship with the natural environment.

Maisy: A Rotten Jack Russell
• Doesn’t really like other dogs
• Or many people
• Keeps me grounded, takes me for walks...
Making Sense of Nature...

• The natural world is under threat from human activities and we need to consider how we protect places, people, animals and plants found there.

• My focus is on how we can engage the public in this (children, young people and families).

• Creative approach, preferring everyday language and utilising stories.

• Resulted in commission to develop a practitioners’ toolkit providing guidance on how to work effectively outdoors, with young people identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

• Also worked with HASCE (now HASKE) on range of projects including delivery phase of the SNROS Heritage Lottery Funded Project: ‘Back On Our Map’ (BOOM).
Emerging Impact & Influence

• Royal Geographical Society (RGS)
  • Conference Officer of GCYFRG.
  • June 2016: awarded Reflective Essay Postgraduate Prize by HERG
    • Essay now published as a book chapter.

• British Educational Research Association (BERA)
  • In 2018, awarded the Anna Craft Creativities in Education Prize by BERA Creativities in Education sig.
  • Convener of new special interest group (sig) in Nature, Outdoor Learning and Play (nolap), officially launched 2 July 2019.

• UoC
  • June 2016, recipient of the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Early Career Research Excellence.
  • May 2017: awarded ECR grant to support post-doctoral study, for project titled ‘Playing with Words… Connecting through Story’.
Celebrating achievements

Journal article - ‘Dr Bear and the Adventure Bears’, published in *Children’s Geographies*.

Book chapters:
1) ‘I thought... I saw... I heard...: the ethical and moral tensions of auto/biographically opportunistic research in public spaces’, in *The Palgrave MacMillan Handbook of Auto/Biography*.

My non/less academic achievements include...
Finding the ‘joy’ in research...

• Not everyone will see what you see.
• Need to value differing perspectives.
• Be open to feedback.
• Respond to challenges.
• Which is where the real learning lies.
How we see a PhD…

**The Iceberg Illusion**

**Success is an iceberg**

**SUCCESS!**

**WHAT PEOPLE SEE**
- Persistence
- Failure
- Sacrifice
- Disappointment

**WHAT PEOPLE DON'T SEE**
- Dedication
- Hard work
- Discipline

FAIL
Coping with the unexpected…

• I had no idea what a PhD was, until I did one.
• Not from an academic background.
• Preparation will take you so far…
• Flexibility, responsiveness and a good sense of humour are vital.
When things feel tough...

• Take a break
• Have a rest
• Do something different
• Remember this is a marathon, not a sprint....
• Pace yourself
You are not alone

- Supervisors
- Mentors
- Research Office
- Research community
- Family & Friends
- Pets...
Now a Nana to 2 grand-doggies and a very beautiful grand-daughter...

There is more to life than work ...
What’s next?

Under development:
• Collaborative study into Nature, Outdoor Learning and Play as means of encouraging healthy and sustainable lifestyles.
• Exploring teaching ethics within research methods.
• Book chapter on practicalities of Creative research.
• Red Riding Hood & Wolves – an alternative story...
• Raven Crag - joining in with Another Waynwright Day
Thank you for listening – any questions?

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