

File 20110223.1315: Notes from meeting with Dr Ashbourn:

Dr Ashbourn called Wednesday for the College Advisor Graduate Consultation interview done every year. She asked for an update on my progress, estimated dates for confirmation of status and submission, and if I had any problems. I reported that I am enjoying the new methodology and really getting into it. I have a few questions about the methodology itself; there is not just one GT methodology; in fact there are several varieties and part of my reading has been for the purpose of exploring the range of the methodological variation so I can discuss it as part of the literature survey. Dr Ashbourn asked what became of the question between Dr Martin and me of which research direction I should pursue: my first proposal or the grounded theory approach; I replied that I am firmly resolved to following the assessors' recommended approach this time. She said that was wise. I do intend to further develop the first idea some day, but first I have to get this settled. I concur with the assessors' advice that a stable and solid foundation is a better thing to have established first. Have to do this work first.

I described in some detail to Dr Ashbourn the specific measures I have taken recently to avoid certain distractions that have been keeping me from making progress as well as I would have liked. Finishing successfully is my only priority, and I have moved some important things around in view of it, financially. As for dates, I want to do confirmation of status as late as I can possibly get away with in Trinity term (so, September) followed by submission in January.

Regarding the GT methodology, I recalled some advice that Dr Jirotko gave me in December: to write the initial chapters in such a way as to lead the reader along to an inevitable conclusion. The reader must be convinced that the only reasonable thing to do is a grounded theory analysis on three case studies, following which exactly that is presented. I am working on those chapter outlines with Dr Jirotko's advice in mind. As I said above, I have a few questions about the methodology, and asked Dr Ashbourn if she thought it would be appropriate to contact Dr Jirotko directly about it. I don't want to queer the assessor relationship. Dr Ashbourn asked a few questions about who in Oxford and elsewhere are the GT experts, then suggested I email Dr Jirotko and ask. I have done that now. She also asked if I have talked with Shamal Faily. I related that I have, and got some examples of his raw data together with some of his final results, but nothing really in between. That is where I am stuck. He is pretty busy right now writing up; I did not want to bother him too much.

We discussed plans for consultation in March when I will be in the UK on travel. I said I would bring the draft chapters 2-4 and my GT database, hopefully to meet with Dr Jirotko for a few hours when I am there. I am feeling confident and enthused with the new methodology, but I do not want to get off-track again like happened last time; I am seeking a partial validation of preliminary results this time in the new methodology. Not enough results yet to show off; I am working on with all energy.

I offered to help set up before the lecture Monday. I hope to meet with people in the department as much as possible when I am there. Finally, Dr Ashbourn asked if I felt like I was making good progress and on track to finish; I said yes.

[not for report]

Tuesday: meet for coffee or hot chocolate with Dr Ashbourn. Monday before the lecture, she would appreciate help setting up, will contact me with information closer to the event. I said I would be at RAF Fairford over the weekend, and one other place that I can't talk about.

Dr Ashbourn told me not to stress so much. She wants me to think about a JRF in Oxford. Take a deep breath, she said. I mentioned that I would be there in time for the college photograph, which pleased her. But I had the pronunciation of Prof. Goudie's name wrong: it is pronounced like gów-dee. She wants me to buy a disposable camera and enter something in the college photography contest by Friday, 4th March.

Submission in January is good timing because that is when JRF applications happen. Dr Ashbourn was pleased with that convergence. I told her I collect the announcements in the *Gazette* and post them on the wall.

She said not to stress, that this will work out in the end. She seemed pleased in a quiet way when I described in precise detail the fact that ATL is quitting her job as a librarian specifically to support my school work. We talked about taxes, deductions, expenses, running the household and the fact that I am taking money out of my retirement accounts to fund this now. I think I impressed upon her how seriously ATL and I are both going into this. Dr Ashbourn seemed to think I will finish successfully.

References