

Apprise Timeline of HOLLY

Holly was a full-time teacher in a religious-affiliated school and single mother with pre-school age children. She began her PhD in a local university in North America to get her 'brain back,' while continuing to work full-time to make ends meet. In 2006 when she began to participate in the Canadian research program, she was working on her dissertation. She hoped for a teaching-only university position afterwards. She graduated when she was in her mid-to-late-30s. What struck us about

Holly's story was:

Being a single parent and re-locating with family (personal)

Financial issues during the degree and managing teaching responsibilities in her post (work experience)

Choosing a teaching career during degree and dealing with lack of career development structure in her position (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
PhD Year 4	A working, single parent with 3 children plus PhD study was 'just too much;' overwhelmed and anxious much of the time. Teaching to make ends meet; but being a mother took priority. Writing at 11 pm whilst falling asleep.	Supervisor very supportive and writing rewarding, when she had time.	Hard to write dissertation due to time given to teaching. Job hunting near end of PhD; putting together job applications incredibly time consuming. Got job interview; it meant someone thought her work worthwhile.
PhD Year 5	No longer influenced by religious upbringing; did not want children to grow up the way she had.	Writing thesis changed how she understood the world; shift from religious upbringing (i.e. truth as absolute) to values of scholarly community (i.e. truth relative). Completed degree.	Offered three-year teaching contract in other higher education jurisdiction.
Post-PhD Year 1	Sold house and moved with children; was it the right choice? All went well, but it could have been hard. Re-married.	Worked to fit in with new colleagues. Teaching frustrating; 1st year students had little engagement in learning.	Saw teaching at a non-research institution as a lifestyle choice; wondered 'Am I doing the right thing?'
Post-PhD Year 2	New partner and children settled; left work at 5pm every day to be with them	Enjoyed her position; felt comfortable and respected. Initiated research with colleagues around teaching and learning; but hard to sustain alongside teaching. Decided not to push herself so hard; had a sense of having 'arrived finally'. Took 2nd year students to Latin America; student experience went viral; students lined up to go next year.	Comfortable in a position with no research expectations; might feel different in the future.
Post-PhD Year 3	Moved house in same city; more settled in personal life, which carried over to workplace.	Teaching 1st year classes left her in tears of frustration at students' lack of motivation; felt like giving up. Published PhD dissertation: very validating.	Completed 3-year probation period; thereafter contract renewed yearly.
Post PhD Year 4	Very much enjoyed small town atmosphere; happy that children had adjusted so well.	Had epiphany; accepted students as they were; dramatically improved her teaching evaluations.	No room for advancement or career development or doing new and different things.
Post PhD Year 5	More balanced at home; sense of wellbeing increased and carried over into workplace.	Stopped doing so many 'extra' things – devoted her time to teaching.	A bit 'stuck' but not willing to move family; to stay motivated, invested in what she enjoyed, like Latin American project.
What struck us	Single parent. Re-locating with family.	Financial responsibility during degree. Managing teaching responsibilities.	Clear teaching career intentions during degree. Dealing with lack of career advancement.



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