

# Apprise Timeline of MONIKA

Monika, single, English as another language, had worked professionally for many years before doing her PhD in North America. She lived a two-hour commute from the university and continued to work part-time during the degree for financial reasons. She joined the Canadian study in 2006 in her third year of her PhD. She imagined a local research-teaching position given she was caring for her elderly parents, and completed the degree when she was 49. What struck us about Monika's story was:

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
PhD Year 2	Parent ill and hospitalised; slowed PhD progress.	Comprehensive exams: "symbolic milestone".	Working part-time because needed income.
PhD Year 3	Parent died.	Collected data; completed first draft of thesis for committee. Involved in student governance; got to know students and academics she had not previously.	Struggled to find time for PhD given work schedule and teaching. Taught undergraduate course in her areas.
PhD Year 4	Experienced constant fatigue and tiredness.	Revised thesis; 'starting the process of ending the PhD'.	Realised work isolated her from academic community. Still attracted to academia environment but 'dehumanization of work conditions' not appealing
PhD Year 5	Doing the degree along with work and family care 'very challenging for health'.	Epistemological disagreement with supervisor about thesis argument; finally, 'disciplined myself' to do the work.	Offered job but not local so refused it.
PhD Year 6	Caring for parent, so experiencing considerable stress. Diagnosed with illness.	No time to try and publish from PhD. Completed thesis though 'could not do the thesis as I wanted'. Continued working part-time. Stopped part-time work.	No time to apply for jobs. Offered courses to teach.
Post-PhD Year 1	Caring for parent, but some time for social activities.	Taught a graduate course and had PhD paper published; started writing a book.	Applied for academic positions locally, invited for(1) interview, but not offered position; realized lacked publications.
Post-PhD Year 2	Not able to look farther afield for positions due to parental care.	Taught 3 courses in different universities with good student evaluations. New publication.	Applied for 2 academic positions locally; not called for interview; job market uncertain; lot of competition.
What struck us	Stress. Parental care.	Issues with supervision feedback. Working to deal with financial issues.	Teaching part-time the only academic work she could get Not having publications so not competitive.

(1) Comprehensive exams (demonstrating depth and breadth of knowledge) are a required element of most North American PhDs. They must be completed successfully before doing a thesis proposal defence (which is similar to a transfer of status).