Beyond PhD survival guides: reflections on finding ‘joy in the journey’

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Today’s talk

• How I arrived at today’s topic
• My research as a tweet…a snapshot of my PhD
• A growth mind-set? - experiences from my personal research journey
• Hints to survive enjoy your PhD experience
• Questions?
“Being a PhD student is like becoming all of the seven dwarfs….”

“…In the beginning you’re **dopey** and **bashful**. In the middle, you are usually **sick** (**sneezy**), **tired** (**sleepy**), and **irritable** (**grumpy**). But in the end they call you **Doc**, and then you’re **happy**!” (PhD Graduate)

“Guides”, for example: 20 tips for **surviving** your PhD; How to **stay sane** through a PhD; five secrets to **surviving** your PhD; 17 simple strategies to **survive**, etc., etc…

“When we look back, we should not be thinking: I am so thankful that’s over and I got out of it alive but that was tough, but **great**, and I would **totally do it again**.” (PhD Graduate)
Pyramid enhances the SEWB & school performance of 11-14 year olds: its unique synergy prompts positive behaviour change & real world outcomes

(140 characters!)
Evaluating Pyramid: a school-based socio-emotional intervention

Building friendships, developing confidence

- Self-esteem
- Resilience
- Social skills
  Children find their ‘voice’
- Optimism & hope

http://www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid/welcome
Study design: a research journey

2013

Effectiveness: SEWB? school performance?

Quantitative strategy
- T1 and T2 informant-rated questionnaire data collection
- T1 and T2 self-report questionnaire data collection
- Inferential statistical analysis of short-term outcomes
- Addressing RQ1 & RQ2 intervention effectiveness
- T3 informant-rated questionnaire data collection
- Inferential statistical analysis of 12-month follow-up data
- Sustainability of intervention effects

Qualitative strategy
- Focus groups with Pyramid attendees
- Thematic analysis of focus group data
- Addressing RQ1 & RQ2 intervention effectiveness
- Addressing RQ3: intervention processes & mechanisms of change

How? Why? ‘Active ingredients’?

2017

Pyramid
Cultivating a growth mind-set

**Fixed Mindset**
- avoid challenges
- give up on obstacles
- view as fruitless effort
- ignore criticism
- be threatened by success of others

**Growth Mindset**
- embrace challenges
- persist across obstacles
- view as path to mastery effort
- learn from criticism
- get inspired from success of others
Embracing challenges

• Presenting your research
- academic conferences, to peers, other relevant audiences?
Managing setbacks

- Navigating the rocky road of school-based research
  - ethics, access, suitability, practicalities of data collection, communication, follow-up… etc.
Effort, effort and more effort

• Methodology
• Teaching opportunities

KEEP CALM AND USE MIXED METHODS
Criticism and inspiration

“*I used to get bullied and stuff which basically put me inside of a shell but Pyramid helped to break that shell.*”

(Year 7 Pyramid club member, 2015)
Remember....

...and I really hope you enjoy your journey!
Any Questions?