



Plan your journey & audit your time

Cassily Charles for Digital Health CRC – October 2020

outline

- Introductions
- What is the research degree journey?
- Making maps versus walking the territory
- Things we need, to use our time well
- Common challenges & helpful practices
- Audit your time



introductions

- Cassily Charles
- Now you...

your field of work/research?
where are you?
favourite housework music?



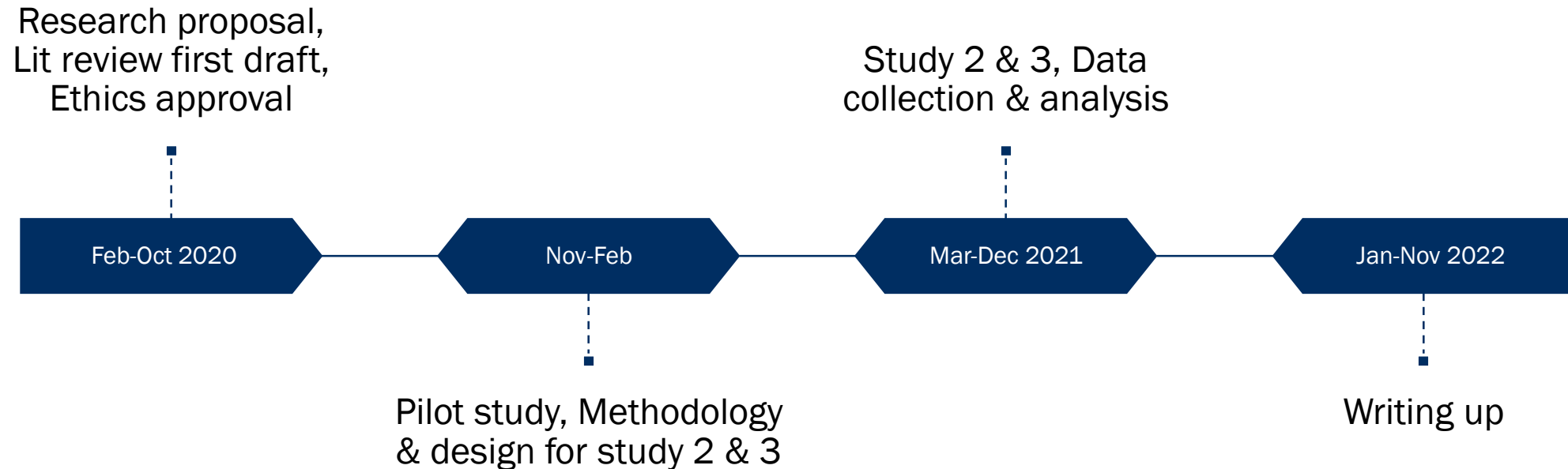
what is the research degree journey?

milestones

1. Draft research proposal, discuss with supervisor/s, get feedback, make changes, present it, receive and incorporate feedback, be confirmed in the candidature
2. Apply for ethics approval (discuss, feedback, changes), make changes, receive approval
3. Search and analyse existing literature, establish a gap to match research questions, draft a literature review (discuss, feedback, changes)
4. Investigate options for methodology and methods, identify data sources, design a study/studies, write a methodology chapter (discuss, feedback, changes)
5. Collect data, analyse it, write results chapter/s (discuss, feedback, changes)
6. Draft and submit publication/s and/or conference papers (discuss, feedback, changes), respond to peer reviewers' feedback, make changes, or revise and submit to another journal/conference
7. Write discussion, re-write literature review, revise other chapters, complete conclusion & intro chapters (discuss, feedback, changes)
8. Complete all parts of the thesis, formatting, editing and proofreading, submit, await examiners' responses, address feedback, make any changes, administration requirements for graduation

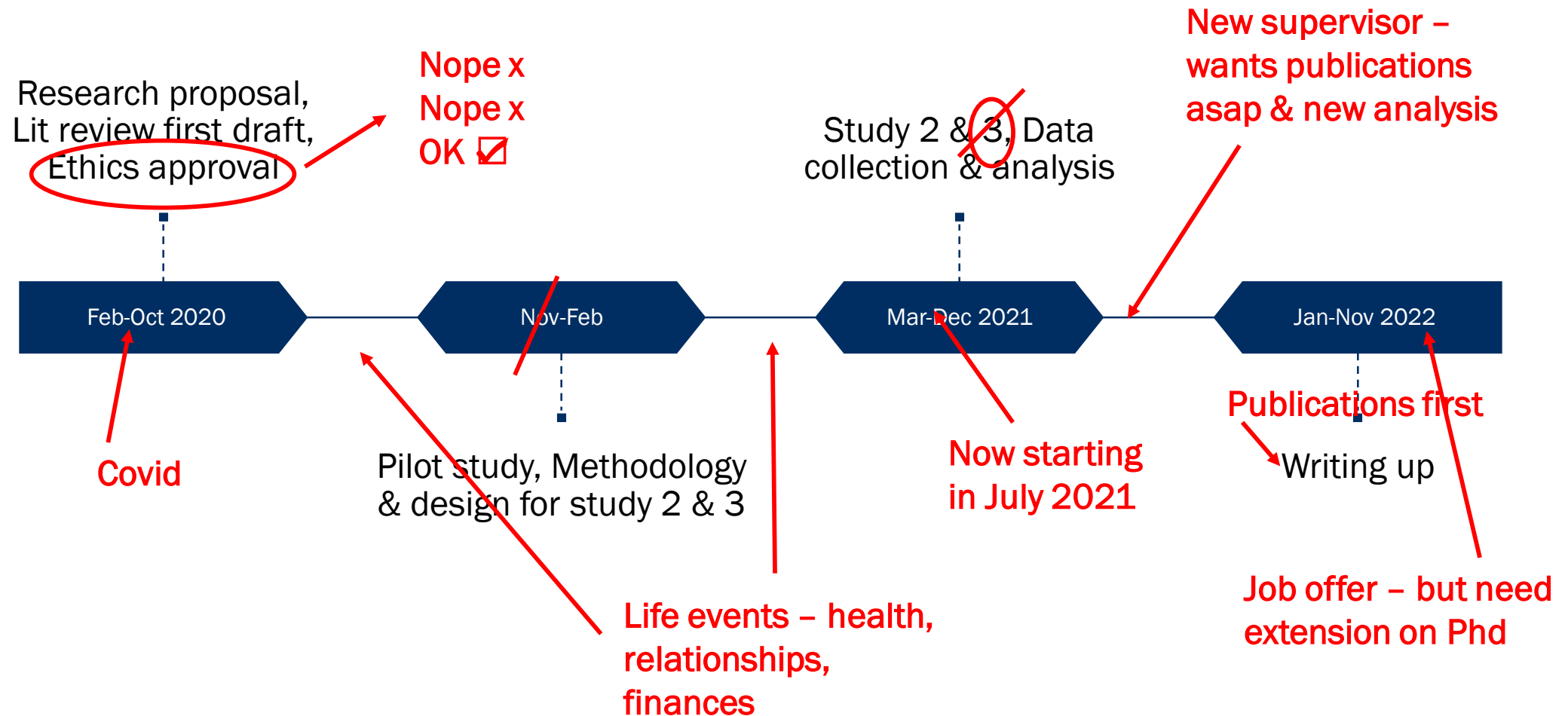
The research degree journey

The first *map of milestones* might look something a little bit like this...



The research degree journey

But once we start *walking the territory* it could look more like this...



what is the research degree journey?

“A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.” (Korzybski 1931)

Map

- Varying degrees of granularity (e.g. major milestones, plans for the month, week, day)
- Public, abstract, agreed, institutional, aspirational, coercive
- Shows & holds long-distance links
- Frozen snapshot of previous info
- Diminishing /decaying usefulness

Territory

- High degree of granularity: reveals the full, fine and complex *now*
- Private, real, human, unexpected, less controllable
- Leans towards short-distance, immediate links
- Generates, and is sensitive to, new information
- Disrupts and subverts linear plans

what is the research degree journey?

“A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.” (Korzybski 1931)

Take home message:

the map and the territory should be in continual dialogue

what is the research degree journey?

“A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.” (Korzybski 1931)

- Every plan has a short life, and gives birth to new plans: Keep revising your plans
- Experiment with different levels of granularity
- Accept, love and defend the new information you get from walking the journey
- There is no perfect map / plan. The best plan is one which knows it has much to learn.

things we need, to use time effectively



things we need, to use time effectively

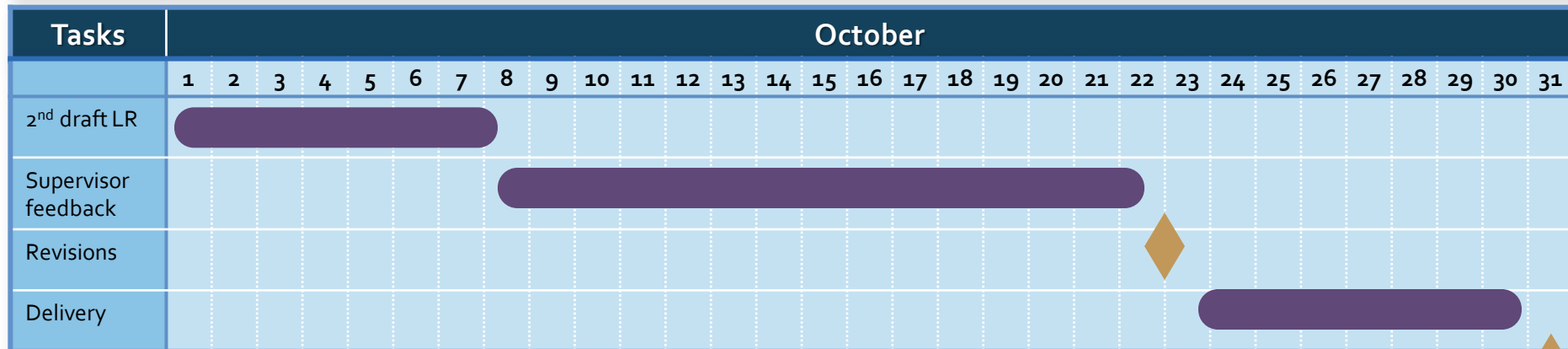
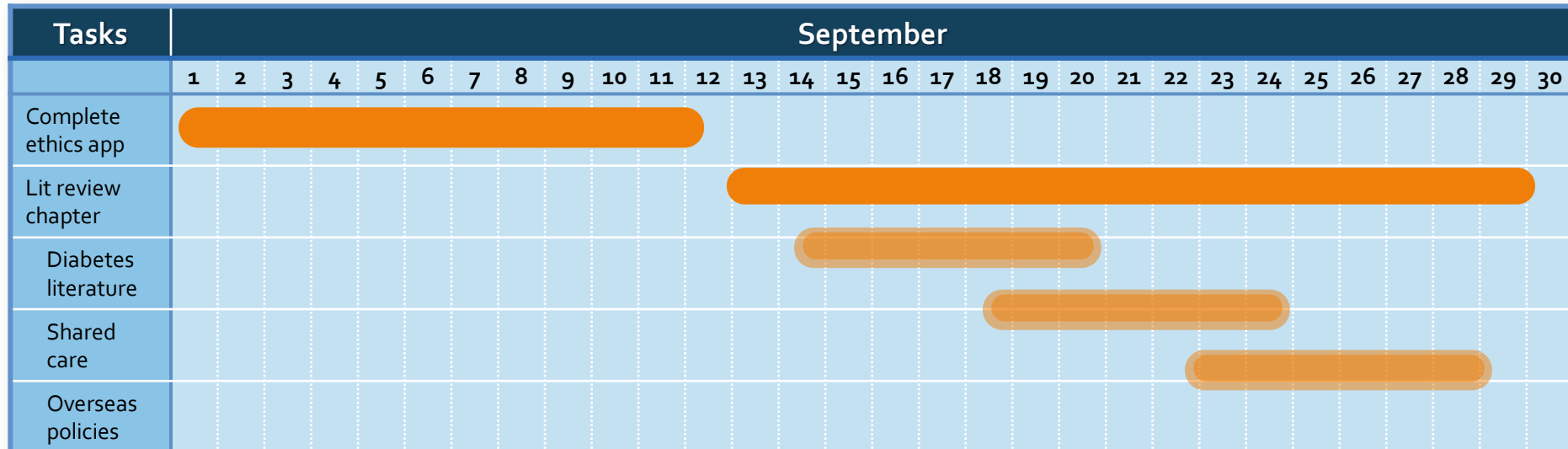
1. Goals, priorities and planning
2. Knowledge of our self and our circumstances
3. Enough time
4. Tactics for adapting to changes and challenges

things we need, to use time effectively

1. Goals, priorities and planning

- Types of goal (e.g. SMART, internal/external, product/process)
- Visibility of goals
- Priorities: always attached to a timeframe (e.g. today, this month)
- Build accuracy of planning: gather data, note progress & successes
- Multiple levels of granularity of plans

Spring 2020



Today

- Work on supervisor feedback on lit review draft (if she gets it back to me) – Priority 1
- Talk to library about setting up database alerts & get help with Endnote troubleshooting – Priority 2
- Reading about action research, versus participatory action research – Priority 2
- Make notes/questions for methodology meeting with supervisor 2 next week – Priority 2
- Initial ideas/ notes for methodology chapter – Priority 2
- Think about possible sites (early childhood education) to work with, and the ethics issues of working with existing colleagues/ previous colleagues - Notes for ethics application and discussion with supervisor – Priority 3
- Walk / phone call with Chris to talk through her issues with Lou – Priority 1
- Water new plants – Priority 1
- New sneakers – Priority 3

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things we need, to use time effectively

2. Knowledge of self and circumstances

- Habits are for efficiency (rather than flexibility)
- Cooperate with your strengths, resources and needs (YANHP)
- Where, when, how do you work well? What is your cognitive/emotional climate?
- What are the demands and resources in your current circumstances?
- What are the organisational circumstances affecting you right now?

things we need, to use time effectively

3. Enough time

- How much time do you really have? Do an **audit**
- Find ways to lighten the load
 - Get help: ask, pay, trade
 - Give up lower priorities: e.g. go part time, garden goes jungle – BUT think health
- Realistic expectations
- Critique the discourse of ‘more with less’ - Are you a timelord?

things we need, to use time effectively

4. Tactics for adapting to changes and challenges

Common challenges...

- Unexpected events – e.g. change of supervisor, family drama, data surprise
- As you progress, your current work techniques fall short – e.g. notes, references
- PhD fatigue / suffering
- Writer's block
- Procrastination

common challenges & helpful practices



common challenges and helpful practices

Unexpected events

- Expect the unexpected – ‘working with Marilyn’
 - preserve margins
 - have a plan B
 - predict based on past experience (your own, peers)
- Draw on others’ experiences: someone has experienced this issue before
- Adjust your map, adjust your expectations, advocate for reality

common challenges and helpful practices

Techniques fall short, as you progress

- Inevitable & healthy! walking the territory informs the map – e.g. lit review
- Work with what you know, until it falls short
- Keep everything – version control, old format notes, feedback emails from supervisors
- Draw on others' experiences (members of your writing groups, peers/colleagues/mentors)
- Get information/advice/support from your organisation (like this session, or consults)

common challenges and helpful practices

PhD fatigue / suffering

- Higher incidence of mental illness and other wellbeing problems for doctoral researchers
- Develop a plan for your mental health and wellbeing **now**
- Step 1 – assess your circumstances, resources & needs, Step 2 – plan for regular wellbeing/health maintenance, Step 3 – plan for interventions when things get tough
- For details, see workshop recording '*Look after your sanity during the PhD*'

common challenges and helpful practices

Writer's block

- Quite common, and you can get through it
- See workshop recording '*Writer's block & getting through it*'
- Reduce the risk with a good plan for maintaining your mental wellbeing & health

common challenges and helpful practices

Procrastination

- Workshop coming up next week (Wednesday evening 21st October)
- Procrastination is itself a strategy (sometimes for protection, or for protest)
- Address underlying causes and/or 'push through' with productivity/focus tactics – e.g. shut up & write, pomodoro technique

audit your time

- Take a sample week (this week, next week)
 - Separate the fixed-time commitments from the moveable commitments and your goals
1. Enter the fixed-time commitments first
 2. Add up the moveable commitments
 3. Calculate the hours left over
 4. Estimate the time needed for your goals
 5. Compare the hours available and hours needed

See hand-out for these steps and table





Any other challenges you have faced?

Any other strategies you have found useful?

Other questions?

Happy travels over the territory 😊