Hellene

As you can see from the picture up here, and naturally being sisters, we’ve been together throughout our lives. And this is just a story that we are going to tell you a little bit about our research journey, and we’ll also touch on our research projects. This is us when we were children, and we’ve always been very fond of each other.

Catherine

So, I’d like to say, I’d like to thank you all for staying and coming and listening to us speak today. Before I start I’d just like to say that Hellene and I were very fortunate because we had each other. We had each other to help us through with our studies. But there was also a really fantastic community at Griffith University that have helped us through all the way. Obviously, without the research community at Griffith, I doubt we would have gotten through. But before we say any more, I’d just like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we have gathered today, the Toorbul and the Ugari people. I’d also like to, I’d like to say thanks to my mum and dad as well, who will be watching this at home, you know, in the comfort of their own homes on their Internet one day. I want to thank all of our family and friends, and a special thank you to the elders in residence, Uncle Graham Dillon and Auntie Jill May Barton [01:37]. They are absolutely available to anybody that studies at Griffith University, and they are a wonderful support team, as are the Council of Elders and the ATSE, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, headed by Auntie Chrissie. And special thanks to the Indigenous Research Network, Dr. Chris Matthews, he’s been a great support as have the members. And of course, Maureen [02:03] and all the staff, Cheryl Cannon and Carol Brown from the Ganmurray [02:06] student support unit, which is a fantastic support unit here at Griffith, and our supervisors, a very special thank you. We had a few as we ran along the way, I think the sisters are a bit full on, two sisters, and they were like, oh, my goodness, but a very special thank you to Associate Prof. Rod Gardener and Prof. Robertson, neither of whom could be here today unfortunately. And of course, the Faculty of Education.

We started off in the photograph in that little house. We both ended up somehow in the Faculty of Education. And thanks to scholarship monies, a nice place to study, a space, a computer, yeah, we made it through. So thanks very much, and all of you, welcome to a wonderful research community here at Griffith University. Yes.

Hellene

I’d like to tell you a little bit about my research project, and I focused on the turn taking organisation of deep hypnosis, and I can see here that I’ve mentioned some of the major findings, and they were that when you study hypnosis, the interaction of hypnosis, you’ll
discover that the client is in a deep state of unconscious awareness, whilst being simultaneously completely asleep at the conscious level. And I suppose what that really means is that the person that is deeply hypnotised has no conscious awareness of what is being said or done, and that explains why they often have complete amnesia upon awakening. Of course, these are the clients that are capable of going into profound states of consciousness. I suppose that basically the findings support those theories of hypnosis which state that hypnosis is an altered states of consciousness, and the data that I had was quite unique, though, because all of these people were quite capable of going into deep trance states.

Do you want to say something about yours, Cath? You’ve only got a few minutes.

Catherine

I’d just like to say, my research was quite different. I looked at how a race mattered in university settings. I was interested in how people experience the world in which they find themselves. I was interested in the notion that language is so powerful that, similar something to Helen’s is in some sense, because it’s language that identifies, and makes sense of our world as to who we are and how we live. And what I did was, I took Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and I had them, they did some interactions in the university setting, and I used some linguistic resources, some conversation and some categories about how you get to belong, and membership, and things like that. Basically, one of the things I did for example is, I looked at ‘we’, a very simple, small word, which we all understand, but I used a different category outside of English, I used what they call an inclusive/exclusive dual plural system to look at what we meant, who got to be included in the ‘we’, and who got to be excluded from that ‘we’. And it was really fun because, this is my diagram that took me hours to make up, that represents that ‘we’ is one way in which we can see how populations of gender, race, abilities and disabilities can come together, and how we can also see it going apart. That was the second bit that took a while. So it was an absolutely fascinating study, and you can jump on line if you want to read any more about it, but I’ll pass over to Hellene. But it was fantastic.

Hellene

And I would also like to suggest to any people that are doing research at Griffith, you know, you might not have a sister to talk with about your research project, but you’ll certainly have a number of others that are in your research areas, people that would be using similar methodologies or perhaps similar research content areas, and I think it’s a really good idea to get together, support your research community, work together, discuss ideas, and it just makes things really enjoyable.

Catherine

We just want to finish, finally, just to say, also to acknowledge Prof. Paula Singh [07:03], and I remember as a student in the Masters in applied linguistics being very fortunate to be a student of Paula’s for one class. I hope she remembers me, I’m sure she does, she’s
been very helpful along the way. And I just feel very honoured to be standing here today, because so many of those lessons, you know, I sat in the audience and I listened to Paula, and today I am standing here and Paula is listening to me, and also my sister, and we are very, very proud, and we are very honoured. And we are very happy to have shared something with you today that’s huge, the projects were huge, so difficult to talk about in a couple of seconds or a couple of minutes, but so worthwhile, so worthwhile. So that’s basically what I wanted to say. Hellene?

**Hellene**

It was just such a wonderful journey. You know, there’s nothing like it. There’s times when you are doing your research that you think, oh, goodness, why on earth did I start doing this? You know? But I would say to anybody, you know, it’s really worth pursuing, you just stick at it and step by step you get there in the end. And it’s really great to have good supervisors, you know, you have the support of your schools, they can, you know, if you just go forward and ask and talk to the others, and go forward and go to the opportunities that are available, there are so many things at Griffith, you know, you can go and learn how to do different courses that will help you produce your thesis in the end, which is a rather long document, and we had a lot of fun doing it. So thank you very much.

**Catherine**

We’ve also had a lot of opportunities as a result of doing that as well. So the journey, I guess, continues, because we’ve recently just come back from Brolga Island in the Torres Straits and we worked on a humanitarian project there. And that was really exciting, lots of fun. And we’ve also been working on a casual basis in the Indigenous policy doing lots of research, so there are lots of other projects. That was the start. And I would have never, ever thought, when I saw the photo of myself with that angry face, I was always a bit of a winger, but when I saw that and watched our lives go on, never, mum said to us when she saw the photo, I never would have thought that you’d both stand up today and be standing there as sisters. So I just wanted to say...

**Hellene**

And doctors!

**Catherine**

And doctors, yes, that’s a real honour. So yes. And a special thank you also to the Gamilroy community as a community that both Hellene and I belong to, and have just come back from in Northern New South Wales. And we are doing a bit of a book on that as well. So we like writing now.

End of recording