**Transcript for “Episode 10: Final Reflection”**

**NR:** Hi there! Welcome to *On the Job with the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative* podcast.

**WF:** Today, we are hosts, myself Wil Flores and...

**NR:** Me, Nupoor Ranade.

**WF:** Are speaking with ourselves!

**NR:** That's right. In this episode, we are chatting amongst ourselves and reflecting back on the past nine interviews with the amazing scholars who shared their time and advice with us.

**WF:** We'll also be reviewing some of their more salient advice and talking about how both we used it and how others might as well.

**NR:** And we'll end with a review of how some of this advice might be adapted for a pandemic version.

**WF:** And speaking of which we think we should start by addressing the elephant in the room, which is a job market season during a pandemic. So let's get into that.

[light piano music plays]

So Nupoor, how are you feeling about the job market season?

[laughter]

**NR:** Honestly, Wil, I'm horrified, but you know what? The other day I saw a job posting and it was, I think it was as early as August 8th. So, and I also saw a post on RhetMap, which is by Jim Ridolfo. And that has just made me very, very hopeful. We'll see how it goes, though. How about you?

**WF:** Right. I'm terrified as well. But I also saw when posted about a writing center director job that looks very promising and interesting, and I've seen others on social media share similar hopes. So there are jobs that are coming out. I've even heard from faculty that there are rumblings of departments waiting to get the go ahead to post jobs. So I guess we'll see.

**NR:** Yeah, that is, that is good to know. You know, the worst part of the unpredictability of whether there will be jobs or that wound is that we still need to be prepared for them if they come out ever. But also the good news is that we've already started with our podcast, especially, and our guests have been super helpful in giving some great advice to us and to help us get started on that journey.

**WF:** Right. So in this episode, we're going to be giving you a short recap of some of the great advice we've heard during our interviews. And we're also going to be talking about how we personally picked up on the advice.

**NR:** So let's get into it.

[a piano jingle plays]

**WF:** So with this advice, we split it up into four parts. We're going to talk about approaching a dissertation, applying to jobs, then we're going to talk about what to do when you're on the job, and how to maintain that work life balance when you have the job. So starting with the dissertation, we're going to split it up into three parts and that's going to be project management, accountability, and rewarding yourself, which actually a lot of our guests spoke about. So let's review some of the advice that we got. Nupoor, what stood up from you about approaching the dissertation?

**NR:** Oh, yeah Wil, talking about the dissertation and after a summer of trying to write and I'm getting some writing done, I did go back and look at, I did go back and hear some of the podcast sessions that we did and some advice that was there. And I think one of the main advice as we even start writing the dissertation, which came from Jack was, you know, just trying to take a step back from other things that you're doing and taking things, some of the things off of your plate, and it's, it's already hard to say no, but then forcing myself or just making it myself, believe that this is for a, cause this is to get started with the dissertation and helped me, better plan my life for the next year or so. It, it really got to me, and I and I did do some of those things. I did say no to some things I did not apply to some places which, you know, in terms of opportunities and just because I knew they were going to eat up in my time and it's, it's been helping me.

**WF:** Right. I did the same thing. I said no to a couple of things, work opportunities. So saying no to money is especially hard, but I'm lucky that my program helps PhD students over the summer with research. So I'm lucky and privileged in that regard. But I did the same thing. I said no to a couple of things, things just to say, this will help you in the long run. Like I can focus on my diss work and get this out of the way and be better prepared for when the fall comes. So, one thing along those lines that stood out to me, as you're moving into the semester is which what Sweta said about writing her dissertation while on the job market. She said probably focusing on your job market stuff about three days out of the week and taking two days to focus on her dissertation was what got her kind of through that process in the early days. But once she got to September and October, her dissertation work kind of went on the back burner and she focused solely on the job market. So I think as we're moving into the semester and I'm getting a sense of how busy I, and a lot of other people are going to be, especially teaching online and how labor intensive that is, I think that's going to help assuage maybe a different word there, but, helped me feel a little less guilty about not getting so much diss work done since we have so many other things happening. So I think that was really, really good advice about. Knowing, you know, when to take a step back from one thing to focus on another thing.

**NR:** I agree. I definitely agree with that. And I remember it was Sara, who also said that, you know, just thinking about writing your dissertation for 15 minutes a day is also good because that helps you kind of feel better that not that you haven't done anything all week, but you've been contributing some small amount or portion of it every day, which is definitely good than not having anything on you. But, I'm also sure that it's not just us, you know, it's not just you alone in your cohort or in your, in your social circle who is feeling that way and is unable to complete your projects. So the accountability partners advice that, that a lot of folks on the podcast like Michelle and, and a few others also gave us, having accountability partners and apps to help us get through the process and also feel like everybody else is going through it, but just keep keeping a tab on how much are we really losing and how much are we contributing?

**WF:** Right. I really took that advice to heart. I met with my advisor regularly over the summer as I was working on my dissertation. And I'm lucky that she was willing to do that. And, I also joined a couple of writing groups just to maybe not even just so much write at the same time, but just check in and give those updates so that I was updating somebody. And it wasn't just me kind of writing for myself that I was able to say, "Oh yeah, I'm going to have this chapter done by next week." And get that work done because I have somebody waiting for that. So I think that advice was really, really helpful. The, the app versus the—using an app to keep track of time also helped me a lot because not 15 minutes spurts, but I found that I'm really a really good writer when I break up my time in 30 minutes, especially when I'm trying to write like a very complex paragraph. So I think these, this advice about, you know, accountability and apps was, was really, really helpful.

**NR:** Yeah, for sure. And even if you're not about of any writing group, the app, the app is, is good. And also accountability partners is always a good idea, but you don't always get them. So using that app in the main way is great. Oh, I do follow the 25 minutes sprints as well using Pomodoros. And that app has helped me get some writing done. And one of the advice that I would like to attach over here, it's a good segue into is thinking about rewarding yourself at the end of that particular time or achieving a certain task or after meeting with someone and exchanging ideas about how much you have gotten completed after that, that social check-in . I remember this advice about treating yourself at the end of, you know, like if you say 30 minutes, you were able to write and get the job done. So yeah, regarding yourself, Sounds great. And I know Michelle talked about regarding that she rewards herself by listening to podcasts and doing some fun things like playing video games.

**WF:** Mhm. And Sara talked about her hobbies, just like going all in on your hobbies to feel like a human. I believe she made dresses and Antonio talked about going to listen to live music. I personally, we can't really go listen to live music anymore, or at least not for a while, but I really picked up on that playing video games part, and I've just been rewarding myself with a lot of Animal Crossings. So if anyone wants to visit my island, public service announcement, I guess. So I guess this is a good time to pivot, to, what to do when we're applying to jobs. Because as we're moving into this fall semester, that's when things are gonna start picking up, like we said, A couple of job ads have already gone out. So let's, let's talk about how to approach it.

**NR:** Generally speaking, there are a lot of places to look for jobs, but I'm glad that Allison and a few others pointed out exactly where to look for relevant job postings and without getting overwhelmed with, with them. And I guess, HigherEdJobs, Academic Jobs Online, and Jim Ridolfo's RhetMap are certainly the ones to dig into whenever we get a chance.

**WF:** Right. And I know there's also the MLA Job List, although I've heard some competing things about, about it, but I know it's still a, a go-to source. Another thing that really stood out to me was what Adam said about how we're kind of primed to do cross-disciplinary work and to really look for those spaces like new media studies or communication studies or, like science and technology studies. Some of the work that we in technical communication really kind of take to heart and we can bring maybe even newer perspectives to these other places. So I'm taking that information to heart this job market and really looking really expanding my purview there when it comes to looking for jobs.

**NR:** Yeah, definitely. I have seen some cross-disciplinary jobs out there and it just makes me wonder what are the right keywords to use and maybe just like making a list of those keywords and just keeping it handy when I'm going on these sites to look for jobs. I think that's great advice. But sometimes they can be confusing because the way the job ad is worded can be super confusing. But I remember Allison's advice on that was to, you know, just sit with it, your advisor and decide whether the job is a fit for you or not. I know Sweta talked about how we can, you know, modify our CVs and our letters to fit a certain job. But before we do that, before that tailoring happens, we need to really make sure that the job is a good fit for us or else it's just a waste of time, yeah.

**WF:** Yeah. So I know Antonio applied for every job under the moon, but then you had Allison saying, I had a very real conversation with myself and my advisor about even whether I was qualified for this job or not. So I think these are some really some very real conversations that we'll be having moving forward into the semester and into this job market season.

**NR:** And I think it's also a personal choice. It's just a personality to overdo something versus just be careful and pick opportunities that make sense to you, I guess. Cause cause that's a big change, you know, it's like moving to a new place and I'm making new friends and starting a new life. So I guess there are a lot of things involved thinking about moving to a new place and starting a new life. let's let's try to recap, the things that, these guests talk about, what to do once you're on the job.

**WF:** Right!

**NR:** So settling in a new place is hard, especially now that we are in the pandemic situation. And I hope we return to normalcy by the time we have to make that move. But despite that we are gonna have to attend a lot of meetings—and Zoom meetings are hard—but so are in-person meetings and all the orientations that you have to go through, but some advice that we've received as, you know, just look for mentors in the new place that you are at, because they can point you to the right resources. Go back to your advisor because your journey with your advisor doesn't end with your PhD. You can still go back to them and ask for advice on how to settle in a new job so that you can make most of the opportunities that are provided to you. And also you're able to stay on track with the research and teaching and the service work that you want to balance out, I guess.

**WF:** Yeah. And even thinking back to some of the advice like from Adam, about cross disciplinary work, collaborating across the campus is also something that was really emphasized to us. Jack talked about, those. departmental collaborations. Antonio talked about collaborating with other colleagues and even working with other people to build graduate work and graduate curriculum. So I think those are some things that will be really interesting, perspectives, depending on, of course, depending on what kind of university you arrive at. But yeah, I think that's something that I'm personally excited for because I like hearing from other folks. So I think that'll be really cool. So speaking of which a lot of people talked about how they were given a course release during their first year, or received that kind of mentorship to kind of guide them through that first year. And what a lot of people talked about is how big of a shift that kind of workload was from being a graduate student, basically working all the time. So we got a lot of really good advice about maintaining worklife balance. Of course, a lot of the information that we got about managing a dissertation carries over, especially using agile methods for managing a project like a Kanban system. I know Jack specifically talked about taking weekends off. And setting like good, like an actual work schedule for when you go to the office. And I know a lot of us might not be able to return to our offices. I personally have not been to my graduate office since March. And I'm fearful for what happened to my office cactus, but even setting up a place where you can work from 9 am to 5 pm or whatever kind of work hours that you find more comfortable for yourself is going to be really good for kind of separating your work life from your home life.

**NR:** Yeah, definitely worklife balance is a big thing and I, I am honestly worried about it because right now our hours are all spread across the week and we can barely that weekends from weekdays. But it's, it's about to change and it's important to keep track of, the calendar and I guess, how many, how many projects we're working on and how that, whether to take projects or not, and how it's affecting our physical and mental wellbeing as well. Jason Tham had some good advice on, being able to take time for physical and mental wellbeing and reflecting on yourself, making sure that you're, you're doing things that are important to you, personally, and not just in your career. So I thought that was, that was really good advice to remember.

**WF:** Right. And I think that's a, that's some kind of salient advice for just living right now during a pandemic, taking care of ourselves and making sure that we're physically and mentally well, as best we can. So speaking of the pandemic, I think, we should probably review how some of this advice transitions over to a pandemic scenario.

I remember Sarah talking about how video conference interviews will never be not awkward. And, even as we meet over Zoom like this, there's still some awkwardness in pausing and interrupting each other. So I think that advice is pretty salient right now, given that, I'm pretty sure most of our job talks, if not all, will be over Zoom or Skype or some other video conferencing method.

**NR:** Yeah, I do agree about the video calls, Wil, and I'm sure, we have gotten a lot of practice by now how to handle a video call. So, we should be okay if not the best. But also I think it was Sarah's advice to be prepared in advance. And, she, she also mentioned those nitty gritties, like ironing your suit the night before, but that does apply we can just extrapolate it to all the other things that are needed before you attend a job call, even making sure you know, what your surroundings are and what they are going to be at the time of the interview. So you have, if you have someone coming over or if you have a room, a quiet place and just to do not disturb sign, that's going to be super helpful, but planning all of that ahead of time is going to be useful.

**WF:** Right. So ironing your suit, even if you're only wearing the top half and bottom half is pajamas, the top half might at least be ironed. [laughter] Speaking of which, I know that, when I was conducting some Zoom meetings over the summer, I noticed that my face started getting green screened because of the way I had my lighting set up in my room. So I had to tinker with my lighting situation. So it's better to, again, to practice those things before you actually do them, but not even just presenting your material. But looking at how you're being presented to the committee, because you don't want to be basically invisible for the entire job talk. So PSA to everybody out there, check your lighting, so you don't get green-screen from zoom if you're using a virtual background!

**NR:** Yeah. Yeah. And these are small notes. Maybe you should start making a list of things to do and all of us should. And Michelle had that advice about, you know, taking notes about, on everything. We can document how we plan to do things and even save the links for our video calls so that we don't get late. Just having all of that in one document. If, if those links have passwords, just being ready with those it's, it's all gonna be helpful and not, not waste time, not get late and just be, and not be anxious at all.

**WF:** Right. Because if you can take care of everything, right from the beginning, that's more, that's less that you have to worry about and all you have to worry about is doing great job talk.

**NR:** Yeah!

**WF:** So some of the other advice that Michelle gave was seeking out help when you needed it. and in a way that works best for you. And I think that, going back to seeking like your advisor’s advice or a cohort member, I think, practicing for your job talk, especially since we'll be doing virtual job talks might be really handy. So that way you can get rid of those technical details, you can get those out of the way and you can troubleshoot anything else that happens. Like if your mic disconnects 30 minute, 30 minutes in, you can figure out why it's doing that versus when you're on the job talk and you speak for 30 minutes and they're like, "Oh, we didn't get any audio."

**NR:** Yeah. Yeah. The part about reaching out to folks and asking if you have any thoughts is important. And I have also heard it in terms of, you know, if you need any help, just going to your friends and or your advisor or anybody who is on the job market, who is at that school, if you have any questions about their work life, it's, it's, it's just useful to reach out to such folks. And a lot of them are available on Twitter and other social media. But if you, you can just look them up and, on the college or university's website and then reach out to them, I'm sure they will be more than happy to get back to you and whatever questions you have. But I think it's, it's super important to reach out and get advice, get help when you need it.

**WF:** Right! And on that note, we'd like to ask you our listeners. If you could comment on the website, if you have any advice that you'd like to share about your experiences or anything that's come up in your own approach to the job market that would be great for other people to know, please, we'd love to hear from you. Please go to the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative website and just comment on this episode's blog post and, really just share that advice and let people know how you got through this.

**NR:** In closing, thank you all for listening to our podcast and being a part of our journey. As we created these and published these, we really appreciate your time and hope this has been helpful for you and good luck if you're going to be on the job market and just thank you for being with us.

Yeah!

**WF:** And good luck to you Nupoor, good luck on the job market!

**NR:** You too! [laughter]

**WF:** Thanks! Yeah. I like we're wishing everybody else good luck, we should wish each other good luck.

**NR:** Yeah.

**WF:** Yeah, thanks for doing this with me. This has been such a fun experience.

**NR:** Same, thank you for, it's been such a great experience, Wil. Thanks for doing this with me.

**WF:** And with that, we'll say goodbye to everybody. Have a awesome semester despite everything, and we'll see you on the other side. Goodbye!

**NR:** Bye bye!

[light piano music plays and eventually fades out]