A45 Interview Audio

Thu, 8/11 6:15PM • 38:40

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

year, exams, people, bit, speak, studies, friends, chiropractor, questions, deadline, community, lectures, parents, tutors, acc, work, feel, institution, job, struggled

**SPEAKERS**

Participant A45, Philip Dewhurst

**ANONYMISATION**

Pseudonyms used in place of real names. Locations redacted or names changed. Personal information redacted.

**Philip Dewhurst** 00:12

Okay, so let's start off with telling me a little bit about why you decided to become a chiropractor.

**Participant A45** 00:20

Yeah, so I've always been involved in sport in kind of horse riding in particular. So I've always kind of had therapeutic interventions, particularly for the horses in kind of had to help them in, like how they going. So it always helped him like improve competition results. So I then had just a one off injury, I was about 14/15, the person who was treating the horse at the time turned around and said, Oh, I can treat you as well. And it was on discussion with her that I actually found out, she was a chiropractor, not a physio, I thought I wanted to do physio by that age. But as soon as I found out, she was a chiropractor kind of looked into it more, and realised that's why I wanted to do so did some kind of shadowing shifts with her as part of like a work experience programme was school. And then yeah, made the decision to go ahead and apply.

**Philip Dewhurst** 01:13

Okay. So it was something that you were quite set on from relatively early age. Yeah. So why did you choose AECC, to do your degree,

**Participant A45** 01:28

AECC I actually only applied for Chiro at AECC, and nothing else on UCAS was advised by the UCAS, advisor to maybe apply for something else. And just kind of I don't know, if it's not AECC, and it's not that course, then I don't want to go to uni, which was a bold move. Looking back. Yeah, but paid off. I think it was kind of when it came down to visit, it just very much felt like a community. It was very similar in terms of the building and things to what my school was like. It just, it didn't feel like I was going to be taking a massive step from school to university, it didn't feel like it was going to be one of those institutions where you kind of become almost nobody, you're just like a number on a page. But also the chiropractors that I'd spoken to had all been to AECC, I'd struggled with biology AS and then obviously, AECC offered the zero option. And when I spoke to my chiropractor, she had the grades to go into year 1 one, but chose to do year 0 anyway. So then decided that actually that was probably the most appropriate route to go down and where I wanted to go.

**Philip Dewhurst** 02:42

So where you said there about the feel of the place and it was similar to your old school? So how important was that in? In making that decision? And how important has that been, as it were, as you've come through the course that sort of familiarity?

**Participant A45** 02:57

I think it's definitely having tutors, like know who you are is definitely a big thing in lectures where I don't feel like I know the tutor as well or the tutor doesn't even know my name, then I'm probably less inclined to get involved as much when it's someone you can kind of have a discussion with and who knows you you kind of have that relationship to have those conversations rather than just trying to get through the unit I would kind of say,

**Philip Dewhurst** 03:28

do you think do you think you would have got on as well? If you had been in a big institution? Where you're not you're maybe they don't know your name, and it hasn't got that kind of historic building kind of in the ground sort of that how do you think you would have coped in that sort of situation?

**Participant A45** 03:50

Personally, I think I would have been like, just got on with it. It's when someone I find it much more kind of motivating and drives me I'm not naturally like the most clever I'd say I've worked hard for like my grades all my life. And things don't tend to like naturally come easy to me quite often have to work quite hard at them particularly like theory and things we have to work on. But then when someone kind of knows your name, and you've kind of set those standards for yourself quite early on for me, that's a massive like driving factor to keep that standard up. So I think in like one of my first exams, I did really well in year zero. And then from that moment on, I was like, right, this is kind of what is the expectation I hold of myself because I don't want people to be like, Oh, she can do that. But she's not like kind of reaching that level. So I think I would have been fine. I'd probably more of just kind of coasted through and done what I had to but when that kind of community is there for me, it's more of a like, right, come on, get on with it and gives me a bit more drive to work harder.

**Philip Dewhurst** 04:57

Okay, so and when you say that community Is that the community of friends of peers in your your year group across year groups? Staff? How big is that community?

**Participant A45** 05:09

I would say it's, it encompasses everyone. I think there's obviously some people that kind of throw themselves into the community more obviously, I've thrown myself in very much though, like to build as many relationships with as many people to open that community in my eyes up. So I know, obviously, I mean, you're for now I know, people from different courses, different year groups, like right down to the gateway. So I think for me, it would be the institution as a whole right up to my relationships that I've developed with, like the governance and things.

**Philip Dewhurst** 05:47

Okay. Okay. So what's been your biggest challenge whilst you've been on the course?

**Participant A45** 05:58

Time management massively. And, yeah, I like to put too much on my plate quite often, and then sometimes can end up, this is probably gonna come as a shock. I ended up putting things off and then have a lot to do at once, but have found that that's also how I work best in some regards. But I need to, there's been the odd time where I've kind of been like, I've probably left this a little bit late, I've still managed to do it. It's still done well with it. And but occasionally have like, kind of question like, Okay, if I'd started a week earlier, what would have happened? Yeah, so it's just kind of getting going quick enough, almost, has been the issue for me.

**Philip Dewhurst** 06:50

So I've got some data that that you, because you've volunteered for the first half of the study, and you've done the survey. So I've got some data. So if it's okay, we will explore some of that as well as Yes. Okay, so some meat on the bones. So the first thing I was looking at was, in terms of, as you've gone through from year one to year two to year three, how do you how do you feel the transition from year to year has been Have you noticed any, or experienced any challenges or barriers or things that have affected that that movement through the course,

**Participant A45** 07:32

year one to year two, I think was a big, year one to two and three to four a, what I'd say are the big jumps, year two to three, because the kind of units are fairly similar from the end of year two into the beginning of year three, it feels more like a gradual transition. year one to year two, obviously, you go from kind of your gross anatomy, where I think you've finished looking at like, leg muscles and things like that, where it's kind of fairly straightforward. And then you jump into the kind of complexity of neuroanatomy quite quickly, I think that can sometimes come as a bit of a shock to the system on top of kind of the changes in the tutors you had for our year in particular. So I think, kind of jumping from having Susan and Rebecca and kind of those familiar faces that for me, I'd had for year zero and year one. And then all of a sudden, you're kind of faced with a completely new group of practical tutors completely like, at the time Bethany was like course, lead is one of your unit leads. You have the consistency of Ben, but you have him a lot less than you've got Clive and obviously, everyone like hears about his like CV and everything is done. So like you kind of almost go in to what can be a little bit daunting, but I think it's quite easy to settle. And once you kind of anticipate the workload and balance it and kind of get your feet on the ground and start running, then it's okay, you just have to get off to that start quite quickly. And then year three to four, I think was, I think it's a lot bigger jump because I wasn't expecting it to be as much of a jump as it has been. I obviously thought that going into clinic was gonna be quite daunting and was a little bit but settled in quite quickly. So I think once we were all through that we felt like it should be kind of a bit of a breeze and then actually reality of managing master's level worth of coursework, patients, everything else at the same time, I think suddenly becomes quite a real thing. And then obviously like looking for jobs and everything on top of that and getting your name out there. So you're ready for kind of interview processes and things is something that you if you're aware of you can kind of plan for it a bit more but if you hadn't been aware, like I personally did a lot of observations over the summer. So we've kind of got my feet in a lot of places, which was quite useful. But I think if I hadn't done that, I think I'd have felt quite overwhelmed going into year four.

**Philip Dewhurst** 10:11

So looking at your, your profile, you're quite high achiever. So your year one average was 78, your year two average was 73. Your Year Three average went to 64. So what what do you think happened? Was there anything that stands out from year three, that that changed that

**Participant A45** 10:37

I think I'm gonna cry, but

**Philip Dewhurst** 10:41

you don't have to, you don't have to say anything you didn't want to. I know, you don't have to give me any detail.

**Participant A45** 10:46

No I'm happy to talk about it. I found online learning really hard. And there was one exam in particular that like completely just train wrecked. But I basically had EPCs, around like having COVID and losing a family member. Whilst in isolation that just really hit me. And that was in the January. So come like, obviously, I had a lot, of coursework deadlines coming up. So I got extensions for all of them. But then, obviously, the more you move things back, the more kind of time you lose for revision of exams. So I felt like I never truly had, I probably should have, like, at least requested to like move my exams I should have done but I wanted to get into clinic in July. So didn't think it would have affected me. But I think looking back and when I saw my results and things kind of rationalised it with my parents. And it was a bit of a shock, kind of getting that result. And I was disappointed. And I'm working harder than I ever have this year, because I want to get up first overall. But yeah, I'd say that is a big contributing factor into it.

**Philip Dewhurst** 12:14

These these interviews and things can can be a bit raw. Yeah. So it's absolutely fine. So I was going to talk a little bit about attendance, because your attendance has been, you know, we would say quite high as well. I think sort of between 86 and 90%. Attendance. So how important do you think it is to have attendance in classes? And do you perceive that there's a link between how often you are attending a class and your performance at the at the assessment?

**Participant A45** 12:52

I personally would say there is, I am a massive one to stick to rules. It's just completely in my personality. I hate breaking rules. It's, I find it really uncomfortable. And like unsettling and nerving, don't like getting in trouble. Like, literally like my mum will raise it. If my mom ever raised like her voice at me when I was little, I can get scared. Like, that's just who I am. As a person and how I've always been like, same at school. So I think it's very much embedded in me that you go, you do well, that's how you learn, you have the opportunity to ask questions. And I've always found that I can almost, there's obviously you've got to do a lot of work outside of the lecture. But quite often a lecturer will say something and you can remember, or at least in my memory, like, I can remember a lecturer said something in this room at this time, and it was this person. And then when you're in an exam, it kind of if you sat there going, Oh, I don't know. You go, okay, what are they saying? And you think back to that lecture and like, who it was where it was, and then it just the information comes with it. That's always how I found things work. It's the same, like when I'm revising for exams, I'll revise in different places purely so I can kind of block materials.

**Philip Dewhurst** 14:10

So so there is in that that visualisation, almost as it were, you can see you were in that room at that time. That was what was happening. So you talked about school, and were used to go to school and coming to, to university. So tell me that a bit about your school was a state school, grammar school, private school. How did how did that transition or how did you prepare for the transition from school to university?

**Participant A45** 14:54

Yeah, so I went to state primary just like local primary school and then my older brother is four years older than me and my parents had made a decision with him that they wanted to send him to a private school. So then kind of when it came round, naturally, I just went to the same place. Just because it was easy for things then. So I went there, I think I got quite lucky, I had some challenging kind of home life kind of things. In my final years of sixth form, so lower sixth I had a few issues just at home. And then in upper sixth the first week of term, I think me my mum, the deputy head of sixth form, who was one of my psychology teachers, and like my head of house, so she was in charge, like the pastoral side of me, and sat down had a conversation and decided it would be a good idea for me to board from Monday to Friday, just to get out the house and kind of focus fully on school. My AS grades. Again, I seem to always do this, I have like one massive year in the middle where I dip and then I pull myself out at the end, which I'm hoping repeats itself this year. So I think because of that I had a year where apart from weekends, I wasn't at home. So yeah, you get your meals made for you and things like that. But you kind of have to become quite independent in a different way that if you have a bad day, you're not just going home to mom, like obviously you can phone her, but actually, you speak it with your friends, you use other methods to like try and distract you or like make that day better in some way. And I think that that is the biggest thing about moving to uni is quite a lot of people are dependent on their parents, when they get to the end of their school years, understandably. And once they then are on their own, they then feel very isolated, because their family aren't with them through every step of the way. I don't speak to my parents that often I speak to them every couple of weeks. But I think that's all as a result of kind of the development over the past few years as well, particularly COVID. Like not being able to go home six months at a time. So yeah.

**Philip Dewhurst** 17:09

Okay. So, move on a little bit to life as a student. Finances. So, so from your survey, I kind of subgrouped people as financially dependent or independent. So IE, taking student loans or self supporting so. So you're, you're in the dependent, because you've got a student loan? How does knowing that you're reliant on that loan? And that that's paying for education? How does that influence? Or does that affect the way that you approach your studies and approach the course?

**Participant A45** 17:54

I think, compared and I've never really truly appreciated it until you realise that some people like particularly being friends with a lot close with grad entries this year, understanding that they're actually paying directly for their education, I think you've don't truly appreciate that when you're on a student loan. And kind of, I think when things start to be an issue, you, or like this, something you're unhappy with, I think you're less kind of, I don't know how to explain it. You're not as kind of forceful about correcting it. Because you're like, Yes, you are paying however much but it's a loan, will I ever pay it back, it's kind of that rather than I can understand someone who has just paid that straight out of their own pocket, they've worked hard for that money it's obviously going to want the absolute best. That's that and if things are going wrong, they want them correcting. So I think that's that way and then kind of the whole like maintenance side of it. I've made sure that I've worked ever since year zero. I had three jobs at the beginning of this year, I'm still working two now. So kind of ensured that I've had another income so I'm not solely kind of dependent on that money. So I have my like freedom and flexibility.

**Philip Dewhurst** 19:26

Okay. So three jobs. So how do you balance all of that with studies and everything else?

**Participant A45** 19:35

So student work would as one. Yeah. So there is I work for the family business as well. So I do all the administration work for the business. So that is a job I started 2019 Yeah, yeah. 2019 and started that one. So because it's obviously the family business. There's some level of flexibility in it, and I get sent the work I need to do. And I get set a deadline, and it just needs to be done by that deadline. So it's almost like having a lot of deadlines, and points to work towards. And I think with anything, I've always worked better under a lot of high pressure. So like, even back in Year Zero, like, I wouldn't necessarily start on a deadline until getting closer because I know, or even if I had, it wouldn't be good work until closer to a lot closer to the deadline. Because that's when it really kind of pushes me and drives me to sit down work in like, everyone I've kind of spoken to was said it like want to set my mind to something, it's like a completely different me. There's just like, my boyfriend can't stand it because he just is like, you just go from like normal, like bouncy to like absolute laser vision. And I think that is very much how I work. So I put aside the time and make sure there is time for everything. And before like accepting additional hours and things I've always been mindful of, okay, let's look what I've got on and then accept them or decline them based on what's coming up. And I think it's just having that awareness. But I've always been kind of a firm believer of if you want something done properly give it to a busy person.

**Philip Dewhurst** 21:22

Okay, interesting. So, thinking about your time you said about time management as well. And you, you said that you were in a club, as in the other category. And that that the time you were spending in that club had gone up? So what was what was that club?

**Participant A45** 21:58

I played hockey last year.

**Philip Dewhurst** 22:01

Okay, yeah, you you ticked the box for clubs other

22:06

Ah would be around student work because I had no idea. That probably could be up. Okay. Yes.

**Philip Dewhurst** 22:16

Okay, so do you see theStduent work as as a job or as a social club?

**Participant A45** 22:25

I see it as both I see kind of being in the office and being around students. And just kind of having that presence and spending time with people is like a social side of things. But then when it comes to kind of the disciplinaries, the committee's academic misconduct, all that stuff like appeals, that is very much like I see as a job, because it's things that have to be done. And if you see, it's not like it's not a social club, like someone's appeal and the like, fate of someone stand on their course isn't and like that, in my opinion, I think there's kind of two, particularly in my role, I think there's other roles that you would class is kind of more of a social club. But I definitely think that my role kind of has two halves to it. It could just be solely seen as a job. But I like to think that I have like the social aspect to it as well.

**Philip Dewhurst** 23:20

And you, you said in the survey as well, that you you estimate you on average spend 11 to 15 hours a week in private study. Over the course. So how important is that private study time in terms of keeping up to date with course materials, preaparing for the assessments, etc? is that, if you didn't have that time, how else would you think you would? Well, how do you think you would have managed over the course?

**Participant A45** 23:53

Good question. I think so me, repetition is key. So I think if I had less, it might have been more challenging, I think I still would have been able to achieve it in some way. It just might have meant that kind of focus in lectures and things might have been off because I'd probably have been worrying about deadlines and other things coming up rather than the course itself. So it might have meant I'd engage less within like lectures and things. But I think I would have managed to just might not have been as kind of successful with particularly year one and year two.

**Philip Dewhurst** 24:34

Okay. All right. So moving on to motivation. What gets you out of bed in the morning.

**Participant A45** 24:44

I am hated because I'm a morning person. At school, I had four horses that I was competing doing four A levels. So it, time wasn't like you don't get to lie in bed, you have animals, you're caring for them, you get on with it. And it's still the same when I go home, we still got horses, we still got dogs, you have things that depend on you, you have to get up you have to carry on. And I think that I'm like that in a person like with people as well like a very much am seen as like a mum of the group quite often and making sure everything gets done, make sure everyone's okay. And I think it's that that kind of drives me and I normally, recently it's been a bit wobbly just because of a lot of going on. But like year, first half of this year, year three or two, always make sure like get up do some exercise. Like if if that's going for a walk, going to the gym, like do something first thing like normally get up six ish between six and seven, get up, go do something, and I just find that kick starts my day. And then I have ridiculously high standards for myself, I don't let myself, like getting a 64 overall last year, hate like, really took a bit of a bashing from myself in terms of like it to me I'd failed. Like, didn't want to like, was just kind of, I think I'd almost have been better off if I'd failed. Because then I really like would have just started again and could have like proven to myself that I could do it. But obviously getting a pass mark, I was like your average, like you're not good enough. That's just my personality. I'm a perfectionist like I was a high achiever at school. And I think that having those high standards for yourself and knowing that nothing's ever come easily, and proving to yourself that you can turn your AS's around to get good A levels through hard work. And knowing that you still want to get good grades kind of pushes me to say you can't you haven't got time to just lay in bed and do nothing. You have to get up you have to go do things.

**Philip Dewhurst** 27:02

Okay, so how does that how does that translate to the sort of the day to day motivation for your studies? You? You kind of said your main motivation is is isn't just, I mean, you ticked for meeting deadlines, but it was it was more than just that. We'd say intrinsically motivated, you're doing it because you want to do it, that drive. So is that is that kind of what you were just saying about? Being the mum of the group and get up early and, you know, having to do so? Is that how you approach your studies?

**Participant A45** 27:42

Yeah, pretty. I think that would be I think I've seen kind of my parents have both built massive things from nothing like my mom's built a massive company of her own that's been hugely successful. And I think that when you see someone do something like that, and you've set your like heart on something, then and I set my heart on chiropractic from what the age of 15 I knew I wanted to be in a caring profession from about the age of 10/11. I think then, when you've been so bold, been so out there about it, you can't not dedicate to those studies, and you can't not commit fully because otherwise, what was the point why you could have gone and done something else instead?

**Philip Dewhurst** 28:28

Okay. Alright. Your motivation over the duration of the course you said, right back in the beginning, your first day on the course, you were really motivated in the course. And your motivation for actually being at university was was less. So is that still the case? Is it the that wanting to be a chiropractor that's driven you since you were 15 still the main thing despite because you do a lot of obviously now across the university. So where's that main drive for you on a daily basis?

**Participant A45** 29:04

I think it is. I want to be a chiropractor. I want to have a successful multidisciplinary clinic where everyone can access everything and I think particularly I think I had lost a bit of motivation this year and off the back of last year. I think COVID really did just kind of wipe me out for it. But then kind of seeing Albert's clinics and when I read the advert it seemed perfect. I spoke to Albert it seemed perfect. I went and saw the clinic. I loved it. I think seeing someone do what you want to do. And then having the opportunity to go and work for them. And it will be dependent now on whether I pass and get out on time. Is that massive driving factor of you want to do this, you've wanted to do this for so long. Keep going you are so close like five years is a long time. I'm like, pandemic and all. So, realistically, I think at some point, you are going to lose some motivation within that, especially the year two, three mark, where it feels like you've been there forever, particularly year two, I would say where you feel like you've been there forever already. But there's still forever to go. And your friends around you who joined at the same time are about to graduate. And you're like, I've got another two years at least. But I think remembering that it's a master's kind of brings that back into perspective a bit.

**Philip Dewhurst** 30:30

Yeah. Okay. So we're moving on, we're getting towards the end, as we just said there about your friends. And you talked earlier on about community. How important is it for you to to be learning with friends to have a community of learners? Is it something that you do regularly are you somebody who studies by yourself? How do you sort of interact in the the smaller community of learning,

**Participant A45** 31:03

I think, I like to do things my way. And that doesn't necessarily always translate into working well, in groups and with people, it's something I've definitely had to work on. And like, patience for like group projects and stuff was always something I struggled with early on. And I remember in year one, just like doing the project, because no one else was contributing, rather than kind of using techniques to try and encourage and we've just done literally had audit this morning. And it's just been a completely different story, I'd say. So, in terms of, I can't, I think my ability to work in groups of people, and study with groups of people has improved. I think on the whole though, other than certain exams, like OSLER, and practicals, and things like that, I would tend to work either alone or with, I'd probably work mainly alone and then speak through things with people, I find, that's the best way to do it. And having, my boyfriends in year two is quite nice for me, sometimes when, obviously, things get expanded on as you go through or like there's a confusion around a topic, being able to speak that through I've found is really beneficial, because then it's me teaching someone else and like explaining that understanding proves to me that actually I do understand more than I thought I did. But then also kind of highlights the areas that I'm weaker in. So I think that kind of balance of speaking to someone and discussing something with someone, but not a big group of people, I feel quite overwhelmed in big groups of people sometimes. So I think that can come into it quite a lot.

**Philip Dewhurst** 32:56

What you've just said there about almost taking on that teaching role. And it reaffirms what you do know what you don't know. Is that something you've done throughout the course? Was that something that's just come out more recently?

**Participant A45** 33:10

I think it's been about throughout the course, obviously, people have a certain topics in more detail than others just based on what people kind of feel of their areas of weakness. So I think to some regards, it has been but it's been more evident, just kind of generally, rather than just in the lead up to exams that it's been now.

**Philip Dewhurst** 33:34

And, and again, just thinking if you, you've done that, so if you if you weren't doing that, do you think that it would have had had an effect on your performance overall, would you think that by by taking on that role and being involved in that way? It's enhanced your your learning and enhanced your your results?

**Participant A45** 33:57

I think it kind of challenges you to identify where your weaknesses are and where your strengths are, I think it could be achieved through other means such as, like practice questions and things. So obviously, like the availability of them up until recently has been limited. So potentially, if all circumstances were the same, and you just took that out in previous years, then maybe it would have impacted but I think there would have been other things that could have replaced it instead, though.

**Philip Dewhurst** 34:26

Okay. All right. So let me jump back to the plan here. So how important, obviously, bearing in mind that COVID has changed some of this now. But how important is it to have or to know that there is support outside of the university from family and friends, you do have you sort of talk to your parents every couple of weeks? So do you have that support network away from the institution as well?

**Participant A45** 35:13

Yeah, I definitely think that I do like my parents are like, we don't speak that often regularly, just because we're all like the same sort of people that we load ourselves up with way too much to do. So then, like speaking to each other can be harder if you're just going to have like a general catch up. But if something goes wrong, or like anything like that, like my parents have always been fully supportive. My brother and his girlfriend have always been supportive, I speak to her quite often. And then obviously, that within the institution like having friends that are also Chiro's, but having the kind of outside relationships and seeing them so frequently, you're speaking to them so frequently, I think, is definitely what is crucial, and has really got me through some kind of challenging years, particularly last year, I think, without my friends, I would really have struggled to get through because they were just absolute rocks to me. And obviously, particularly in like, family, like challenging circumstances, when you lose a family member, everyone's kind of struggling and suffering together. And just having someone else that you can speak to that knows what's going on, but doesn't make you speak about just that topic and isn't just focused on that topic can be the distraction that you need, just to kind of bring yourself up to then carry on in carry on with your studies.

**Philip Dewhurst** 36:36

Okay. And nearly at the end now, so in your opinion what's the university done to support your education? Or is there anything else the university could have done to support your education?

**Participant A45** 36:52

I think the kind of whole open door policy is what is obviously it's more of an issue now people are busier and are in their offices less. But I think having that availability of tutors that you can go and speak to someone, if you've got a question about a unit, like they're happy to talk to you about it. And that whole again, it comes back to the community that you feel like you have a good enough relationship with that lecturer to go and ask the questions to say you don't understand something is what really comes down to like why I think I felt supported throughout the whole time. I think, like I said, again, the lecturers that maybe I didn't know so well, is where I probably kind of dropped down a bit because I wasn't necessarily as confident to go and speak to them and be like, I really don't understand this. And if I had maybe like my results would have been slightly different. But overall, I'm pretty happy with them. So I'm not going to complain too much.

**Philip Dewhurst** 37:54

Okay. Is there anything else that you want to add or anything else you you think? Based on what we've discussed the you want to talk about? Think so no, no? And then do you have any questions you'd like to ask me?

**Participant A45** 38:22

No