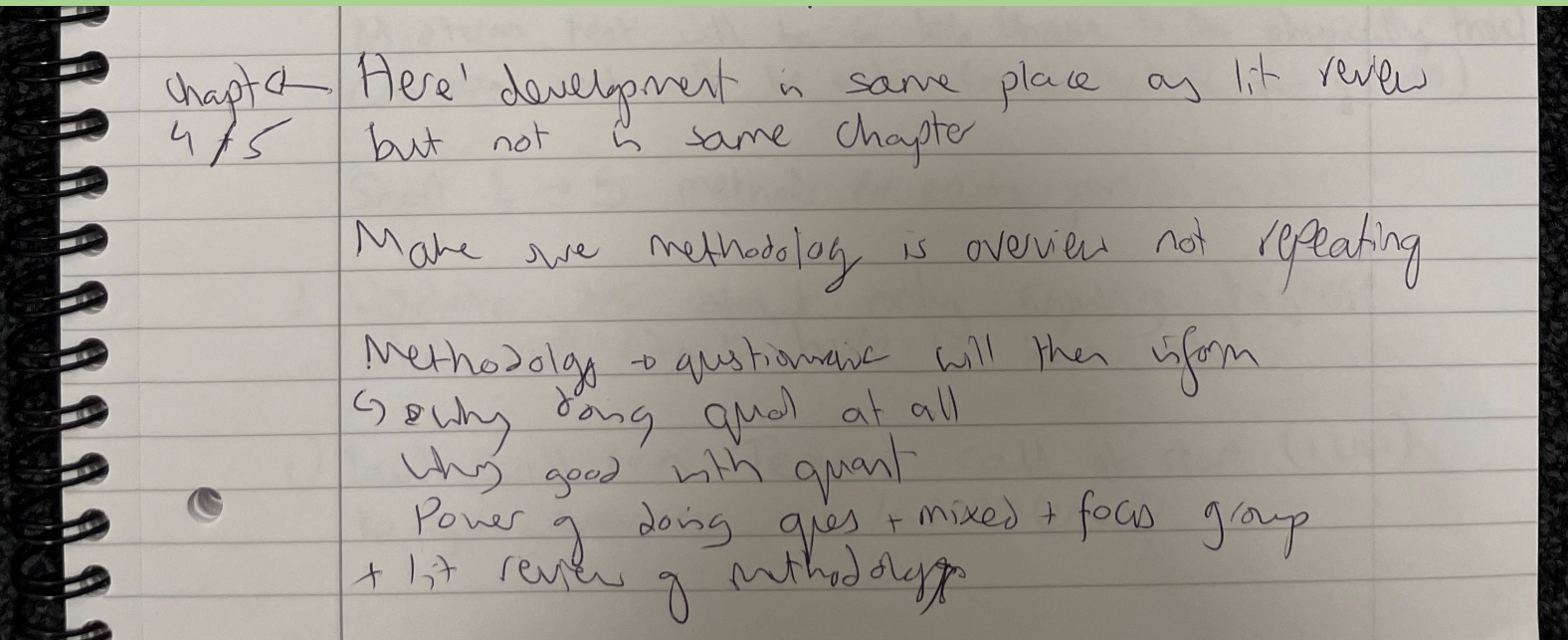




# THE TAP

Technology, Anxiety, Pain

October and  
November 2023  
Issue 25



## SUPERVISION PANEL

At the start of September I had a whole supervision panel meeting, made up of myself, Paul (my primary supervisor), Dylan (my second supervisor), and William (my independent supervisor).

I prepared a 15 minute presentation going over what I have done, and what my plan looks like going forward. The panel was extremely complementary of my presentation, praising how organised and concise it was.

We spent some time discussing each of my studies, highlighting my main findings of each and how they all link together. We then spoke about what I needed to do in order to be ready to submit. We discussed what tasks were still outstanding and how long I anticipated spending on each. I made sure to include some contingency time in case of any unexpected delays.

A large portion of the meeting was spent discussing terminology. As my area of research is an overlap of three areas - computer science, mental health, and chronic pain - different words have slightly different meanings in each context. This means it is extremely important that I provide clear explanations of what I mean when I use certain terms to ensure the reader's understanding is the same as what I intended.

Overall it was a great supervision panel meeting. I feel confident that I am on the right track, and all of my supervisors agree.

# JOURNAL FEEDBACK

At the start of September I received feedback on the article that I submitted to the Digital Health Journal about my questionnaire study. Unfortunately it was not accepted. Although this is very common when trying to publish a paper, and my supervisors had spoken to me about the importance to the feedback rather than the acceptance, it still hit me hard. It is difficult to read a page of constructive criticism about a paper that I have put so much work into. I will admit, after reading the feedback I contacted my supervisors in a bit of a panic. I was questioning the very core of my research, asking if I was focusing on the right thing or if I needed to make fundamental changes.

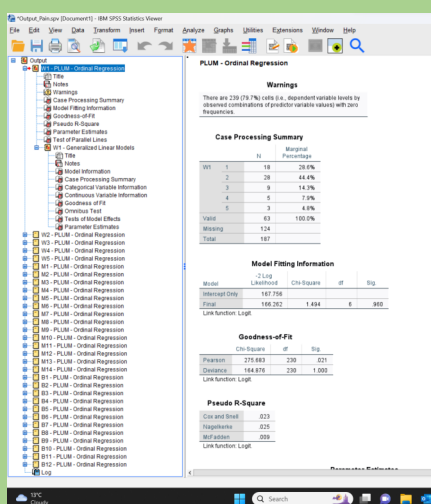
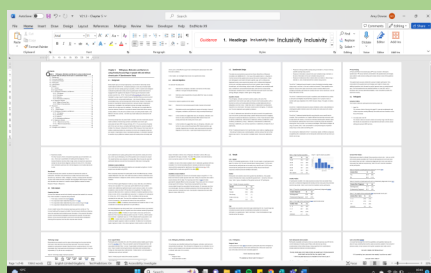
Thankfully, they both came back to me really quickly and reassured me that there is no issue with my thesis. They advised that I take a couple of days to let the feedback sink in and then to start working on the suggestions. They acknowledged that receiving feedback like this can be very emotional and that it is important to give yourself time to process those feelings before you jump into making changes.

This is exactly what I did. Three days after receiving the feedback I sat down and read it through properly. I found that I was far less emotional and was able to process what they were saying much better, and in many cases I agreed. Not being accepted the first time round was hard, but I believe that with the feedback I received I can make my paper stronger, and hopefully it will be accepted one day.

## REVISITING MY FIRST CHAPTER

Following the feedback I got from my paper about my questionnaire study, I decided to revisit that chapter. I felt like now was a good time to go back and make improvements rather than continuing to push further ahead with my later chapters. I had already intended to revisit this chapter as I felt that by writing my subsequent chapters I had learnt a lot and could see areas that I could improve on.

This has meant that I have revisited both the statistical and qualitative analysis. This has been challenging and has taken weeks worth of work to complete. However, I feel so much more confident with it. I am now focusing on updating the discussion and conclusion for this chapter and am confident that it will be much improved once I've finished.



## DISABILITY

In early September I was asked by the Disability and Dyslexia Service to speak at their Autism Induction event. This is an event designed specifically for incoming students who are on the Autism spectrum, giving them an opportunity to get to know the university and the services that are there to help them ahead of the start of term.

I was asked to give an overview of my journey at university, as well as pass on any advice I had from my 8 years of experience at Queen Mary. I felt really nervous as I stood up to give my presentation, but I kept in mind that by pushing myself outside of my comfort zone I might be able to reassure one student, helping them to feel less afraid of this step. To me, that is well worth the challenge of giving a presentation.

Once term began, I then attended a Social Circle event. This is a community of neurodivergent students facilitated by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Their first event was a quiz which my team won! After the quiz there was time for students to chat. It was great to talk to the new students and offer them reassurance that although things feel big and scary right now, things to get easier. I plan to attend future Social Circle events, and I look forward to hearing how the new students are doing.



## NEW TERM

September saw in the start of the new academic year at Queen Mary and as in previous years I have been involved in the first year programming module. This is the largest Computer Science module at QMUL with almost 500 first year students enrolled, and a team of 60 second and third year demonstrator students helping out.

In the run up to the start of term I was heavily involved in setting things up - making sure we had all of the resources ready and in place. I was also solely responsible for the recruitment and management of the demonstrator team.

Now that term has started I continue to manage the demonstrators, as well as dealing with issues that students have during the labs. It is a lot of work but I thoroughly enjoy doing it.

## DOING WHAT I LOVE

September and October were filled with lovely things:

- An afternoon spent wandering around a local classic car show - it was fantastic weather and we treated ourselves to a Mr Whippy ice cream.
- A trip to see 'A Haunting in Venice' (the new Poirot film) at the cinema.
- I continued to attend Bounce exercise classes, even trying out other classes such as Balance and Belly - they were great fun.
- An evening at the theatre watching 'Buddy', a show about the life and music of Buddy Holly.
- A morning spent at the local pop-up pumpkin farm. They also had some left over sunflowers from the summer which you could pick and have for free.
- A day spent at the zoo feeding giraffes. We brought my Mum this experience for her 60th birthday as giraffes are her favourite animal. It was such a fun experience being so up close to these amazing animals. They effortlessly stripped the branches of leaves using their massive tongues.
- We watched SClub perform at The O2. My sister and I used to listen to them all the time when we were younger, and make up our own dances. It was so much fun to see them live.

## TURNING 28

At the end of October I celebrated my 28th birthday!

I had a fantastic day with my family, doing some of my favourite things. We spent a rather wet, but brilliant, morning at a pumpkin farm, followed by an afternoon of pumpkin carving, finishing with a lovely roast dinner out and delicious birthday cake.

