

## VSS Attendee Testimonial – Marijke Synhaeve (Sept 2022)

Lynsey Sampson: Hello! We are welcomed by one of our regular attendees of our library lounge virtual study sessions, who will be talking about her experiences of attending these sessions.

Lynsey Sampson: Hello, what is your name?

Marijke Synhaeve: Hi, my name is Marijke.

Lynsey Sampson: Thank you, Marijke and what year are you in?

Marijke Synhaeve: I'm doing a part-time PhD. And I'm in my second year now.

Lynsey: Okay, So second year of a part-time PhD.

Lynsey Sampson: and lastly what subject are you studying?

Marijke Synhaeve: I'm doing a PhD in Social Policy.

Lynsey Sampson: Okay, that's great. So, to start with, why did you initially sign up for the virtual study sessions?

Marijke Synhaeve: I initially signed up for a study session because I had a specific question that I wanted to ask a librarian, and this seemed the fastest way to receive a reply.

Lynsey Sampson: Okay, so it was really just having an instantaneous response from a librarian through I suppose the zoom chat facility, which is really good actually, when you're on the virtual study session?

Marijke Synhaeve: Yes.

Lynsey Sampson: Excellent. And what did you hope to get out of the sessions?

Marijke Synhaeve: To be honest, I don't think that I had very clear expectations. But I have to say that these days I try to attend the virtual Study Sessions frequently because of three reasons.

Marijke Synhaeve: I think first of all it's a good way for me to feel connected to the University because I'm doing a PhD part-time, and I am based in the Netherlands. So, the study sessions help to make me feel kind of part of the university.

Marijke Synhaeve: So that was the first reason. Second reason is, I find these sessions very helpful, because there are always Librarians available, so you can contact them by the chats during the meeting, and they respond immediately. So, for me, if I have more complicated questions then I get in touch with the subject Librarian. However, sometimes I have these kinds of small questions for which I would normally not email someone from the library. And for these kinds of questions, I find these sessions very helpful.

Marijke Synhaeve: And the third and final reason is that the study sessions provide a supportive setting in which it's hard not to be productive, I think. Because of the short round at the beginning to talk about everyone's aims and you know that after two hours, one hour, and at the end of the

session that you have to come back and state what you have actually done. That's a structure that really works for me.

Lynsey Sampson: That's great. So, it does sound like You've got three main points, and you know, to feel connected to your university and be part of a community when you're studying remotely, and to actually ask those questions that you feel would be good to get an immediate answer. And actually, it really helps to find them out when you've got them in your head. And you know thirdly just kind of motivating you making you feel productive when you've got that kind of structure in the virtual study sessions, too. So, they sound really good points. So, thank you for that. And what did you get out of the sessions now that you've been attending regularly for some time?

Marijke Synhaeve: Yeah, so I think these are the three main things that I do get out of the sessions, and you've summarized it perfectly.

Lynsey Sampson: Thanks very much. And oh, I just want to put in another question. How did you find out about the sessions?

Marijke Synhaeve: Because I received an email about it. And I thought, Let's just try and see what it actually entails.

Lynsey Sampson: Excellent! So, it's through an email. And that's interesting, because I think a lot of people do find out about the sessions through an email. And so, it's good to actually hear that the direct e-mails are working and getting out there and putting the idea in people's head to come along.

Lynsey Sampson: And finally, is there anything else you'd like to say about the sessions?

Marijke Synhaeve: Yeah, I can only add that I think it's a very valuable service that the library offers with this study sessions, and I think that many students can benefit from it.

Lynsey Sampson: Yes, it's one of these things that so many more people should get involved, but it's just trying to spread the word and get out there Really, um, and make more people aware of it and get people involved.

Marijke Synhaeve: Yes.

Lynsey Sampson: That's great. So, thank you very much for joining us to talk about your experiences as a regular attendee at the virtual study sessions. It's very much appreciated. And yeah, thank you for your time.

Marijke Synhaeve: Yeah, you're welcome.