Episode 10: Dr. Dannelle Stevens

**KL:** Katie Linder
**DS:** Dannelle Stevens

**KL:** You’re listening to Research in Action: episode ten.

[intro music]

# Segment 1:

**KL:** Welcome to *Research in Action*, a weekly podcast where you can hear about topics and issues related to research in higher education from experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, director of research at Oregon State University Ecampus.

On today’s episode, I’m joined by Dr. Dannelle Stevens, a professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at Portland State University. Dr. Stevens has written several books including Tenure in the sacred grove: Issues and strategies for women and minorities from Suny Press and co-edited with Joanne Cooper, Introduction to rubrics from Stylus Press and co-authored with Antonia Levi, and Journal-keeping: How to use reflective writing for teaching, learning, professional insight and personal change from Stylus Press also co-authored with Joanne Cooper. Dr. Stevens earned her doctorate in educational psychology from Michigan State University. Before her work in higher education, she also previously taught middle school and high school social studies, language arts, and special education for 14 years across four school districts and three states. Welcome to the podcast, Dannelle.

**DS**: Hello. How are you, Katie?

**KL:** I am wonderful. I’m so glad you can join me. Now two of these three books that I’ve mentioned I have read and loved. I will obviously need to pick up the third one as well. But I met you a few months back when we happened to be in a session together at a conference. And I sat down next to you and heard your name and immediately said, “I love your book on journal-keeping.” It’s one of my favorites. And so I knew I had to have you join me on the podcast. So, thank you so much for joining me.

**DS:** It’s my honor to be here.

**KL:** So I read on your website that one of your underlying assumptions is that cognitive, social, and emotional development does not end with the teenage years, but continues through a lifetime and one of the best ways to foster learning and development is through writing reflection on our work. And I’m wondering if you can elaborate on that and where you think journaling, in particular, fits into that.

 **DS:** Well I think today, in particular, we are all on fast-forward all the time and doing this activity, and particularly as faculty we have so many different expectations of us from our peers, from teaching, from service, from committees that it’s really hard to find out just what you’ve done in a year or even a week or even a day because we’re just so, so busy. And what reflection gives you is the opportunity to go back and rewind and reflect and plan exactly how you’re going to use your time and how you’re going to sort of develop yourself. I always use this as an interesting example that we all have a curriculum vitae in higher ed. We all have a curriculum vitae and it is really our life curriculum and it’s what we have designed for ourselves. No one told us to write that journal article, no one necessarily told us to go to that conference; we have made those decisions. Well, how did we make those decisions? And, is it just because someone asked us? Or, did we actually plan to do our lives in such a way and reflect on what we wanted and where we wanted to end up? So your CV should be an embodiment of that reflection and where you see yourself going in the future. Journal-keeping, for me and for many people, is a very powerful tool that helps first of all with that reflective process. It’s a location for your reflections and it’s a location for planning and prioritizing what you want to do with your life.

**KL:** Absolutely, I love that description of it. That it really is about, you know, planning and intentionality. I’m wondering what you think are some of the benefits of journaling that are kind of specifically connected to researchers. For researchers who decide to keep a research journal or to journal simultaneous to their research work?

**DS:** I find that for researchers there’s a lot of benefits. The first one I’d say is organization. A journal is, my journal is chronological. I always, always, always put the date even on papers in my office that I touch. I always have the date on them. And a journal, my journal is chronological so I take it to every meeting, every conference, and I have a log really, a very elaborate log, of what I’ve been doing over the last year. And I can mine that for the writing and the research I’m doing. And I don’t have to plug it in, I don’t have to charge it like I would if I had a computer, and I have it available. I also have it available for times when, say I’m on the bus and I just want to think about what I’m doing or where I’m going, or I’m on an airplane. I use my journal often after I go to a conference and I take notes on what I learned. So it’s a very portable tool and it’s a handy tool for that kind of reflection and organization.

And the second thing I think it’s good for, one of the benefits, is that most of us, writing requires and research requires a certain amount of momentum. And, how do we keep ourselves engaged and excited when we get distracted or when we have to grade student papers or we have to design a class? How do we stay in touch with what we need to know and what we’re working on? Well, one way is to have a journal and to keep track of your thinking. I’ve been working like, I will put parts of chapters in a book if I’m writing a book and I’ll kind of say, “Well, what do I want in this chapter?” And I’ll reflect on what would an audience want to know about grading rubrics or grading journals. What kind of questions would they have? And those are the kinds of queries I make in my journal, which then feed into my writing and my research.

**KL:** I love this idea that you brought up earlier about mining your journal for ideas and the content and really trying to get at those corners of your brain that are really just trying to do reflective work. And I think about, there was a journal that I kept when I was writing my dissertation, and now it’s beaten up and it’s this kind of lime green notebook that is a little bit falling apart to be completely honest. And I remember when I went back to that manuscript once it was done and I’d graduated and it was a few years out and I was turning it into a book, and I was having the hardest time with the introduction and I knew I needed to revise it and I wasn’t quite sure where I wanted to go. And I ended up going back to my original dissertation journal to say, you know, “What was I intending to do here?” Like, what was I really starting out with? And it really did help me shape the introduction of that book to what it needed to be by going back to those original intentions.

**DS:** Wow.

**KL:** So for me it’s been an incredibly powerful tool, particularly with those larger book projects where it feels very difficult to wrangle everything into one place.

**DS:** And you keep a project-specific journal?

**KL:** I do. I do. Especially for bigger projects I tend to keep a project-specific journal. And then I have a separate journal that I use that’s more personal, and then I have a separate notebook that I use for kind of work-related and reflection when I go to conferences and things like that. Yeah, I have like a travel version. So I actually try to, I do kind of separate it out into different themes I guess based on what the need is.

**DS:** Yeah and I think each person has to figure out what method works the best for them. Peter Elbow once said that if you’re going to start a writing project – and this is the way he did it – he had a bunch of scraps of paper and he put them all in a drawer and then he read all of them when he wrote *Writing without teachers* and that became the fodder for that very wonderful book that talks about free writing and other activities. But, you know, we don’t want to lose those ideas, so if you have a journal with you, you can jot them down right there and you’ll have that right in front of you.

 **KL:** Absolutely. I’m wondering if the journal that you keep, if you end up with scraps in it because that’s something that I often find. My journals are filled with Post It Notes and, you know, I don’t always have them with me, right? I make notes in different ways and then realize later on that they’re supposed to be part of my journal, but I hadn’t necessarily intended at the time. And so I end up kind of clipping things or even sometimes I print out emails that I receive and copy them into my journal because it’s relevant to the project. Is that something that you do as well?

**DS:** Absolutely, absolutely. And sometimes when I go to conferences and I have a particularly good session and they’ve given me a PowerPoint I will cut it up and glue all the little PowerPoint pages into my journal and then make notes on it. Though one of the problems is people go, “Well then how do I find it?” Well I make a table of contents in my journal. And inside the front of the journal-keeping book is an example of that. So I number the pages and I go back and really mine that journal, and particularly when I have a big project like a book project. And I use, you know, I put tabs on the pages that I use a lot and I can see the beginning of an idea or if I have ideas for a chapter like you said I’ll do Post Its, a bunch of Post Its, and I’ll put them in the journal and then I’ll re-organize them, and then I’ll begin to see the shape of the text. But it’s in the journal and it’s not little pieces of paper that are floating around, so I can go back and refer to it and see what ideas I had at that time. It gives me a starting place often and it also gives me a sketch pad. So if I have an idea or I see a relationship, I can sketch it in my journal. And then the next stage is I make it more formal and I do that a lot, a lot, a lot. It’s really a way to, it’s for me, it’s not for anybody else. My journal is for me and my thinking, and helps me sort out what’s really important and how I’m thinking about something and if I can draw it and write about it then it gets clearer in my head. Because my whole philosophy is writing is thinking. It’s not something you do after you’ve thought, so the best way to clarify what you know is to write about it. And then you find out what you know and what you don’t know.

**KL:** I completely agree. I could not agree more. I feel like you are my journaling kindred spirit.

**DS:** That’s wonderful.

**KL:** Yes, I’m identifying a lot with some of these practices that you’re talking about. We are going to take a brief break and then we’re going to come back and talk a little bit about some concrete tips and suggestions that Dannelle has for journaling practices for folks that might want to get started or for folks that are already journaling, but want to have some new organizational tips.

[music]

# Segment 2:

**KL:** So, Dannelle, one of the things that you mentioned in the first segment was that you have an index that you create for your journals. And this was something that I learned from you actually because in your book *Journal-keeping*, in the front of that book, you have a color copy of one of the indexes from a journal that you had kept. And I was like, you know, “How brilliant is that?” Because I think one of the things, as you mentioned, is people think they’ll keep a journal and they won’t ever be able to find anything again from their thoughts that they’re kind of collecting. So in this segment I wanted to talk a little bit about tips and suggestions for successful journaling practices. And one of these very concrete tips is this idea of keeping an index. So, what are some ways that you have utilized that index? I know the one that’s in this book is color coded, but what have you found that works for you?

**DS:** For the index? Well I don’t do the index until the journal is filled. Now some people find that they want to keep it all the way along the way. I sometimes, often, have to number the pages before it’s filled because I need to find certain pages and I sort of have to number then. But I usually use the index as a reflective tool, so I use it also to find things. But when I do the index it’s often actually on an airplane flying to somewhere, to a conference or across the country, and I have a couple of hours and I can sit there and create the index. Now the index contains, a lot of people wonder about this index and how to do it. But you really need to have the date, then you have the topic of whatever it is, and then the page numbers. Because sometimes several things cover several pages and sometimes they cover several pages and sometimes they cover only I have three things on one page. So you can’t just put all the pages there and then fill it in. I’ve found that out.

The other thing is when I review it I will put stars – I think the one in the journal book is that way – and arrows and VIT – very important thinking – don’t lose this, this is really going to add to what’s going on in your thinking and my thinking. So I always do that.

**KL:** So I am an as-I-go indexer, but you are making me think, you know, what some of the benefits are of actually looking at a journal in a more holistic way, as you’re saying, to look for patterns. And I think particularly the journal that I use for traveling, I’m traveling quite a bit more now for my job than I have in the past. And I easily lose track of, you know, “What did I learn at that particular conference?” And being able to kind of look at a season of travel or a season of professional development and really try to discern what are some of the things that came out of that for me. I like that idea of looking at it in a more holistic way, that makes a lot of sense.

**DS:** Great, great.

**KL:** There are people, I think, that love the idea of journaling, but have kind of a hard time keeping up with it. They may start and stop and start and stop. How important do you think is regular journaling? Or can you just kind of set something aside and pick it up when you need it? What do you think?

**DS:** Well, I know that my students always tell me that they, I mean I have students that go, “No Professor Stevens I don’t journal.” I say, “Do you not do term papers either?” because I expect them to journal, but I also expect them to be wedded to it by the end of the class because of the activities. Now I think that writing is thinking, so as faculty we are expected to think and to think clearly and to have fresh insights. And I think journal-keeping allows you to have that. You can’t force anybody to do it. It’s a very personal activity. But as soon as faculty start doing it and begin to see the benefits of it they begin to realize how valuable it is. I also do this when I see people with journals, I always ask them, “How does this work for you, you know, this journal?” And I’m also learning from them how valuable it is. And if they look around there’s quite a few people who keep journals who are academics. It’s pretty obvious the value that it has for them in terms of their thinking and lubricating their thinking, but also organizing their lives. So I just think, I think they should try it. It’s just like anything. You want to try a new sport, you’ve got to get out and practice it even if it doesn’t feel right in the beginning. But just see what happens with it. Ask yourself some questions, dialogue with – we have some great activities in our book – dialogue with the paper you’re writing in your journal. Just start doing it and gradually I think it’s self-reinforcing and motivating.

**KL:** Absolutely. Well, and I think some people are very detailed note takers and they don’t really see it as a form of journaling, but in some ways it can be. So sometimes I think it’s just the perspective that you put on the kinds of writing that you’re doing in your day-to-day life.

**DS:** Right, exactly. And then that can morph into reflection on that writing. Exactly. Also you can write in the front of the journal a few strategies to get yourself going. Like the focus free write strategy in the book or the dialogue strategy too. If you’re stuck you can say, “Oh, yeah. Let me try this strategy.” Or the sentence completion strategy, just something to get yourself going. And once you do that, then you realize the value of it.

**KL:** Well I see so much value in all the journals that I keep. We’re going to take another brief break and then we’ll come back for our final segment.

[music]

# Segment 3:

**KL:** So, Dannelle, now we both use journals for research purposes specifically and I’d like to talk just a little bit more about that. You know, what are some of the strategies that you use, particularly when you’re using a journal that’s directly tied to work that you’re researching or a book project or something else that you’re working on?

**DS:** One of the strategies that I use is to, if I’m organizing, I take a bunch of Post Its and I write down all of the ideas I have related to a topic, a research topic or journal topic, and one idea per Post It. And then I put the Post Its in my journal and I move them around until they sort of sort out into different themes or ideas that I want to cover. And then after I have them sorted that way, then I’ll write a sentence below those ideas and I can begin to see some organization either for the argument for a journal article, or for the organization of a chapter. And it just gives me a confidence that I have a place to start. And I’m starting with my authentic voice. I’m not starting with the literature so much as I’m starting with what I know about this. The problem today, the problem and the blessing, is that we can get into so much literature so quickly. We can download this and download that as quickly as possible, and it’s very hard to sort and sift as to what is really important in that literature and how that literature’s going to help you. It’s easy to get derailed into other ideas. And what the journal can do is sort of help me funnel down what do I really know and what do I really want to know? And how can I pick the kinds of literature that’s going to help me support my argument and help me do a good job as a researcher?

**KL:** I think that’s such an excellent point because I’ve often used my research journal, particularly when I’m working on a book, to start to synthesize some of the stuff that I’m reading. And sometimes it’s starts with just taking quotes from other, you know, researchers or other scholars, and just transcribing them into my notebook, so that I can start to kind of piece together what are people saying about this and how do I feel about what they’re saying? Does what they’re saying fit into what I’m trying to say? And then when I eventually do start writing I’ll often take like a highlighter and I’ll go back through and read all of those quotes and kind of highlight, ok what are the ones that I really want to put into the book or into the article? And then, also, I can kind of track and make sure because I think especially when you’re working with a larger manuscript you don’t want to kind of put the same quote into two different places when you don’t realize it.

**DS:** Right.

**KL:** There’s always the little dangers of not keeping those citations and things organized. But the other thing that I do with the research journal is when I put those quotes in, I always put in the full citation right at that moment, so I don’t have to track it down later on. As you’re saying, these things are at our fingertips, but it’s still extra time to have to go track down a journal article or a book, especially if I’ve ordered it through inter-library loan and it’s not really available to me. You know, I want to make sure I have all of that information at my fingertips, so I often use that research journal as kind of a record keeping of the reading I’ve done.

**DS:** That’s excellent. And I’ve gotten very good about using a citation management system Zotero, so that’s sort of taking care of some of that. But I still have some journal practices with that, particularly like keeping a list of my key words that I’m using for research. And I’ve put those in my journal so that I can get back to them, and find out the ones that give me the most articles or the kinds of work that I want to come out of the work.

The other part is if you’re collaborating, it’s invaluable to have my journal with me when I’m in a meeting with some of my collaborators. Because my collaborators are so, you know, we make decisions and you’re going to do this and I’m going to do that. And I just find if I write it down and then I organize it, then I have it in that one place. And I always go back to those meetings and they say, “What was the date? When did we meet last?” I had to do that Friday. “When was the last time we met? Oh yeah, we can go back to our journals. Oh, ok there are the notes. There’s the notes from that meeting.” So we’re both journal keepers in this situation, but we can get the date off our calendar and then find it. So that’s really invaluable with your collaborators.

**KL:** Absolutely. I think the other thing that that reminds me of is when I work with reviews of my work. When I have feedback from someone either it’s a revise and resubmit from a journal or something like that. I will often use my research journal to try to, again, kind of sift through those reviews and try to figure out what is it that I want to change about the piece and how do I want to respond to those reviews? And I will often print them out, cut them out, and put them into the journal so that I can kind of make some notes and refer to that when I go back and do some revision work. And in some ways I think that’s kind of similar to what you’re saying about the collaborators. It’s helping you kind of with that dialogue, with that other person. But in the case of the reviewers you don’t know who that person is and you can’t just pick of the phone and say, “Hey what did you mean by such and such?”

**DS:** Oh right.

**KL:** Sometimes you need to kind of process that through the journaling to try to figure out what are they really asking for here? So, I’ve used it in kind of the post-production side of my writing as well.

**DS:** That sounds like a great idea. Now I haven’t done that. I have another method that I use for the revise and resubmits, but it’s more computer-based. But I do think that it’s really helpful to, you know, to begin to see and you can also see patterns. The thing is once it’s in the journal, once I have it in the journal – I cut and paste it – or it’s a document that I’ve taken the time to put in the journal, I know where to find it. I know where it is. You know, it’s always there in the journal.

When you do engage in some of these activities, like dialogue or focus free write, it also may help you maintain momentum for your work. Some of this work is just sort of labor intensive and takes time. Trying to keep yourself inspired and excited about what you’re doing it might just take a journal entry on “Why do I care about this? What’s so important about this? Why should other people care about that?” And you start doing that kind of thing, you can keep yourself motivated through the reflective practice in your journal. And I love that part of my journal. When I get a surprise while I’m writing along – “Oh, never thought of it that way. Wow isn’t that cool?” You know, I made a connection in my writing from my reflective writing and spontaneous writing, free writing, that I hadn’t made before. And that’s so affirming for the way my brain works and so affirming for who I am; it’s just really, really a nice benefit from using my journal.

**KL:** So I know that we probably have some listeners who are digitally minded when it comes to journaling and are using software like Evernote or something like that to do a lot of the tasks that we’ve been discussing here.

**DS:** Yeah.

**KL:** You know, trying to really organize their thoughts and do some reflection. Let’s talk about digital versus hand written. You know, what would you say to listeners you are saying, “You know, I think I can do those things, but I really want to do them in a digital format. That’s more comfortable for me.”

**DS:** I think the most important thing is the reflection on your practice and kind of being able to go back and see what you’ve done and revise it. In many ways you’re doing action research on yourself during this process of journal writing. You’re asking yourself questions, et cetera. Now, can you do that on a computer? Yes. And can you do it with Evernote? Yes, you can draw with Evernote. And a lot of people are very, very comfortable with that. I just haven’t been able to make that bridge at all. So I like the paper journals. I like to see the stack; I have a big stack of journals. But I like that sort of record or something, and then I can go back and re-read it. And there is some research to say that what happens with handwriting is different than what happens with the computer in terms of your brain. Handwriting, some of the research is saying that handwriting taps more parts of your brain first of all. It’s a very physical act. And I also think, I haven’t seen any research on this, that handwriting is more like a story. It’s a line of story like we read. We write with our hand, our hand is mimicking the way our brain works sort of across the page. When we’re typing, it isn’t mimicking how our brain works, although I’m sure that many of the younger people particularly are much more comfortable on the computer than they are, you know, with Evernote and drawing on Evernote et cetera. I just am not there. I don’t know. How do you feel about it? What are you thinking?

**KL:** Well what I find kind of interesting, I was thinking about this while you were talking, a lot of the work that I do, when I’m drafting something, like when I sit down and I’m going to start writing an article or I’m going to start working on a grant proposal or a book, I do a lot of that at the computer. But when I’m at the brainstorming stage or I’m really trying to like piece things together or I’m note-taking or, you know, things that I would consider to be a little bit more informal. I do that in a handwritten format. So I was wondering when you are drafting things for your books or for other things, are you doing that at the computer or are you handwriting those things?

**DS:** I use my journal as a sketch pad.

**KL:** Ok.

**DS:** I use my journal as a way to figure out what I know, what I want to know before I get to the computer.

**KL:** Yeah. I use it that way as well.

**DS:** I don’t think I could write anything without having my handwritten journal before. I mean, I just use it as a sketch pad because it’s a way to sort, it’s a way to sift, it’s a way to figure out what’s important. It’s a way to look at how it’s organized. And then I go to the computer and I type it in, and then I see where I am. So I think in our world today, I think people, I mean I make my students do a handwritten journal. And Joanne, my co-author, doesn’t do that. When we teach together she says, “It’s ok, whatever way is comfortable for you.” But I want them to try it. That’s all. I just want them to try it and see how it works for them. Does it help them think more freely, more openly? Do they get to fun and interesting ideas quicker? Are they able to reflect better with a handwritten? And I make them do that. Some of them resist that, but they go out and buy a journal and they bring it to class. I’d say 75% of them, even probably more, are happy with the handwritten journal.

**KL:** Well I can definitely hear the clarity and the joy that it brings you to work with your journals. And I want to thank you so much Dannelle for talking to me about this today. Just to remind our listeners Dannelle’s book Journal-keeping: How to use reflective writing for teaching, learning, professional insight and positive change co-written with Joanne Cooper is available if anyone is interested in kind of learning more about journal-keeping for their professional life. And thank you so much, Dannelle.

**DS:** Oh, you’re welcome. It was my pleasure.

**KL:** And thanks to our listeners for joining us for this week’s episode of Research in Action. I’m Katie Linder and we’ll be back next week with a new episode.

Show notes with information regarding topics discussed in each episode, as well as the transcript for each episode, can be found at the *Research in Action* website at [ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast](http://www.ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

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# Bonus Clip:

**KL:** In this bonus clip for episode ten of *Research in Action* Dr. Dannelle Stevens talks about choosing the right journal and dialogic journaling. Take a listen:

This is I think a very important question for many people and you had mentioned you have a journal that’s almost 8.5 by 11. And I have multiple size journals kind of depending on what I use them for. But if someone is saying, “You know, I want to start journaling. I think I want to do this. How do they go about choosing the right journal for them?”

**DS:** Well I think they have to think about their purposes for this journal. If it’s for personal reflection I have a smaller journal. I’m kind of particular about the paper. I’m also particular about the size and the consistency. So my personal journal is from Paper Blank and it’s the same size, I’ve had the same size for years. What’s really funny is when I was a little girl I kept a journal and I had one of those journals that had the little lock on it, you know.

**KL:** Oh, I had one of those too.

**DS:** Yeah, and I have they’re all the same size and I’ve had them from second grade to ninth grade, when my parents read my journal and then I stopped. But, you know. And I used to cut pieces of paper to fit that journal because one page wasn’t enough. So, you know, the size I think you want to decide how big your purse is and, you know, how much space you want. I happen to like my sort of almost 8.5 by 11, it’s called a lab notebook, because I can put papers – 8.5 by 11 papers – in the back that I’m working on at that time or I need again. So I just slip those in the back and I have them if they’re sort of ones that I’m currently engaged in doing things with. So that’s the size. I like my size, most people around Portland State use the larger size. I think Moleskine makes a really beautiful journal that has really nice paper – and I like nice paper. And I have the same pen I use on my journal. I don’t use pencil in my journal; rarely use pencil.

And I always make a column down the side so it’s a really dialogic type journal. So there’s a large column, which is what – and I’ll say why it’s dialogic. A large column is like the river of experience and it’s the notes from the meeting, it’s the ideas. And the side column is like standing on the bank of that river and looking at my experience and writing reflections. So the little column allows me to go, “Where’s this going? Or, what is this about? Or, why do I want this to happen? Or, what can I learn? Or, what is the to-do list?” I put the to-do list in the column on the side.

**KL:** It sounds very meta.

**DS:** Yeah, it is meta. That’s the meta part is on the side. So I can say, “Oh, save this” or “Call this person.” And it’s sort of like a dialogue back and forth in some ways with what’s on the main column and what’s in the little column. And the little column also has the date and if it’s a meeting, I’d write down the attendees. And that just helps me keep track if somebody’s not there, to make sure they get the materials or make sure that I can include them the next time or I can see that they missed that part of the meeting. So it becomes very much meta about the experience, the river of experience down the page.

**KL:** I think it’s also so true what you were saying about people really need to decide what works for them when it comes to journaling. A couple other things I’ve seen, especially for people who are kind of concerned about filling a journal, is I’ve seen some people get like day planners that have sections for each day and they use that as a form, like a way to structure their journaling so that they can just fill in like a smaller half page section of like notes or things they want to think about around a particular project.

But I have to say, too, the journal that I’ve landed on, which I think is kind of strange to be completely honest, is when I was dissertating and doing a journal for that I found a kind of large, bulky cardboard covered kind of notebook at CVS at like a pharmacy. And ever since then I have looked for the same kind of journal and they have them at like Walgreen’s and they have them at Rite Aid and these kinds of places. They’re about 8.5 by 11 and they have I think maybe 100 could be 200 pages, front to back, lined. But they’re always in really strange patterns and bright and colorful. And it allows me to have a journal that is very distinct and so I immediately when I see it I’m like, “Oh that’s my book journal” or “that’s my travel journal.” I’m able to really tell them apart because they have these really distinct covers and I’m very picky. Because like I went the other day to get a journal for something and all they had was like a leopard print in hot pink and I was like, “I can’t do that. I can’t.” I don’t think I can handle that leopard print hot pink journal, although I’m sure that other people would be completely drawn to the leopard print hot pink journal.

**DS:** Yeah.

**KL:** But it has been very personal. I’ve really had to choose and also keeping in mind, you know, where am I really going to take this and do I want to have something so bulky? But it’s worked for me to have something that is sort of substantial in size because I know I really am going to fill it with a lot of ideas and thoughts.

**DS:** Yeah and you’re going to fill it also with handouts that you glue – I glue things. I take a glue stick with me.

**KL:** Absolutely.

**DS:** And I also glue in people’s business cards if I meet people at a conference. Like I have the business card for those three women that did the workshop on writing groups. So I put business cards in there. Then in the back I always have a list of books that people have recommended or movies. It’s sort of like a reference list in a way. But it’s just very, very helpful to me. It’s an organized for my life. And the thing about writing is that people may be worried about filling a journal. I mean I had some, well because my parents read my journal and I stopped journaling, I found some old journals and I wasn’t very much of a journal keeper at all until I actually became a professor I became more of a journal keeper. And that was like twenty-five years ago.

But I just need a place to sort of organize things and to keep track of all the meetings I was going to. And I was finding I didn’t have the file folder, I’d go to the meeting, I wouldn’t have the file folder, I wouldn’t have the information from the last meeting. And it was like, I’m going to start journaling just to keep track of all this. There’s just too much stuff going on and the journal really saved me in the organization part. And then I started using it, reflecting in the back, I actually flipped the journal over and go through backwards on the journal because I use gridded journals. And I just flip it over and it becomes a whole new book from the back believe it or not. And that’s where I do free writes and I also write anytime I use journals in my classes with my students I write when they write. And I always write when they write, then I’m doing my work and I’m modeling that sort of reflective part that you need to do. And right in front of them I’m doing my work, I’m not thinking about passing out papers or grading or anything. I’m thinking about my own work and I figure that’s a nice underground message of the value of journals in our professional lives.

**KL:** You’ve just heard a bonus clip from episode ten of *Research in Action* with Dr. Dannelle Stevens talking about choosing the right journal and dialogic journaling. Thanks for listening.

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