Episode 80: Daniel Ginsberg

# KL: Katie Linder

# DG: Daniel Ginsberg

# KL: You’re listening to “Research in Action”: episode eighty.

# [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. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, full transcript, and an instructor guide for incorporating the episode into your courses. Check out the shows website at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast to find all of these resources.

On this episode, I am joined by Dr. Daniel Ginsberg, the Manager of Education, Research and Professional Development at the American Anthropological Association. Daniel manages the association’s program of research on the profession of anthropology, where he has studied anthropology education, degree attainment, and careers within and outside of academia. He uses these findings to find provide support for anthropology departments to create professional development opportunities for AAA members, and to inform the association’s public education initiatives which over anthropological perspectives on current issues such as race and migration. He has a Ph.D. in linguistics from Georgetown University, a Master’s Degree in teaching English as a second language from the School for International Training, and professional experience as a high school teacher and language test developer, and he has published on issues such as critical and inquiry based pedagogy and STEM instruction for linguistically diverse students.

Thanks so much for joining me on the show, Daniel!

**DG:** Thanks, it’s great to be here!

**KL:** So, I’m really excited to talk with you about working with a disciplinary association, because I think that we all, many of us, belong to them, but we may not know kind of what goes on behind the scenes. We don’t necessarily think about the qualifications of the people who are working for these associations. So let’s just start with the kinds of things that you do in your role with the American Anthropological Association.

**DG:** Sure. So my title is Manager of Education, Research and Professional development, which is kind of a mouthful. Um and I feel like to explain it, it kind of makes sense to start with a research piece. Um mandate there, my portfolio is to do research on anthropology as a discipline and as a profession, uh so it’s kind of Meta. It’s like doing anthropology of anthropologists, which is fun. Um I get to deal with – so to some extent it’s issues in higher education, because um typically people don’t study anthropology before they get to higher education, but I get to do some research involving working with administrative data sets that come from the National Science Foundation of the U.S. Department of Education around things like where people are earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in Anthropology, what their sort of demographic characteristics are, what the trends are over time, and then once they’ve gone on to earn degrees – um what they end up doing next. Whether it’s within or outside of academia. Um we’ve also done some primary data collection around that so within the association, we do surveys of our members, we do surveys of our anthropology degree granting departments, and other stuff that comes up as needed, but those are the big sort of ones that happen on a regular basis. Um and then because it’s anthropology, and because it’s sort of my background lends itself to it, I’ve tried to work in a more qualitative aspect to it. I think a lot of disciplinary societies working at this kind of level, it’s easier to have that national focus that lends itself more to these big data sets. But I have another project going where I’ve been interviewing graduate students in anthropology who have non-academic career goals. Um talking about what their goals are, how they arrived at them, um what kind of support and mentoring they get within and outside of their departments; to really understand those issues in people’s own voices who are going through it.

**KL:** Daniel, that sounds absolutely fascinating, and it sounds like you’ve been able to kind of work in some of your own research agenda and interest into this as well. What are some of the things you do for the association that are outside of the research portfolio?

**DG:** Um so the other pieces of it are education and professional development. The other sort of terms in my title. Uh professional development is really more focused on anthropologist in general and on members in particular. Um so in that context, uh I get to work on things - like we have a fellowship for early career researchers who are interested in learning more about the association, and I coordinate that, and do some mentoring work with them. Um I’ve also been involved in looking at some of the other mentoring opportunities that the association offers. Um either one on one mentoring, there’s these programs where you would kind of be paired with someone, but also in terms of professional development workshops that we have with our annual meeting. And then on the education side it tends to be more outward focused to the general public, and so I work with a project manager who’s in charge of our public education initiatives. We have one long standing public education initiative on race. And another one that we’re currently working up on migration. Which are topics that are both currently relevant, but also perennially relevant. They’re the kind of things that people are going to be teaching about at the higher education level, but also before in K12. So we provide educational materials for race, we have a traveling museum exhibit, and we have a museum exhibit for migration, um these are the kinds of things that we’re doing, and then we have public programming that goes around those as well. Um and so that kind of education focus, but also just generally trying to promote opportunities for people outside of higher education, and outside of higher education departments to learn more about what the field is and what it has to offer.

**KL:** So, Daniel, sounds like you have a really fun job. I’m curious if there is like a team that you’re working with? Are you primarily doing this on your own? I mean it sounds like you have your own portfolio, but what’s the kind of context that you’re doing this in, in terms of other people you might be working with?

**DG:** Um so the American Anthropological Association, the triple A, It’s a membership association, and we have between nine and ten thousand members, and a staff support for all of that. So we have the association leadership who are selected from the members, but then there’s a staff of about 20 people who work out of this office in Northern Virginia, where I’m sitting right now, and uh we are split among a lot of different areas of focus. Um so I have colleagues who primary responsibility is about managing membership and working with trying to, you know, reminding people to renew their membership when it comes to coming up with different kinds of promotions or offerings that we could have as member services and benefits. Um I have colleagues whose responsibilities are mainly around coordinating logistics for the annual meeting. Uh I have colleagues who work with publications, because we have a portfolio about 20 journals that are published by the AAA or different sections of the AAA. And so from within this office we coordinate all of that and manage our relationship with the publisher. I have a colleague whose main responsibility is around governments, so she’s like the parliamentarian. Well she’s not the official parliamentarian, but she knows all of that kind of issues, and what’s in the bylaws and how to make sure all of those things are running properly. Uh. And all of those different areas of focus intersect with mine in interesting ways. For example if I am preparing something for the annual meeting I work with my colleagues in meetings, or I’ll – if I’m working on developing new professional development offerings, I would coordinate with my colleagues in membership. Uh if I’m thinking about graduate student leadership, so leadership roles falls into governance, but also thinking about students it falls into professional development. And so there’s a lot of intersections between me and all of these other colleagues with different areas of focus. Um and then I do have one person who I work a little bit more closely with, who’s really the project manager for these education initiatives. And so he’s more involved in working through the timeline to make sure that these different books, and museum exhibits, and other kinds of programming – uh get done on time and are organized properly.

**KL:** So, it’s really interesting. Based on what you’ve described about the work that you do, I would imagine that publication looks a little bit different for you. I’m sure peer review is part of that, but it also sounds like you’re creating other kinds of artifacts that are like outputs of your work. Can you talk a little bit about what publication looks like? And it sounds like it might not always be text based.

**DG:** Yeah, absolutely. So it’s been interesting for example, comparing what I’m doing with friends from my cohort and graduate school. And you know, we’ll follow each other on social media and they’ll announce if they have a journal article coming up. What I noticed, for example, after the first year of graduating is that while my one friend may have three articles coming out in peer review journals, I may have ten non-peer reviewed things that I just sort of will post on the website in various forms of formality. So I think I mentioned the survey of members that we did, and in the year following that survey I wrote up, I think five different reports touching my different aspects of the survey data um around things like focusing on students members, focusing on faculty – and specifically on contingent faculty, because that’s an important issue to be learning more about. There was one focusing on academic careers and how their represented within association membership. Um and so I’ve got a lot of those things that I’ve written as a sort of, grey literature, is the term I’ve heard used for it. They’re things that are not really – they’re scholarly, but not peer reviewed. And so they will follow kind of a, you know, “I’ll talk about methods, and I’ll talk about findings, and I’ll have a bibliography” in the same way that you would if you were writing a journal article, but in the same kind of a way, and for a different sort of use. Uh and to some extent that does get sited, I’ve at least seen it sited in people’s conference abstracts. So when people are trying to put together panels at conferences that are – that discipline, sometimes they’ll be looking at that work to say, you know, “Because of what it looks like across the broad scope of the discipline, or across the broad scope of association membership.” and then they’ll focus on whatever it is they’re focusing on. We also have a newsletter that goes out to members every two month, it’s called *Anthropology News*, *a*nd I have a column in there that’s called “Field Notes on the Profession”. Where I’ll write about different things that are coming up either in the research level that I’m doing or in other aspects of my work; if I want to put it in front of members so that they’ll be aware. So if I just want to put it on the website, people will be directed to it, or I can point people there if they are asking questions where I think it might be interesting, but I also have this column on the other side really where I can alert people to the fact that I’ve been working on whatever issue then try to get more member engagement around what I’m working on through that channel. Um I also kind of mean to be working more on traditional peer review publication, so I’ve managed to get a couple of book chapters out since I graduated. I finished my Ph.D. a year and a half ago, and I have one book chapter that’s come out based on a dissertation chapter and something else that I was invited to work on by people that I knew who are working in an area that I had previous experience, and around educational linguistics. Um and so those are helping to kind of build my CV in that way, um I’ve had some – with my boss about that. About how it might be good for me to do more peer review publication, because it helps, for example, for grant writing. If I can show I’ve published on relevant issues it would be easier for us to get grants if we’re trying to get external funding for something. Um and also because it’s another way of engaging with members if I’m publishing in more high profile, or prestigious venues, then it gets a sort of different kind of attention to my work. But it’s been kind of a struggle to fit that in around everything else. There’s a point where, especially if I’m thinking about publishing out of my dissertation, rather than publishing out of my current work; it’s kind of like a hobby that feels a little bit too much like work. And so I haven’t done as much of that as I would like to. I have an idea of a paper on my mind and on my to-do list, but that’s about as far as it’s made it.

**KL:** Daniel, I can completely understand this and identify with this as a full time administrator who also has my own research agenda on the side. So I think this is such an important point that you brought up, and also I think what you’ve said about the different kinds of publication you’re doing, I’m wondering if you can talk a little bit about how the skills you have from your Ph.D. have really transferred into this position. Because I would imagine you were not trained to write newsletter pieces, or maybe even how to do research reports, you know? These may be kind of newer things that weren’t covered in your Ph.D. program. Are there particular things that you gained through your Ph.D. that have really helped you transition into this new role?

**DG:** I think the best thing that I learned from my Ph.D. that’s been most helpful to me here, is really having the confidence to know that I can pick up new areas of focus, or new research methodologies as I need to. Um there was at one point, I was sort of – so most of the work that I did in graduate school was in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, and so I did a lot of discourse analysis, I did a lot of qualitative methods. But I was in a linguistics program, and at one point I was sort of flirting with some ideas around computational linguistics, around language processing, and different ways of using computer modeling to try to understand interaction. And I had different professors who, you know, would help me understand bit sand pieces of that through the coursework, and I was kind of trying to bring together things from different areas, and what that really gave me, I remember a lot of the time having to remember, for example software packages. I wrote a paper on the used machine learning techniques, which I didn’t really know anything about, and there was a software package that I found that to some extent had it coded in, to the point that I could use it and I didn’t have to know all of the math myself. Um but I still, I needed to learn how to do that thing, and how to write it up, and you know, for each course that you take in graduate school once you’re sort of in the predissertation phase, you’re always sort of having to become a – something of an expert in a really compressed time frame, and looking back on that now from where I’m at now, there was a learning curve from when I started my current job. You know, I mentioned some administrative data sets that I used from NSF, from the Department of Education, also census data, statistics. And I had to learn not just how to learn those different data sources, but I had to learn that they exist, and then I had to figure out how to get the data and how to use it. Whether that’s in terms of what software package I’m using for analysis, but also in terms of just what variables are in there and why they might be interesting to me. And the best thing that I got out of graduate school, you know I went into it because I wanted to learn how to be a researcher, and I feel like that’s what it is. It’s not a thing that you finished, but just that you have the sort of baseline level of understanding, um kind of a sense of what research design is, and a critical eye for thinking through a question, and coming up with a plan of how you’ll find an answer to it, and then you’ll figure out the tools that you’ll use, and you’ll know that you can, if you don’t already know how to use them, you can learn how to use them. Um and obviously this is all within the realm of social science, so I’m not going to learn how to use a particle accelerator, or anything like that. Um but I think that, you know, being confident that you can get there, if you need to get there is kind of the main thing.

**KL:** I think one of the things you’re really pointing out is the importance of the basics. You know, really having a strong foundation that you feel like you know enough, that you can pick up things with the knowledge that you already have. And I completely agree with that. That has also been true of my own experience. We’re going to take a brief break, when we come back we’re going to hear a little bit more from Daniel about being an alternative academic research role. Back in a moment.

# Segment 2:

**KL:** Daniel, one of the things I find interesting about your role is that it is kind of falling into an area that we call ‘Alt-Ac’ in academia; Alternative Academic role. And I would like to talk with you a little bit about what lead you to pursue a research role that is outside of a tenure track position, because this is primarily a more administrative role. It’s not affiliated with an institution, and I think often times we think about the golden standard as being tenure track roles in institutions, so this a little bit off the beaten path. So what lead you to pursue a research role sort of outside this typical faculty position?

**DG:** I should give you a little autobiography to answer this because typically my goal was never to be a professor per say. Um when I first applied to Ph.D. programs I was working as a public high school teacher, and I was coming up with research questions around my everyday practice, and I wanted to move into a role where I would have the space to be able to pursue them, and also the understanding of how you even go about that, and that was really what lead me to apply. So what I wanted to do really from the beginning was education research, and specifically qualitative education research, because I was frustrated by a lot of what I was exposed to as a classroom teacher, but it’s framed to be this very broad scales. You know, if you’re talking about psychometric studies with ends a hundreds of thousands, for me seeing 25 students at a time, but every single day; that’s on a more ethnographic scale. And that’s why I fell into doing this sort of qualitative ethnographical kind of work, is that it resonated with me from my professional experience. Um but so I - when I started off I hadn’t ruled out the possibility of going the academic route, um but I wasn’t aiming for it as an aspiration. I remember what I would say at the time was “I have questions I care about, that I want to learn more about, and I don’t care who signs my paycheck.” Um which now I think looking back on it, and on the way that – especially the academic job market is what that really meant is that I was not destined for a faculty role [Hm], because I think it takes a certain kind of ambition to get there, and if it wasn’t my goal to do that work, then I was going to end up somewhere else. Because I kind of had this awareness of it as a possibility, that there is valuable work to be done outside of faculty roles and outside of even higher-ed affiliations. Um so I was kind of persisting in this agnostic space, but reading a lot of what they call ‘Quit Lit’. These stories that people have of having uh – tried to become professors, and then gone other ways. Um and not that I identified with it, because I was sort of in the middle of my graduate program and I hadn’t tried to go that way yet, but I took them as really cautionary tales of what I would want to be aware of going forward. Um and I would, you know, whenever I found myself in whatever a role to be kind of talking about these roles issues, I would always mention I was thinking about getting these other kinds of jobs, and trying to maintain an awareness of it. One thing that was really helpful to me there was my graduate program. I was in the linguistics department at Georgetown University, which also has an applied terminal Master’s program in sociolinguistics, which was really an unusual thing. But they had a lot of professionalization activities for MA students that I would go to, I went to an activity where you would write a resume, I went to an activity where you would talk about your skills and interests in such a way that was meant to get you thinking about where you might be happy working. I wen tot some presentations that they would have for some people, a lot of times who did have Ph.Ds. but were working on different kinds of industry and non-profit roles. Um and I think that the fact that that program was in my department alongside the Ph.D. program meant that a lot of these things are mentionable in a way that I think for a lot of people who are in more academically focused departments, you can’t event talk about these things. And they’ve even had, you know, now that I’m in this role I’m in now, I’ve had research participants tell me that they were interested in pursuing different types of careers, but they couldn’t bring it up, or they couldn’t bring it up until they had been hired, because they feared or they had experienced different types of negative consequences for that. And none of that was ever really an issue for me. But really I think the final indication from me that I was not going for the tenure track, I applied for one tenure track job, and it was in my fourth year of my doct program, so I was still writing my dissertation, I was not really competitive for it, it was at an Ivy League school and I knew that – or if I had thought it through I would have known that they’re going to have such an applicant pool that they’re not going to even consider someone like me. And I had eventually found from reading on the – the dreaded academic job wikis that they had contacted their short list, and that was how I knew I didn’t get it. I never heard from them one way or the other. But in that time in between – between the time I had put my application in, and the time I knew it wasn’t going to be me, I wen through a- I don’t want to say a serious depression, because that overstates it, but I wasn’t well mentally. You know? I had a new puppy, and I was freaking out, screaming at the dog for no good reason. My stress levels were through the roof in ways that dissertation research never did it to me. It was this academic job market process. And to some extent what it was, was the thought that I may have to move, um because I had a spouse with a career, and she had recently changed jobs, one time I had a – my son was four years old, and we had just got him into a charter school, which if you’ve spoken to anyone who’s been through the D.C public charter school lottery, that’s all the parents of young kids can talk about. And he was in, and I had these thoughts of having to start over in a new city, and I knew – and then once I knew that I didn’t get that job I was so relieved, and I said “That’s it. I’m not going to follow that path anymore.” And then from that point forward my cool was to get my Ph.D. and not move.

**KL:** That’s a pretty good goal to have, and actually I think that there are a lot of people who are entering the job market that are geographically bound, and the challenge I think of tenure track jobs is you really do have to be prepared to move anywhere. I mean, if that’s really what you want, and people are putting out 30 applications for every job that’s available in their field, it’s really challenging, and it does have a lot of constraints. I’m wondering if you can talk about some of the benefits and maybe the challenges that you found of being in an alternative academic research role, because I’m sure that it comes with some pros and with some cons to be outside of an institutional affiliation for example. Um so what are some of the things that you found with your current role?

**DG:** So the orientational research that you have an alternate academic role is a little bit different. Um if I think about again the example of my friends from my program who are in tenure track jobs, where your research questions come from is different. So I think the benefit in a traditional academic role is that to a large extent you can really follow your interest, although there comes a time where you’ll have to sell it to a publisher if you’re trying to get a monograph published. You’ll need to make it look interesting and relevant in the sense that people will buy it, and so there’s that audience that you’re chasing, but really where that comes from is that you’re doing the work because you’re curious about it, then you figure out how to sell it. Where in my case it’s the other way around. My – the association that I work for has certain questions that they want to get questions to, and so my job is to find answers to those questions. I have people emailing me and saying, you know, asking questions like, “I’ve heard that a lot of programs are being shut down. Is that true?” And I can – I’m the one who would then go look at for example the federal data sets and say, “No actually it’s the – there are more departments now than ever granting degrees in anthropology.” Um and I can give them sources for that that they can then take back to their administrators and advocate for their programs in that way. And so that’s not a question that would have occurred to me personally, following my own interests. But really what I find fulfilling about that is that I know it’s going to be useful to someone, um because they’re asking me, and because I can have it available to them. In some ways it’s kind of – it can be similar to a librarian role. Where people will come to a librarian maybe not with a specific question that they need answered, but with a sense of what they need to know, and then you will go through like a reference interview, and then they’ll figure out what are the sources you really need, and where can you find not what you’re asking for but what you need? And I find that I go through that kind of process a lot with members who will call me up about these kinds of issues, but that’s one of my favorite things honestly. Is to be able to, on a much shorter time frame, you know, maybe days or weeks to provide somebody with something that they could really put into play right away.

**KL:** So I know we have a lot of graduate students in particular who listen to this show, and also early career professionals who might be thinking, “This sounds really nice. I want a position like Daniel’s position!” What can you tell people who might be interested in moving into this kind of role; working with a disciplinary association? I mean, maybe even just, how did you find it?

**DG:** Yeah, that’s an interesting question too! Um so, at the time that I was sort of in my autobiography a moment ago, and talking about deciding that I wanted to uh just not move, and where I would work. I was sort of open to whatever, but at that time I had sort of come up with a dream job in my head, which was really involved with middle and high school teachers. I had this idea that I would be working in classrooms directly with middle and high school teachers. That they would be generating research questions, and I would be sort of facilitating this process as a professional development activity, um and I was trying to figure out where I could take this concept and how I could sell it. Whether as a research scientist at a non-profit or as an independent consultant, and I was talking to friends who were independent consultants and trying to figure out how to do that. And at the same time as a graduate student, I was involved in graduate student leadership of another scholarly society. I was Co-chair of the Graduate Student Council at the American Association for Applied Linguistics. And part of what I was doing in that role was trying to advance more programming and professional development opportunities for my colleagues there around issues of non-academic employment, or alternative academic employment. Um and so I kind of had an association role already at that point, and I was also a member of the AAA. And so at this time that I was looking for work, I think it was a month after I had filed my dissertation, I got this email, a monthly email blasts of news and notes for members, and one of the top items in the newsletter was, “Congratulations to our professional fellow. We have a post doc for people to come and work with XYZ including career diversity and it seems to be working, because our fellow just got a job and she’s moved on to do, whatever it is she went on to do.” And a little lightbulb went off in my head, and I scrolled down to the bottom of the email, and there it was, “Highlights from our job bank… you could apply to be our next professional fellow.” Um and so I did, and I got the job. I came on as a post-doc initially. Um but - this idea of working in associations, I hadn’t thought of it as a career path, but I knew that it existed, I was kind of aware of it. Um and then after I had been here for about a year, we started talking about transitioning me from a post-doc to a regular staff role, and so that’s what I’m in right now, um but I think scholarly societies are great. They vary in terms of how many people on staff are trained in that discipline versus hoe many people are trained as meeting planners or communications specialist. Um and so if that’s something that interest you, then you can talk to people who work for your society and see what they have to offer. But I think the bigger point there is whenever I talk to people who are in these kind of non-academic roles, who have been through Ph.D. programs, there’s always some level of serendipity involved. It’s like I heard this story a bunch of times, I was in a Ph.D. program, I became aware that a faculty job wasn’t going to be it for me, and then something fell into my lap. And this is a pattern that these stories tend to fall into in my experience. I think that that telling of the story is very true, and it feels very true to me having been through it, but I think when you say, “Something fell into my lap” a lot is erased in that telling of, “Something could have fallen into your lap and you dropped it, but you didn’t.” You know? Your friend may have said to you, “I heard about this internship that they have for ethnographers at Adobe” and you might say, “Oh that’s nice, but it’s for other people. I’m going to be a professor” or you might say, “Where do I sign up?” And so I think there is a huge amount of good fortune involved in this, but also there’s a way of telling the story that fortune favors the prepared. So for someone who is either becoming aware that a faculty job might not be it for them, or for somebody who wants to pursue a Ph.D. because they want to do research – isn’t committed to an academic career. I think what you need to be doing is thinking about where else this work is happening. And I would say this, even if you are committed to an academic career, even if you’re an undergraduate who’s considering applying to Ph.D. programs, now is the best time to think about it, because the academic job market is really – I’m trying to think of a way to say it for polite broadcast in a podcast. It’s horrific for a lot of people. And some people end up doing really well by it, but I wouldn’t bet on it. I think if you’re considering that path, you need to also think about other things that might be interesting to you. Whether its plan A or plan B isn’t something I necessarily want to get in to, that’s a really personal decision. Career goals can change over the course of your time in your program and outside of it, and you’re whole life span really. People come and go from academia over the course of their careers. But I think if you go into a Ph.D. program only aware of being a professor as the only thing you could possibly do with it, you’re doing yourself a disservice, and you just need to be aware of other things that might be options for you later on.

**KL:** Well I love this idea of ‘Fortune favors the prepared.’ I completely agree with that. Well, Daniel, it is always super fun for me to talk to another alternative academic who is a researcher. I want to thank you so much for taking the time to come on the show; share about your story and your experience. This has been really great!

**DG:** Yeah! Thanks for the opportunity, I really appreciate it.

**KL:** Thanks also to our listeners for joining us on 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 links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript, and an instructor’s guide for incorporating the episode into your courses, can be found at the show’s website at [ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast](http://www.ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast).

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# Bonus Clip #1:

**KL:** In this bonus clip for episode 80 of the “Research in Action” podcast, Dr. Daniel Ginsberg discusses his experience of becoming a parent while also being a graduate student. Take a listen.

**KL:** Daniel, you briefly mentioned in an early segment that you had a young child while you were completing your Ph.D. and I know that there are many people listening who are also kind of thinking about that, thinking about starting a family while they’re in school, or who are currently doing that. And I’m wondering if you can share a little bit about your experience. You know, what were some of the pros and cons of starting a family while you were in the midst of working on your doctorate.

**DG:** Sure! My son was born during the spring break of the first year of my graduate program, and right away that put a – it made a difference between me and some of my other colleagues in the program. There were things that I had to work through in a different sort of way, of example it had been good training for me to have another career and to come back into school because I knew how to manage my time and get everything done between 9 and 5. And so once he was old enough to be in day care, I could do my course work on days that I had courses, I could get my homework done on the other days, and then I could get all that work done sort of during business hours and be able to do pick-ups and drop-offs from day care. Um it helped me to think about finding allies within the program; professors who would be understanding. Who had been through those sort of things as well and had kids at certain key moments in their own academic career. Um and that’s something I would say faculty who had had kids as faculty, and especially at more difficult moments in your career when you’re not as established um they have an understanding of what that is, and they have an opportunity to really then support the next group coming through to make it so they don’t feel they have to choose between their family responsibilities and their academic coursework and other things they need to get done, um but that they can really make space for you to coordinate these things together. Um and I remember thinking at one point in my program that it was really beneficial in a way, because I would see people get really hyper focused on their research and spend ridiculous amounts of time working on things. There was always a time I had to stop, because when you’re with an infant, when you’re with a toddler, you know, that’s always something that you have to be doing, and you have to step away. Uh but then I’ll never forget that I talked about this with a friend of mine and I said, “You know, I’m kind of greatful that I have a child and it forces me to be a more well-rounded person” and she said to me “That’s nice for you that you can say that, but if you were a woman people would hear you say that and say ‘maybe you’re not serious enough about research’.” And that was a very important moment for me to think about what are my responsibilities not just as a parent in an academic role, and I believe that a graduate student is like a first academic job, but also in terms of what gender privelige might give me in terms of being able to move that forward, but not in a way that leaves other people behind. And so it really, you know this was years later, but I remember just recently on Twitter there was a thing where people were finding acknowledgments in scholarly monographs where the author would say, “Thanks to the other person, and thanks to my wife for typing.” And it became a hashtag on Twitter; #thankyoufortyping. Um talking about what those relationships are like. And for me trying to think about what that was like in the context of my own experience in graduate school, what I was able to do having that sort of flexible schedule – that I only needed to be on campus when I was taking a class or teaching a class, and for the rest of the time, you know, I had obviously huge amounts of work that I had to get done, but when I got them done was up to me. And so that meant that I could be first on call for day care pick-ups, for day care drop-offs, for emergency phone calls, uh for you know cooking meals and going grocery shopping. Um because my spouse had a 9 to 5. And so she had to be in the office, and I did not have an office that I needed to be in. And I think especially in a world where we default in opposite gender co-parenting arrangements, you know, we default to having the woman take on a lot of these responsibilities, but if I would say I felt as an academic man co-parenting with a nonacademic woman that it was my responsibility and my opportunity to take on more of that because I was able to, and I think that that’s something that really changed the character of my graduate school experience. Where I could spend that time with my son, where I could set the president for our relationship being like that, where if you’re really moving a – broader societal assumptions in that way, it takes work to do it, and the flexibility of an academic schedule gave me the space to do that. Um but also I have to acknowledge that it’s easier for me than it would have been, I imagine, for one of my woman colleagues, and most of my woman colleagues in graduate school who had kids had them soon after they graduated, because the calculation of when is different for important reasons. But then that also changed things, as we said before, when it came to the point where I was applying for jobs where you really aren’t just following your own career. I mean some people do it, and I knew faculty for example who had kids along the way at different points in graduate school, post docs, pre tenure jobs and kept following those jobs wherever the next opportunity took them around the world. And if that kind of thing works for your family, I’m not going to judge it. I think that’s great that you can make it work, but in my case with my son having got into school, that was a huge consideration in me not pursuing tenure tack jobs, and really prioritizing geography over the kind of job title that I would have or the kind of career path that I would follow. So it really does change things for – I don’t want to say better and worse, but it changes the way you make these decisions, and uh I’m not the researcher that I would be if I had gone through it single and without kids.

**KL:** Well thank you so much for sharing your experience, Daniel.

**DG:** Yeah thanks for giving me the opportunity!

**KL:** You’ve just heard a bonus clip from episode 80 of the “Research in Action” podcast with Dr. Daniel Ginsberg discussing his experience becoming a parent while also being a graduate student. Thanks for listening!

# Bonus Clip #2:

**KL:** In this second bonus clip for episode 80 of the “Research in Action” podcast, Dr. Daniel Ginsberg shares some of the benefits of disciplinary associations. Take a listen.

**KL:** Daniel, because you have kind of this insider view of a disciplinary association, I would love to hear from you a little bit about what are the kinds of benefits that these associations offer to their members? For people who maybe aren’t aware, maybe aren’t connected to one of these associations, you know, what are the kinds of typical things that people can expect that might be of interest to them?

**DG:** The most high profile things that we do, that pretty much all of our members are aware of is we run an annual meeting, and we publish a number of journals. In a lot of cases that’s why people join, you know. For people who want to go to the meeting there’s a discounted registration fee for members, and if you’re going to be presenting at the meeting, you have to join. And so that’s it for a lot of people, you know, they need to be presenting at our meeting for whatever reason and so they become members, but they might be less in tuned to what we’re doing for the next 11 months of the year. Um and there are a lot of things that are going on that any other scholarly society will have going on more or less that could really be a benefit for people who get involved and take advantage of them. So one that I’ve talked about already is opportunities for graduate student leadership. It was something that was really valuable to me as a member of the American Association for Applied Linguistics, um where really the experience that I had there was a great counterpart to what I was getting through my graduate program in a lot of ways. Um I was working on a team, I was working on a service to the profession – service to the discipline in ways that graduate students don’t always get to do. I was working together with senior scholars in the field who are sort of in a mentoring role with us, and I got to know people that I wouldn’t have got to know just going to the conference, but because I was in this leadership role they had a reason talk to me, and I made relationships that way with people that I’m still in touch with. Um but also in terms of what I learned about managing volunteers and planning annual meeting events that are not on the scholarly program, we would do different kinds of professionalization workshops for or graduate student constituency, and having to plan those was a really important experience for me in terms of learning to do different types of engagement with people outside of the more narrowly, scholarly forms of the engagement. Um and that kind of thing persist beyond graduate leadership. There are a lot of different ways that people at any point in their career can get involved with an association. So we have opportunities for undergraduates through to senior researchers, whether it’s in association management, you know, we have the president and the board of the association are members who are elected by members, but to work yourself up into that position, there has to be some kind of a – uh varying levels of experience required, and varying levels of commitment required before people are going to – you know you don’t just wake up one day and become the president of the AAA. And so people have had different kinds of experience either in commitment leadership, and so we have committees – a variety of committees. Some of them deal with more logistical things like deciding who’s going to win awards or managing the association’s finances, but there are also other committees that exist in a more programmatic level. So um we had – or we’re going through every organization now, but we had a committee that was involved with labor relations and a committee that was involved in ethics, and human rights. Different societies will have groups or committees around representations of different kinds of underrepresented communities, whether its women scholars, scholars of color, graduate students, and undergraduate students. And so those are ways into leadership that you can really learn a lot for yourself, but also you’ll be benefiting some larger community within the discipline. Um and those are great opportunities that people have for uh, you know, it’s really useful work. It builds your network and it looks great on your CV. So there’s something in it for you, but also it does really make a difference in the community.

**KL:** So also because you have this insider tract, I’m wondering if you can talk about how members can contribute back and support their disciplinary associations. And you’ve mentioned some ways of possible doing this where it’s kind of mutually beneficial for the member and for the association. I’m wondering if there are other ways that members need to be thinking about supporting their different associations, or scholarly societies.

**DG:** Yeah it’s interesting because we try to understand how we can keep our members engaged, and it’s important to us to stay relevant and to keep people on board with us for a lot of different reasons. In some cases what we’ll see is that people might come and go as they may or may not have something to present at the annual meeting, which makes a lot of sense, especially in a discipline like anthropology which has a lot of interdisciplinary uh, crossover. And so if – I think our meeting is at the same time of year as the African Studies Association. And so if you work on anthropological work in Africa, you might take a year with us and then a year with African studies and come back and forth every year. Um or even if it’s not the meeting at the same time, you know funding is limited. We only have so much money to spend on conference attendance and professional memberships. And so they’ll go to their other professional society on odd number years, and come back to us on even number years, and that makes sense if people are trying to manage limited resources. Um but we also see there’s a really strong core of members who are going to be member regardless. Even if they’re not coming to the annual meeting. You know? Our membership numbers are much larger than our meeting attendance numbers. I think this is true of any society. You don’t have every single person go to an annual meeting. And to some extent people are stating members because they’re involved in this kind of leadership - work that we were just talking about, but also people really feel like being a member of the association is part of how they feel themselves to be a member of the discipline, you know? I think of myself as an anthropologist, I think of myself as an AAA member, and it’s hard to know where one begins and the other ends, or where the overlap is precisely. Um and so while membership might not be something that gives you immediate tangible benefit, you know, uh membership means you can present at the annual meeting, but you might not be coming to the meeting this year. Membership gives you access to all of our journals, but you might get that through your library at you institution already. And so I think part of the reason that people stay members is that they know that’s going to support a lot of the other things that we do to promote the discipline in general. Um so we have, you know, I mentioned these um public education initiatives around issues of race and migration, and it’s really important to the discipline to have something like a high profile museum exhibit that reflects anthropological perspectives on race, you know, from a cultural, and historical, and biological perspective for general audiences – in a way that is clearly labeled anthropology. And so that’s not that I could say, “In my career it has helped me in this way this person say that exhibit” but just that it’s in sort of an incremental way – it’s better for all of us if people know who we are, and what we have to offer, and why you know there might be sometimes, if you’re a journalist, there might be some issues that you might want to call and get an economist as you expert to explain what’s going on behind the scenes, but other issues where you would really want to get an anthropologist. For us to get to that point we have to be on their radar, and the association is really working on that, and how we can even make people think about anthropology when they have the kinds of questions that an anthropologist might be able to weigh in on.

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