Episode 129: Zapoura Newton-Calvert and Deborah Smith Arthur

# KL: Katie Linder

# ZNC: Zapoura Newton-Calvert

**DSA:** Deborah Smith Arthur

# KL: You’re listening to “Research in Action”: episode one hundred and twenty-nine.

# [intro music]

# Segment 1:

# KL: Welcome to “Research in Action,” a weekly podcast about topics and issues related to research in higher education featuring experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, research director at Oregon State University Ecampus, a national leader in online education. Today’s episode is part of our four part back to school miniseries to help celebrate the release of our new edited collection, high impact practices in online education. In this miniseries, I have the privilege of interviewing some of the contributors to our book, who our experts on high impact practices and effective classroom practices. Our edited collection is a first of its kind look at how to apply high impact practices to the online classroom environment. You can learn more about our book at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/hip. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript, and an instructor guide for incorporating the episode into your courses. Visit our website at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/podcast to find all of these resources.

On today’s episode, I am joined I’m joined by two guests:

Zapoura Newton-Calvert serves as Digital Coordinator and Capstone faculty member in Portland State University’s University Studies Program. Her research and pedagogical foci include removing barriers to educational equity, social justice in online learning, community-based learning online, and Universal Design for Learning.  She served as Faculty-in-Residence for Community-Based Learning in PSU’s Office of Academic Innovation for three years and also worked as a Service-Learning Coordinator at Portland Community College. Her recent publication (also co-authored with Deborah Smith Arthur) “Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University” explores instructor presence and community formation in online CBL courses.

I’m also joined by Dr. Deborah Smith Arthur, an Associate Professor at Portland State University, in the interdisciplinary University Studies program. Her work mostly revolves around juvenile and criminal justice and educational access for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students. She has been teaching Capstone courses for 15 years and teaches a fully online Capstone once a year.

Thanks so much for joining me on the show today, Zapoura and Deb.

**ZNC**: Thanks for having us, Katie!

**DSA:** Great to be with you!

**KL:** So I’m really excited to talk with you both a little bit more about your experiences with Capstone courses. I’ve had such a fun time working with you on this volume, and both of you actually came in kind of at the last minute and saved me a little bit, because we had some people drop out and we needed new authors, and you’ve been such a pleasure to work with. So – so glad to have you on the show today. I thought we could start out by talking a little bit about what are Capstone courses? I know this is something you’re both pretty passionate about, you’ve published about other than in this volume, but our readers may not be super familiar. So what are Capstone courses?

**ZNC:** Well first I’d like to say that Capstone courses look a little different at Portland State University, where we teach, than maybe at other places. Um in general Capstone courses are some sort of culminating course. It takes into account all of the disciplinary knowledge that students have already had at their time in university, and it applies it to some kind of real world situation. Um do you want to add anything to that, Deb?

**DSA:** Um yeah. Just in our research about different types of Capstone courses at different universities, you know, they can be done a little differently in terms of some are a culminating project – a Capstone project, and not necessarily considered a full course. But we do do it a little differently here at Portland State in that Capstone courses are all interdisciplinary and all community based learning, so students are working on a project of benefit to the community as the culminating experience pulling in all of their interdisciplinary knowledge to benefit the community.

**KL:** So Capstone Courses sound incredibly rich in terms of what could potentially come out of them. I’m wondering if you could talk about why they are important for you. Why do you think they contribute to student learning more specifically?

**DSA:** I think that one beautiful thing that I’ve witnessed in teaching Capstone courses here for 15 years at PSU, is um our focus on the goals in university studies. And so those include diversity or understanding the variety of human experience, critical thinking, communication skills, and social and ethical responsibility. And so every Capstone here at PSU addresses those four goals through the particular lenses of that class, so really being community based, and putting students outside of a classroom and off-campus in most cases, and in an engaged setting in a community somewhere, really gives a beautiful platform to work on those four goals, and that’s really rich.

**ZNC:** Yeah. I’ve had – so I teach a social justice in K12 education capstone, and I’ve had students who come into my class who want to be teachers, who want to be in social work – maybe juvenile justice, and they all say, “Wow. This has been so illuminating to apply the concepts that we’ve been talking about in a real setting, and to think about what this might look like as a career.” Um so that can kind of launch them off into their careers or into their grad work in a really meaningful way, where they have thought about it more deeply.

**KL:** So over the course of your experiences working with Capstones, what have you found to be the important elements that you want to make sure are included in any Capstone course?

**ZNC:** In our model I think one of the key elements is mutual relationship with the community partner – like a deep long term relationship with a community partner, because all of our courses are community based. So I know that for me, I’ve had relationships with some of my – the schools that we work with for over ten years, and that long-term relationship helps sustain the work, and it also helps us frame the work as mutually beneficial. So the students are getting something out of that learning, and the community partners is getting something from the student supporting them.

**DSA:** Absolutely. I would agree and echo that. In the juvenile justice Capstone I’ve been teaching for a long time here, we have a beautiful partnership with the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, and specifically the Juvenile Service Division. And, I mean, my students always come away from that experience just profoundly impacted, but at the same time, you know, equally important is that kind of service and the contribution that we can make to juvenile services division, specifically juvenile detention in a way that staff cannot. I mean, just by the fact that we are not staff, and the students are college students and they’re coming into engage youth, they’re bringing in something that DCJ on its own really can’t provide. So the relationship is just really strong, and it really is win-win. And I think that’s critical for Capstones at PSU – we want to make sure that we’re not making work for community partner, but is actually a tremendous benefit to the community partner. That’s very important to us.

**KL:** Okay. So I’m wondering if you could each talk a little bit about some of your experiences with designing Capstone courses. Like I’m really curious, for example, about what are the outputs of these courses? What are some of the assignments that you’re including to really help students to have these deeper experiences that you’re describing?

**ZNC:** Mm. So my course is very discussion based, its very student centered. Um they’re working usually hands-on with a community partner with a focus on educational equity, and um the design has a pretty even flow – especially in online. We have to make it a little bit predictable. Um students facilitate a discussion, in addition to me facilitating a discussion. Um so we have – we start with kind of the roots of educational equity, and then we build up information to more specifics that can help students as teachers, as voters, as parents. Um so I think that discussion is the heart of the classroom. Um in terms of design, findings ways to have that conversation and to build a relationship so that we can have meaningful and challenging conversations, has been a big challenge, and I’ve met that challenge through using the synchronous Google hangouts with students, and also having video – asynchronous video chats so that we can hear each other and see each other, so that relationships gets built. That’s one of the most important components I think of the class.

**DSA:** Yeah. I think, you know, just that deep reflection on the experience too. We have the Academic component, then we have the community based learning component that, you know, ideally fit just seamlessly together, so you’re applying what you’re learning academically and what you bring into the course from your discipline academically – that you’re applying that in the community based real world setting. But reflection is such a key component of that too. I have my students write learning logs, and so just reflecting on each week on their time in detention, and I always tell them – only partly jokingly, I tell them “This is actually my gift to you.” Um because – that assignment. Because if you’re anything like me, life just flies by at this breakneck pace and half the time I’m turning around and going, “What just happened?” you know? And making an assignment to stop and reflect on each workshop, and what did I learn, and what did I learn about myself, and what assumptions did I hold that may have been challenged by being, you know, in this setting? You know, that’s – that’s key. very important. And um, I do see – you know, it’s that – required time out to actually solidify that learning within yourself.

**KL:** So I’m really curious if you can talk about what are your favorite parts of teaching Capstone courses, and what do you think your students favorite parts are?

**ZNC:** Favorite parts –

**DSA:** I’m going to jump in there. I love to see students get really excited about issues that I’m excited about. I am - you know, most of my teaching is around juvenile justice and I practiced law before I came to PSU, and so I was on the, you know, so called front lines of that work for a decade. And then teaching about it, and watching students get really fired up about those same issues, and knowing that they’re going to head out into the world to work on those issues, um is really inspiring for me. I love that part of it.

**ZNC:** Mhm. Yeah. I think the relationships definitely are the best part. Being able to work on a topic that you’re passionate about side by side with your students and with the community, so attending a rally together or working with a community partner on a project, and really seeing everyone grow. We’re doing a lot of work around racial equity in my class, and seeing students have the opportunity to think through a lot of topics that have come up throughout their education, but really apply them personally and to have the time and space to think about, “What does this look like – um – what is this going to look like for me out in the world?” I think that’s exciting. I also have to say that a lot of times my students will want to have a potluck at the end of the term and gather as a community. That’s beautiful. And also, many of my students have become my community partners ultimately. So when they go out into the work place and become teachers, start working with different agencies – I get to partner with them, and that my students get to work with their organizations, that’s probably one of the most exciting things.

**KL:** And what do you think is their favorite part of the Capstone experience?

**ZNC:** Working with kids. I mean, my students definitely [*indiscernible*] work in classrooms – elementary and high school. Um they haven’t necessarily had a lot of chance to work hands on, one on one with young people since they were there in school themselves, and I think they just love creating those relationships. I think the best thing for them is when they finally get to a place where the student – there’s some trust there, and they start opening up, and they’re joking with each other. And I always hear from my students in their journals, they’re like, “Oh so and so called me by name today!” You know, just that getting to know each other on that intimate level – I think that’s what they love the most.

**DSA:** Mhm. I would agree with that. I think – same answers to different setting. My students in my juvenile justice class are going inside juvenile detention in Multnomah County. So just sitting down with the quote on quote other, you know, who they like – only understanding of the kids who may be detained there is from the media. Sometimes they have friends, or family members, or loved ones telling them, “Oh you shouldn’t go there.” And then they go in, and sit down, and actually engage with the kids, and realize that they’re – have so many similarities and that there’s nothing to be afraid of. And just that - I think that that awakening for them is very exciting for them as students. I think that the majority of Capstone students, and I think this is true for you too, Zapoura, that we work with are so eager to get out of the classroom and start applying this stuff in a real world setting, and I think that that’s – direct engagement I think is really rich for students, and I think they really appreciate it. And then also making connections with the agencies and the staff, and you know, sometimes that leads to continued volunteer work, or employment – and you know, they love that too.

**ZNC:** Yeah. I think I can crystallize – I have a student example. A student who came in and said, “I want to teach. I want to be a teacher” went into the setting, um, volunteering with youth in a classroom, and came out and said, “You know what, I don’t think that I am a good fit for this. I didn’t know, and I think that I might actually want to go into counseling.” So it was also great place to have an epiphany about, “Hm. This thing that I have imagined, what is it actually like in practice, and where do I fit in if I still have this objective, but don’t fit into that particular setting with my skills?” So it was like an epiphany – and important epiphany to have before going into the next step.

**KL:** I love that example. I’m wondering if you have other things you want to say about, what do you think students will really walk away with from these Capstone experiences? Like what are you hoping for them in terms of what they’ll learn, or what they’ll be able to take with them into, you know, their next piece of their educational journey?

**ZNC:** I have my students write a personal or a teaching philosophy at the end of the term as for their final writing of the class. So for teachers they write a teaching philosophy, for others a personal philosophy outlining, you know, how they want to be in the world and they also write an action plan – so a three, six or twelve month plan about how they want to be to be active, impacting the world in positive ways based on some of the values and the models that we have looked at in class. Um and I think that is a chance for them to really crystalize what they want their impact to be, and for me I just want people to – I don’t care if they go into education or if they go into something else, I want them to act on the things that they’re passionate about, to not be silent when there’s injustice, to be an educated voter, to have difficult conversations in the world. That’s kind of what I’m looking for. That’s what I hope for them.

**DSA:** Mhm. Mhm. Same. I think regardless of if students choose to go into the field that’s connected to the Capstone, or realize – have an epiphany like Zapoura described, and decide that they don’t want to do that, in any event – whatever they do next, they can take with them this perspective on a social issue or problem that they just did not have before. So they’re looking at it a little bit differently, you know? Um and they’re going to carry that with them into the rest of their world. You know, I’m thinking of a student I had who was a returning student, a man about 40 years old, came in – this was years ago now – did my juvenile detention capstone working with these kids, and then turning our closing circle at the end he was in tears, and he said, “This was incredible but so hard, because it has changed the way I see everything, and what do I do with that now?” And so to me – it’s not always easy. I mean, that’s difficult, but I definitely count that as a success. If your hearts been broadened, and your mind has been opened, and you’re going to approach everything a little differently, you know, that’s the best we can hope for I think.

**KL:** These sound like such rich experiences, when we come back we’ll hear a little bit more from Zapoura and Deborah about Capstone courses and moving them online. Back in a moment.

Research in Action has special meaning to us here at the Oregon State University Ecampus Research Unit. Over the past year, we’ve dug into the research and made it actionable through our own new edited collection, High Impact Practices in Online Education: Research and Best Practices. This edited collection bring high impact practices including fundamental metrics for measuring student learning and campus culture to the online environment, and we want you to benefit from our work. Order your book today with a 20 percent discount code as a special gift to you. Visit ecampus.oregonstate.edu/hip, and use discount code hip20.

# Segment 2:

**KL:** So Deborah and Zapoura, one of the contributions that you made to this edited collection on high impact practices in online education, was a chapter specifically about online Capstones and how you kind of transition Capstones into the online environment. I want to dig into this a little more, because I think it’s a really interesting idea. Can you start by telling us a little bit about some of the benefits of moving a Capstone course online?

**ZNC:** I think first I want to say that online is happening, so there’s a huge push to put classes online at our institution and I think at many institutions, and there’s a lot of reasons for that. Some are positive and some are – they make money. In that context, it’s important for us to push for rich online experiences that mirror in some way the experiences that students have on campus, and to really push that envelope for having online content and online experiences that are equitable and that give students the depth of education that their counterparts face to face would have. Um so a benefit I think moving a Capstone online is that we’re having really rich, engaged, reflective community experiences online which doesn’t happen that frequently as far as I’ve seen. Um, what about you Deborah, what do you think?

**DSA:** Well, you know, at PSU Capstone courses are required courses – senior level general ed requirements for undergrads – for most undergrads at PSU. And so I do think that moving Capstone courses online really is an equity issue. I think its – PSU, we have students who work so hard and they have families, and they have jobs, and they have other commitments, and you know, really a large non-traditional student base. And so I think having the online option for this required course has been beneficial for a lot of students, because they’re just really, really busy people. And so um – and life changes – people move and things like that. I’ve had students who, you know, moved and then just needed to finish out a couple of courses, so they came for the online experience. So I think it provides more opportunity for students to fulfil that requirement. And then as Zapoura said, we – it feels incumbent upon us. Our passion is making sure that those are still really rich, engaging experiences and not just sort of checking a box to get it done kind of situation.

**KL:** One of the things that I have always found really interesting about online courses is this idea that when students leave us and they go out into the work world, in all likelihood at some point in their careers they will have to learn online – just kind of the way things are going with professional development, and things like Lynda.com, or other things that they may need to do. And it seems to me that an environment like this with a Capstone, where they’re being so reflective and really needing to understand how they learn, and how they can kind of synthesize what they have one over the course of their academic career, it really does prepare them for really good online learning experiences once they leave our institutions. Is that something that kind of goes into your thinking about students who are really at the end of their, you know, university career at least as an undergrad?

**ZNC:** Yeah absolutely. I think one of the things that I’ve seen is students really learning how to, and we’ve mentioned this before, but create relationships with each other even if it’s virtual. So most of us that work, we do work with colleagues who we are not present with in the same space. Most people work that way, but a lot of students haven’t had the opportunity to experiment with what that looks like. Like how do you get to know each other, how do you start to develop common frameworks for discussing? So that alone, you know, just learning the logistics of that and then the relationship building online is going to be key for them in any kind of future workplace situation.

**DSA:** Mhm. Absolutely. And also just um – realistically the – becoming familiar with other technologies, and just getting more adapted diving into different technologies can be helpful too.

**ZNC:** Yeah and there is a gap between the way some students are – learn about technology, where some students learn about technology as sort of consumers of technology, where other students are taught to be producers through technology. And I think this gives an opportunity for those students who may not have had the chance before, to see themselves as sort of owners and makers in that space, which is what we hope for them in their employment or their additional, you know, grad work too.

**KL:** Okay. So for people who are listening to this and thinking, “Okay. I’m intrigued! There could be some reasons why I want to shift this online” what are some important considerations when you’re transitioning a Capstone course into an online environment.

**DSA**: I’ll go ahead and just admit that several years back – how many years ago was that? Five years ago when I started teaching a fully online Capstone, I mean Zapoura helped me so much through that process, but I’m going to tell you the truth, I was a little scared at the time. I am not the most technologically savvy person, and I love my students and it felt like I’m going to lose connection with my students, and I’m going to stumble over this technology, and it’s going to be so hard, and I just had these mental barriers around it. And honestly just diving in and, you know, working with someone so great a mentor as Zapoura, in terms of how to overcome those barriers – now I absolutely love it! So I think one – one consideration is overcoming our own personal fears about what we feel – like what that’s going to be like for us, and being willing to dive into that, because now I actually really enjoy teaching online. And I’m still not the most technological savvy person there is, but I know where to ask for help, you know?

**ZNC:** Yeah. I think transitioning a Capstone course, many people in our program had a lot of the same fear Deb had about is this even possible, can we create this kind of experience online? I personally just love to experiment with technology. I’m not afraid, I’m okay with doing it wrong, so I think I was a good person to kind of dive into that and get messy with it a little bit. For me, I started teaching online a long time ago as a writing teacher, and after a couple of years I realized that the students were just names, you know, just a typed name on the page, and that I needed to do something really radical to change the way that I was seeing my students, and probably the way they were also seeing each other, and me. So for me the transition – the part that was most important to figure out how to transition, is conveying the soft things like personality, the fact that I care – how do you convey care in an online course? How do you connect students to each other to support each other? How do you create enough trust so that we can have a conversation about racism, you know? That’s a lot to build into a class, so it really those interpersonal and like emotional content, that I think is the most challenging about transitioning. I mean, some people might say that the technology part – we actually have a lot of support on campus. We have our office of academic innovation, who helps us with our course modules and designing what the content should look like, I mean that’s laborious, but I think the most challenging part is getting to know each other in a rich way.

**KL:** So I’m curious for you both, how has online education or technology just more generally influenced how you envisioned Capstone courses?

**DSA:** You know, I found that in my online course, I tend to have more direct one on one relationships with student. There’s a lot of emailing going on, phone calls occasionally, and just reaching out to each student one on one. So I was thinking about that, and I feel like that happens more in my online class – that one on one relationship than it even does in my face to face class. So in the face to face class, I definitely build relationships with students, but it tends to be the group as a whole, and the relationships that I have with individual students it’s definitely because they seek me out for that. And in the online class, because I – you know, I’m worried about making sure that we have that relationship, I tend to be more proactive one on one with students.

**ZNC:** Yeah I think for me, I’ve also done a lot of thinking about what virtual volunteer work or community based work can look like in addition, so I really hadn’t really thought about what can community based work look like if we’re not in a classroom working with youth or directly working with a teacher. And because I have online students who maybe work during the day, and can’t get out to a community partner, I’ve had to revision what it looks like to do social justice work in other kinds of formats, so we’ve become partnered in different ways with organizations. We’ve helped with building surveys, we helped with – I actually launched a project myself called Reading is Resistance, which is an antiracist library project for schools where my students compiled booklists and work with teachers to diversify their classroom libraries and work together in ways that they don’t actually have to be physically in this space together but are still able to have an impact. And that’s been exciting, because it sort of breaks up the traditional idea of community partnership, and gives a lot of other possibilities.

**KL:** So one of the things that I always think is interesting when I talk with other instructors who transition courses online, is that it really ends up affecting their face to face courses. They take things from the online, and use it in other modalities. Have you had experiences of that? Of thinking, how can I move a certain thing from face to face into online that I’ve found is really important, or you know, I’ve found something really amazing online, and I want to transition it into the face to face environment as well?

**DSA:** Um let’s see. I use a technology in my online course that allows for students to report back to the whole course and it involves video and audio, so I think that seeing each other is really important, and I liked that platform so much that I did end up building that into my face-to-face course. I mean, I say face to face, it’s actually a hybrid course, so I do have time with them, but rather than typed responses, I utilize that platform that allows for the visual and the audio response, so that’s one example I can think of, where the online has informed the face to face hybrid.

**ZNC:** I think for me teaching online, the most successful model has been when I decentralize myself, when I’m really more of a member for the group, um a mentor facilitator, but not really at the head of the classroom imparting information. So, I think because that helps us all build relationships. Um and I have definitely woven that back into my face to face class where students are often leading the discussions more often than I think I was doing before, and where I sit down with them almost as a peer talking through unpacking some of the way that we mentor, and teach what we bring into the space with us when you work with youth. Um so I think it’s more – it’s actually more student centered than it was before.

**KL:** So I’m really curious, especially after you work with this chapter, are there areas of Capstone course and moving Capstone course online that you really wish had more research? And what would be some of the questions you might ask that you would really love to see people follow up on, and collect some data about, and contribute to the literature even more?

**ZNC:** I would really like to see more information on online learning and equity in online learning. Um a little more about who is taking our online courses, how we structure our classes to be inclusive spaces. I don’t see a lot about that, and I think for us and our program, we think a lot about like, what students aren’t showing up in our online classes or who can really benefit from having that space, and what are the barriers for them that make an online space not successful? There is some research on, you know, lack of access to technology and also on many underserved students need a much stronger relationship with their instructor. And so I think that’s why Deb and I do focus on that so much, is that we know how important that component is, but I would love to see more and what that looks like, what presence looks like, and really pushing those conversations – what some people call challenging conversations – like real conversations about things like race, like equity, how we can build that in, build the relationships up enough so that we can have those real conversations to push students forward. There’s not a ton out there about engaged online learning in this way, and definitely not with a social justice lenses.

**DSA:** Yeah I agree. I don’t – I think when we were working on the chapter that was really the area, the equity area that really rose to the top in terms of a lack of research.

**KL:** Okay. To close this out, I’m curious ifyou have, you know, a final piece of advice for people who may be interested in transitioning a Capstone course online.

**ZNC:** Yeah we were talking about this a little bit before. I would say work in community to build your class. Don’t do it in a vacuum, don’t do it by yourself. Reach out to resources and to other humans. Deb and I actually worked in a room, like we actually reserved space and worked together simultaneously designing our courses, and it was definitely more fun but it also allowed us to experiment. Like we tried out different technologies with each other, talked through what would a student – you know, how would a student see this? It was much better that way.

**DSA:** Yeah we were working on our own courses, but were in the same space at the same time and it was – it was just so helpful to not be on my own, or to be honest, to be with someone that I didn’t know – or. I mean, it was just so much easier, because we work well together anyway, so we had a lot of fun just doing Google hangouts with each other in the same room, and just trying to see is this working, or what would you do with this? And so just kind of – I would agree. It’s really important to do it with somebody that you’re going to have fun with too, and it just makes it easier to overcome some of those hurdles.

**ZNC:** Yeah it takes away the fear! Because there really is a lot of anxiety and fear around this work, and I think that if you can get a little light hearted and also be willing to make mistakes, and then just talk to someone about like, “Wow this thing happened. What should I do next?” that’s an important part of the process. It’s not going to be perfect at first.

**DSA:** I think I would add too that to transition capstone courses online, to feel confident in the value of that. I think one barrier that we faced earlier on was this general sense in academia that somehow an online course was less work, and less worthy than a face to face course, which was unfortunate. I think that that’s – we’re shifting away from that. I think people are more and more seeing the value and the difficulty in doing that well. But I think having that support with other folks who teach online, for me it was very helpful in the beginning, because there was a sense of, “Well. Oh you’re just teaching online, you’re only sort of part a teacher.” Like that’s not real teaching somehow! There was sort of a sense of that, and thankfully I think because of the need for online, we’re shifting away from that. But that was – it was great to have camaraderie with other online folks.

**KL:** Well I want to thank you both for taking the time to come on the show and share a little bit more about your experiences with Capstone courses and online Capstone courses. Thanks so much!

**DSA:** You’re welcome.

**ZNC:** Thank you!

**KL:** Thanks also 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 links to resources mentioned in the episode, a full transcript, and an instructor 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:

**KL:** In this bonus clip for episode 129 of the Research in Action Podcast, Dr. Deborah Smith Arthur and Zapoura Newton-Calvert discuss how they chose each other as co-authors. Take a listen:

So Deborah and Zapoura, it was so fun to work with you both as co-authors of the chapter that you contributed to our volume on high impact practices in online education. I would love to hear a little bit about how you came to choose each other as co-authors! I think the co-author relationships are kind of special and unique, so tell us a little bit about how you found each other.

**DSA:** I do think that we have a special and unique relationship. I just love working with Zapoura. I think we – we were colleagues, you know, we’ve been colleagues for quite a while before we co-authored together. I think we have similar teaching philosophies. Um we’re both mothers of young – youngish children, and so um real understanding of working around um those requirements of parenting at the same time of trying to meet a writing deadline.

**ZNC:** Yeah we’ve had some funny conferences calls with children popping up – little ones popping up in the conference calls and bouncing things. But it is really important when you’re thinking about timelines, we can’t ask – we can’t be rigid with each other. We have to have a little more of a flow. We trust that we are going to get the work done, but we also know that we are juggling a lot of things and are able to make that work, and that trust and respect I think really helps our process.

**DSA:** Mhm. Yeah. It’s really good to have that shared understanding a flexibility with one another. The first project we were working on co-authoring together, which was a piece for Metropolitan University’s journal - uh my kids were building a fort under the table while I was working on it. And I know that Zapoura had a situation where she had to mute a conference call, because her son was having a stomach flu in the background. And so I think a lot of laughter and mutual understanding of what that’ – what it’s like to be mothers and authors at the same time has been really helpful.

**ZNC:** Yeah I think that, and we were both so passionate about our areas of advocacy and activism, that that passion – jus that we have the same level of that passion. Like our end game is activating ourselves and supporting students in that work, and I think that that mutual – the mutual objectives I think propel the work forward even when it’s hard to get it all done.

**KL:** So what are some of the benefits and challenges of co-authorship for both of you?

**DSA:** I would say a benefit is that we’ve really had fun when we’ve worked on different articles together. Um you know, it’s satisfying, and because we have sort of a shared approach and shared philosophy it’s been pretty easy. I’ve co-authored with other folks, um and it hasn’t been as much fun necessarily. You know, there’s some folks you just don’t have that – I think the level – again the level of relationship. And without – for me, not having that relationship, it can just be more stressful and a little bit more difficult. Sometimes walking on eggshells, sometimes feeling like who’s pulling more weight? Those kind of issues. I didn’t feel those at all in o-authoring with Zapoura. So I think having that relationship, and being friends already, and colleagues already - that we knew we one another and had a shared respecting was a benefit and made it fin. It’s been more difficult sometimes with other folks.

**ZNC:** Yeah we’re lucky that we work in a program that really centers teaching, so the writing work we do is important, but it isn’t everything. And I think that our focus on students and on teaching had made it a little less precarious in terms of ownership of the intellectual work. I feel like we both are not super precious with, you know, every sentence and allow each other to go in and advise – we just have a level of trust where that isn’t hard, and that makes a big difference. And we’re also just not so committed to our sentence – I mean, we are committed people, but we’re flexible with getting the work done.

**KL:** Aright, well I want to think you both for of course contributing to the volume, but also for sharing about your experiences as co-authors. Thanks so much!

**ZNC:** Thanks!

**DSA:** Thank you!

**KL:** You’ve just heard a bonus clip from episode 129 of the Research in Action Podcast, with Dr. Deborah Smith Arthur and Zapoura Newton-Calvert discussing how they chose each other a co-authors. Thanks for listening!

# Bonus Clip (HIP #3):

**KL:** In this third bonus clip for our back to school mini-series, I chat with my co-author, Chrysanthemum Mattison Hayes, about the challenges of editing a collection with 20 plus contributors. You can learn more about our book; High Impact Practices in Online Education at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/hip

Mum, I think something that a lot of people struggle with as they think about taking on a project like this, because it is a little bit longer term – it’s kind of like a book, even though I think it’s definitely a different process of a solo author book – it takes time, and you really have to build it into your schedule. And I’m curious, I mean, you and I are both full time administrators, you also changed positions and have had a lot going on in your professional life here at OSU during this process. How did you fit this in? Like, what made this a priority for you and how did you kind of finagle your schedule to make this work, especially at the last minute when I would be like, “Okay. We have this. We have to do it”? Especially when we got to the proof stage, and you know, the publisher especially toward the end kind of controls the timeline a little bit more, and you kind of just have to do it on the timeline that they request. So talk a little bit about that; how did you manage you time around this?

**CMH:** So first I was really excited just to start this process, and people that – I don’t know. I should just start by saying that I’m really optimistic and I’m very much a yes person when it comes to new challenges, and especially I’ve worked with you for a little while now and I find that to be really exciting, and I’ve always gotten really positive – it’s always been really positive interactions, and you’re like ”Do you want to edit this book with me?” and I was like “yes –well what does that mean?” But I was like, Katie’s done it and she’s awesome, and she said she would help me, and so yeah! Let’s do this. And so I very much have that attitude and then I figure it out, so this idea that maybe I knew what I was getting into, and then I accepted that with full and complete awareness is just not true, but I was excited. First thing I did was I checked in with my supervisor who was very supportive of it but also very realistic, um and said, “You have these other responsibilities, you know, etc. This is going to be something that if you commit to – you know, you’re going to have to figure out how to make this work and all of these other things.” And so I knew that going into it, it may take some of the time – I don’t think I worked on it at work very much to be honest. Our meetings or at work, so time that we spent crafting emails and doing that was there, but most of the time I spent was on my couch, or on a park bench, or something outside of that space. And one of the things that made it that I kept coming back to that helped me be able to prioritize it, was the nature of the book itself - it’s something that I’ve done some research on myself that I’m very passionate about. High impact practices and especially experimental learning is something that I’ve done a lot of thinking about, and some hands on work, and some research related to it, and I think it’s incredibly important and I really appreciate it getting highlighted and all of these authors coming together and offering up these various perspectives. I felt very much a part of an important community, and something that hadn’t been said before that I felt needed to be said. And so it was really an honor to be able to help shepherd that, and that’s what I keep going back to – is how this helped – or helped me realize one of the goals I had when I started doing this work, which was to be more involved in the advancement of not necessarily the literature, but the education about it and the application of this to a broader audience. And so that was exciting for me, and that kept me motivated. And then also the opportunity to learn this very practical skill of what is it like to move an edited collection forward, or what is it like to edit with a colleague? And then once we moved to the various points in the process, um I think each one had a different strategy. So if it was editing the first chapters, or the first time chapters came in, I tried to be slow and methodical about making sure I was catching things. I got a little fatigued maybe the second, third round through things I was like, “I’ve read this chapter so many times.” But they were good, and every time I learned something new and I was like, “Did I read it carefully enough last time, because this feels a little new to me.” By the time we got to the end of the process, I was a little tired, um and I did read chapters on my vacation in Hawaii with my family – on a patio bench overlooking the ocean. So it was nice, but it was making it a priority in other parts of my life that contributed to being able to finish it on the timeline that we had set out.

**KL:** Well and I think that – this is the thing that I think is really variable when people – like I think that you and I were very committed to the timeline ad we needed to move it forward for a range of reasons, including other projects we had on our plates for a respective jobs here at Oregon State. And so we, I think sacrifice might be too strong of a word, but I think we were definitely prioritizing and like choosing to move it forward. And not necessarily at the expense of other thing, but just making sure that we weren’t holding – like we weren’t the bottleneck basically for the project. And having administrative support for it was also really helpful like having another set of eyes to do some of the copy editing, because you’re right. By the end you get kind of fatigued, and there is a balance I think between the larger vision for the work and the detail orientedness you have to have by the end when you’re really trying to make sure that formatting is correct, and you’re working on indexing, and things like that. In the beginning it is a lot more about shaping a vision of what you’re trying to create and how you’re trying to engage the contributors in that, but toward the end it’s like, “is this comma in the right place?” You know, and it’s a very I think challenging thing to shift into that, especially when we have so many other projects going on, and to take the brain energy that it needs to do that well is really hard. So I really – one of the things that I really appreciated about this project, especially at the end, was having all three of us – you, me and Amy, our admin who support our project, all of us having a set of eyes on this so that we were really trying to catch everything, especially at the proofing stage.

**CMH:** And I do also want to add it was really helpful having the support of my family and my partner, especially he knew I was working on this book, and he was supportive of it, and in the evening sometimes I would go in and I would be like, “Okay! I’m going to work on the book.” And he was really encouraging and supportive of that too, and I don’t think that would have – if he was like, “Why are you working on that again?” He knew I was committed to it, and he was committed to me being committed to it, so that was very helpful as well. Um yeah. So for me it was a lot of newness, and so I’m not sure that I know what you might categorize as bumps in the road, but do you – looking at our process in particular, what were the things that you noticed, or that you wanted to maybe call out that these were some of the things we encountered, and here’s how we dealt with them.

**KL:** Right. So we did have one group of authors who pulled out relatively late in the process, and that was a little bit of – that was a surprise. We weren’t expecting that to happen, so it was one of those situations like, okay now what do we do? Because we’re well into the process, and we know we have to bring someone in in the middle. So I did a little bit of research and found a couple new authors who were phenomenal, like totally willing to come on board part way through, super excited about the project, so happy to share their experiences with a particular high impact practice they wrote about, and that was a huge relief to be able to kind of bring them in. Um the second kind of bump in the road I think we encountered was we ended up adding a chapter that was not intended, um because when we go the first round of – um when we got the first round of chapters in, there’s a high impact practice of undergraduate research, and the undergraduate research chapter that we got, which I really love, was really focused more on the humanities, and we knew there was a whole section of undergraduate research that was more in the sciences, but our authors couldn’t speak to that. And so we ended up again, not at the last minute, but definitely in the middle of the process looking around to see who could we bring in to really address specifically undergraduate research in STEM. And again found a couple really amazing people who were totally willing to jump in, they had an expedited timeline, they were able to turn things around super-fast, and developed this really amazing chapter for us, and we ended up adding like a sister chapter basically. So that particular high impact practice has two chapters so that we can really explore both angles, and that was something where it does affect the length of the book, it does effect – you know, I had to go back to the publisher and say, “We had this experience, and do you have a problem with us adding additional length to the book? We think it’s going to make the book better, it’s important to us that we put this in.” and they were totally fine with it. So again it’s kind of – the bumps in the road are not insurmountable, it’s just kind of a wrench gets thrown in your plans a little bit, and you have to kind of get creative about, okay so what do we do here? And I think for people who are contributors to edited collections, it’s helpful to know that if you do need to pull out, the sooner the better, you know, like just be realistic with yourself about it. I think that’s a challenge. You know, you want to try to do it, and so you stay in as long as you can, but from an editor perspective, if you can’t do it we really need to know, so that we can get a replacement in and make sure the replacement is a really quality one. So that I think – and I’ve had that happen before in other edited collections as well, where people kind of pull out at the last minute, and I think that people pull out for so many different reasons, and good ones, I mean its not to say it’s not justified, but I think that in just in terms of the logistics of handling all of the different authors, it’s helpful to know early rather than later. So I think that that is a little of the bumps, is having to kind of swap out authors in the middle and bring people into a project that’s like well underway, and we don’t want the new authors to feel stressed. You know, that they have to get something and turn it around, and have questions about the quality of what they can do, and things like that. So just trying to give them as much space as possible to draft their initial drafts, and get feedback from us, and it means a quicker turn around on our end. And so.

**CMH:** It goes back to the commitment though (It does). I think when that happened – my sense is for both of us, it really kicked our focus, and our desire to be responsive and make sure they got the same attention and the same quality of feedback with in a timeline that matched the timeline that we asked them to move on, and so it really is a balance, and I think that’s how you show respect and regard for the commitment that these colleagues are doing, and putting faith in the work that you are working on together.

**KL:** Absolutely. And I think, like with any project, you are going to experience this. Like I have never had an edited collection experience, or any group project experience, where something has happened, you know that I – that I. you can’t plan for everything, and I think it’s really important to just kind of stay calm, and like we can quickly cavined, and we were like, what are we going to do, who’s going to take on what, and who do we know that could be good for this? And I think the collection is great, I mean like, even with these bumps, you know, like it’s turned out in a way that I’m just really excited to share it with everyone. So despite the bumps. You can still have an incredible product that comes out in a really good team of people that are contributing.

**CMH:** So Katie, I think I would engage in this process again. Maybe I would need a little time between this and the next project, but you seem to come back to edited collections. Could you talk a little bit about why – what brings you back to this process?

**KL:** I mean, I think for me, I really enjoy working with writers, with academic writers. In any capacity. I am an associate editor for a journal where I get the opportunity to do that, and I get to collaboratively write on a lot of projects including projects here at Oregon State and projects outside of Oregon State, co-authoring books with people, things like that. And I just enjoy kind of bringing people into – especially, I mean, I think what was rewarding for me was when we first talked about doing this together, and you were like, “You know, I’ve never done this before, but I’m up for it if you’re willing to do this and mentor me through it” and I was like “Absolutely.” Like I think that when you’ve gone through something, or you have experience in a particular area that someone else doesn’t, it’s important to share that, and to help nurture people into academic publishing. And I think edited collections are a really good way of doing that, because you can get sometimes first time authors in those edited collections, or in this particular one, we may have had people who never really written about teaching and learning before, like maybe they had subject areas in other things, or in their kind of home disciplines, but they never thought to write about high impact practices. But everyone who wrote in this collection, although some were more experienced in it and others were not, like everyone brought the same level of passion to it. You know, like they wanted to share what they knew was working in the classroom. And to give everyone an opportunity to do that is just really cool. Um I also think edited collections, and this came up a little bit in one of our earlier bonus clips, they’re a fantastic way to build a network, and to get to work with a large number of people that you would just not have worked with otherwise. And I feel this way about both of the edited collections that we’re doing right now, this one and the one that’s coming out in early ’19 on the business of innovating online. I mean, I’ve just had a really cool opportunity to interact with a bunch of really amazing people, and now we’re connected, and if we run into each other at conferences we know – we know each other. And there’s probably at least 50 people that I’ve added to my network from these two edited collections. So having that opportunity I think is just a very cool thing, and being able to expand your network in some way. And I think people will say, you know, they don’t think edited collections quote on quote count in the same way as a special issue of a journal, or that you know, even submitting a chapter to an edited collection is maybe not a smart move depending on your discipline. And I guess I feel that there’s so much more to edited collections than how they count on your CV, and even contributing a chapter to your book. It’s a community that you build, and there’s something important there about drawing people together around a particular topic and getting more perspectives than you can do alone. So I think that it’s a really special genre. I think that’s part of what keeps drawing me back to it. Alright, let’s go ahead and wrap up this bonus clip. Thanks so much for hanging in there with us with these behind the scenes glimpses into editing this book on high impact practices in online education. We’re going to come back with one more bonus clip next week on how we’re going to be working on promoting the book. So definitely make sure to check back for that. Thanks for listening.

You’ve just heard a bonus clip for our back to school miniseries, where I chat with my co-editor, Chrysanthemum Mattison Hayes, about our experience working with high impact practices in online education. Don’t forget that you can learn more about our book at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/hip.