Episode 153: 3-year Anniversary Part 1

# KL: Katie Linder

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**TG:** Tara Gray

**AS:** Ana Spalding

**JS:** Janet Salmons

**TT:** Tracy Teal

**IM:** Inger Mewburn

**MG:** Matt Bergman

**KA:** Kevin Anselmo

**CF:** Candice Foley

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

# [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. 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.

Hi there, RIA listeners. I’m so excited to share with you that it is our 3-year Anniversary for the “Research in Action” podcast, and this has been such an incredible project to do over the past 3 years. To help us celebrate this 3 year anniversary I reached out to our past guests to ask them the question: What is the research lesson that they learned in the past year that they thought could help other researchers? And we had such an incredible response. It was so fun to reconnect with our past guests and listen to all of their lessons, and I am so excited to share them with you over the next couple of episodes, so that we could squeeze everybody in. So let’s dive in to our first set of clips from our past guests.

In this first clip we hear from Dr. Danelle Stevens from episode 10: Journaling Best Practices, and she shares her research lesson that she’s learned in the last year. Take a listen.

**DS:** I think the most important lesson I’ve learned in the last year is the power of having a powerful citation management system. I have adopted Zotero about 4 or 5 years ago, and I have found it has changed my scholarship, it has improved my scholarship. It’s made me less nervous about my scholarship, wondering if I’m covering enough bases, and I see it as two levels. There’s what I call the basic level and then beyond the basics use of Zotero, and Zotero in particular is my library, I use it in such a way, it tells me I use it in such a way, it tells me I use it in a way that nobody else—he’s seen it used that way but he says that it’s very powerful, and when I teach it to faculty their jaws drop. But the basics of any citation management system, which I knew was that it is really a storage place in the beginning for all your urls, and documents, and pdfs, and other things. You can just kind of put it in this digital storage space. And so that means they’re not in little files associated with one manuscript. They’re not pdfs that come in from your friends that you go “oh I want to make sure I save that!” You can immediately put it in Zotero and it’s there. And it’s not wondering around your computer in some file or if your computer breaks down, or you lose something, Zotero has all of that information. And if you already have a bunch of pdfs on your computer you can actually drag them into Zotero when you create the site for yourself. And that will catch you up with what’s there. And it’s not heavy lifting in terms of managing it, getting it filled in. But it’s just that storage place and being able to put everything there is very important. And then the second best thing since you have them in Zotero, let’s say you wrote a paper, or I write a paper and I have all the references and I put them in one, what is called a collection or a file if you were in Microsoft word, and I put them all in the same collection and then I highlight them as references and I make a bibliography from them in about 10 seconds. And it’s a bibliography that’s correctly formatted.

So say you send a paper in that’s APA and you get it back and they rejected it and you find another journal and they wanted it to be in Chicago, you just go in and tell Zotero, I don’t want it in APA anymore I want it in Chicago. Then boom, boom, boom, it switches all of your references. So it has allowed me to spend my time more judiciously and more carefully. Because it is really a very good place to have them all and be able to have the flexibility and to put all the references in one file. You can also make collections. They have these collections, I have one called academic writing, but have probably about 12 different collections under academic writing. So I have emotions of writing as one of those, I have writing in the second language as one of those. I have writing retreats. So I have all of these collections and I just drag the files into that. So if I want to focus on one topic I have all of the references in one place. And that’s very handy. And the third kind of basic part is you can create kind of group libraries. And that means that if you’re working with another person you can both share the same set of references together, and move all your references in there, they can see the ones you collected, you can see the ones they collected and it can all be in one place there. And there can be any number of people that can be part of grouped libraries. And that to me is such a powerful tool. For years I had these stacks of paper, I put pencil marks on the front “See page 23 for quote” or “this is about writing retreats,” I tagged them the best I could in different stacks but it was always so, actually I didn’t trust I was doing a thorough search of the literature then as I do now. I’m very confident of what I’m doing in terms of that.

So my second group of things of Zotero, which is what my librarian said, what I do with it which he hasn’t seen anybody else do with it. And then it has to do with the functionalities of Zotero versus Melendy versus RefWorks, versus all the other kinds of citation management systems. The thing in Zotero is that you can take notes, you can take notes and all of those other systems but in Zotero, you can tag individual notes. In other systems you can have one long note, but in Zotero, you can tag individual notes. Therefore you could, I have a bunch of tags which are called “lack of research in doctoral student writing”. I can tag individual not only articles but individual quotations within those articles that have that statement. So when I want to write that section of my argument I can just hit, I can select all of the ones all of the tags that say “lack of research” in say “doctoral student writing” and I can cut and paste all of those individual quotes into a word doc and I have right in front of me all of the kinds of quotations and ideas, I can weave together to make the argument that there is a lack of research and doctoral student writing and it is, I've shown that to faculty and that's when their jaws drop. Wow and it is because you know, this is the kind of thing you do you put you know page number, see pages dot, dot, dot for the doctoral student writing but now it is in a digital form and you can create and I just I love it because then it I can weave those ideas together very quickly. I can see what I'm doing with them. And one of the things I make sure I do every time I open an article and I say, oh I want that quote. I want to make a note of it. I move it over to the note section for that one article and then at the bottom of it, I put an in-text citation as it would be in APA, like Jones and Smith, 2004, page 83.

So I don't have to go back and try to figure out what page it is on, and so then when I cut and paste that into a Word document where I would have the list of all those for example doctoral student writing issues. I already have the page number. I have the author and I have the year attached to that quote and then I can decide do I want to just use the quote or do I want to use the exact words the idea in the quote and it just becomes just a marvelous way to use the feature that is only found, according to my librarian, in Zotero where you can tag individual articles, individual quotations within an article.

**KL:** In this next clip you get to hear from Dr. Tara Gray who was from episode 18 on Publish and Flourish. take a listen as she shares her research lesson from the last year.

**TG:** This year, Katie, I've rediscovered that organization is the key to revising. If every paragraph is organized around a minor point and the list of minor points shows that the minor points add up to the major point. You'll have a paper that's organized. And not only that, it will also be persuasive. You’ve communicated your purpose to your audience. Which, of course, is the ultimate goal of any paper. You get this list of points you make a reverse outline or an outline that's created after you draft your manuscript. That doesn't mean you can't outline your manuscript before you write, but you will also want to outline it after. To begin your work of revising you make an outline. To do this, you read a section of a manuscript paragraph by paragraph backwards, that is read the last paragraph first and then the next to the last paragraph and so on. You read backwards so that you keep your focus on each paragraph as a distinct unit. Rather than slipping into reading the paper over and over again with no particular reason for the umpteenth time.

By reading backwards, you will see your manuscript through a new lens as if you were reading it for the first time. As you read you should locate a key or topic sentence in each paragraph. These sentences will go into the album. You may ask, what are the similarities and differences between a key and a topic sentence? Both types of sentences should appear early in the paragraph preferably within the first three sentences be written simply and with little detail. They should be the most general statement and they should assert the topic or point without trying to prove it. You've got the rest of the paragraph to do that. That's where the similarity ends. The difference is a topic sentence announces only the topic, but a key sentence, announces the key to the paragraph, which is the point. Thus a key sentence advances the argument better than a topic sentence does. These sentences are also stronger than topic sentences because they give the reader a better sense of direction. It's the difference between a sentence that states the paragraph will compare the nutritional value of an apple and an orange. Since it says it will assert that the nutritional value of the apple is superior to that the art. Once you give a point, you've got a key sentence in academe, you're not a mystery writer. Readers want to skip and skim therefore they want to know from the start that the butler did it. So now identify key sentences in a section of a manuscript you are writing by reading the section paragraph by paragraph backwards or in reverse. If you can't find a key sentence in a paragraph rewrite the paragraph to include one. These key sentences provide the very skeleton of your work and its structure. Next make a list of the key sentences you've identified.

Once you have the full list read the list of sentences sentence by sentence backwards. As you read check to see that each sentence helps communicate the purpose to the audience. If one key sentence doesn't help consider dropping it and the paragraph it comes from or footnoted if you'd rather. Next read the list, sentence by sentence forwards. As you read forwards ensure that each sentence is organized within the whole, logical and coherent. If two or more key sentences are poorly organized consider reorganizing them and the paragraphs they come from. Finally, read the entire section forwards checking to see that the changes you made really work. Making a reverse outline allows you to see the structure of your work without all the distracting detail of the rest of the manuscript. Therefore making a list is superior to merely highlighting the key sentences in the text. I highly recommend that you cut and paste them into another doctor.

Reverse outlining may sound like it takes a lot of time but to learn to do it well it will take some time. But if you learn to do it, well, it will save hours upon hours of flailing around not knowing just how to improve your writing and finding keys will take less and less time as you begin to write with them in mind, which you will soon begin to do. Papers with reverse outlines receive rave reviews from readers and reviewers alike.

Many of our readers report on that here's what one reader said: “When I apply the steps, my papers are accepted with fewer rounds of revision and revisions are minor. It's almost like a magic formula follow the steps get more papers accepted with fewer revisions.” For more information consult my book: Publish & Flourish: Become a Prolific Scholar, second edition. The cheapest way to buy it is that teaching.NMSU.edu, that page has a major tab that says publish and flourish. Thank you.

**KL:** Next up. We have Dr. Ana Spalding from episode 20 where she talked about her interdisciplinary research and here's her lesson from the last year that she thinks could help other researchers.

**AS:** So one lesson I learned in the past year is to do work that feels comfortable and to find people that are okay with you doing work that feels comfortable. Yeah over the past few years I've sort of felt the need to make social science more exciting, more attractive. So I've kind of gone in directions that weren't that comfortable and that didn't really make it successful.

**KL:** I am loving all of these research lessons, and I hope you are too we're going to take a brief break and then we'll be back with some more lessons from our past guests. The “Research in Action” podcast is brought to you by Oregon State University Ecampus, a leader in online education that's committed to making access to a top-ranked education available to learners worldwide. Our online students live in all 50 states more than 50 countries and five continents and since 2002 more than 5,000 students have earned a degree online through Oregon State E-campus. Learn more about our Global reach and impact and are 50 plus online degrees and programs at Ecampus.oregonstate.edu.

# Segment 2:

**KL:** In this next clip, I'm pleased to share with you the lesson learned from Dr. Janet Salmons who we heard from last on episode 23 on e-Research. Here's what she has to say:

**JS:** Right now, I don't have any primary research underway. I think of my work at this point as Meta-research because I'm doing research about research methods and trying to observe the trends and the developments that are going on today, particularly around qualitative and mixed methods. So one of my observations is that. It seems like qualitative and quantitative approaches are you know farther and farther apart because on the quantitative side, we have a lot of interest in data analytics and big data. Where you know, the end is so huge, you know, can you even count it? Which is you know, just so very different from the qualitative approaches that are typically more kind of person oriented. But then at the same time, it seems like the boundaries between qualitative and quantitative are blurring that we have qualitative researchers, who are interested in using their approaches with big data and we have quantitative researchers who are trying to find the stories behind the numbers. So, you know, that's kind of one point and then gets along with that I see you know this interest in big data and extant data of all kinds seems to be increasing and I think there are a lot of kind of social and cultural factors that play into those choices because with you know, some of the kinds of research scandals we've had in the last couple of years and other issues that are making it just difficult to find consenting participants for you know, some of the other kinds of approaches. But at the same time when I look at the literature that is getting published. I see a lot of what I think of as really deep data qualitative methods such as diary methods and narrative and creative art space methods that are that are deeply personal and individual.

So, you know when I look at these trends, I think almost any lesson I suggest the opposite could also be true. So out of that, you know, my recommendation is to researchers to go ahead and try whatever new and emerging approaches you want to use and draw from all the traditions or whichever tradition makes sense to you and then my second request is when you do so, would you please explain how and what you've done in the ratings that you do so that we can learn from each other.

**KL:** Our next clip comes from Dr. Tracy Teal from episode 31 on Data Carpentry, and Tracy shares her lesson from the last year.

**TT:** Well, thanks so much. I'm excited for the opportunity to come back after this podcast and answer this question. And so I think when reflecting on the year passed that the question is about. What is the most important? Research lesson, you've learned in the past year that could help other researchers and I don't think this is exactly necessarily a research lesson, but it's about the value of communication and of teaching and so what I would say the most important lesson that I've learned personally and through seeing the impact in our community is the importance of learning about how to teach and how to teach effectively and inclusively.

And as researchers, when we get up at the front of the room and we're teaching world leaders in our research, and teaching in a way that brings people into this topic makes them feel like they belong that is something that they can do is so impactful on people's ability to do research, be excited about this work and get more people into research and the kinds of things that we can do together. So I've just really seen what a difference it makes when we feel confident and have some information in our teaching and I think just that really can influence how we practice our research and who we do it with.

**KL:** In this next clip take a listen to Dr. Inger Mewburn from episode 33 on supporting and training new researchers on the important lesson that she's learned in this past year.

**IM:** So one thing that I've done this year, of all the years. I've actually gone to therapy. And I was prompted to go there because I realized I was working too much and I didn't quite know how. And I was also just having some strange relationships with some colleagues over trying to trying to make some space for myself and trying to walk myself back from the over-commitment state that I've got myself into. So I saw a therapist every month for a while and luckily the university actually supplies that. And what I found out is a university actually has two full-time therapist because there's so many academic seeing them, and I had no idea we never talked about the fact that we're all obviously using this service at my university and that they're keeping everyone on the same page. They helping people have better relationships with each other and this is never spoken about and it's never normalized and it's never made okay to seek therapy, especially if you're considered to be very successful. And so that one thing I've really learnt is that other people are going to therapy. And other people have benefiting from it and therapy is more like coaching for life than it is for fixing some sort of really broken problem that you have.

So I feel really transformed by that and I feel like my relationships with other people are just so much easier to manage. I just don't get myself in what we call in Australia in a tears. We're not going to have a difficult conversation with someone and it comes down to even simple things. Like I found out yesterday, we were significantly over budget, which normally sends me into a complete, you know, panic attack, but I was just shrugged and thought oh, well, they're not going to sack me for that and I thought I feel very therapize. So therapy.

**KL:** All the way back from episode 40 on early career research, next we have a clip from Dr. Matt Bergman sharing his research lesson from the last year.

**MB:** The major research lesson that I've learned along the way is that the idea of three in works, three in review, and three almost in-pressed or being published that year is a great rule to follow if you're on the tenure track, so if you can go that route, it's great. You know, you've got metrics met, you know, you're on path to getting tenure. But even more than that, what I had noticed is that when I find a topic or a content area that really drives me. It gives me so much leverage to get my research into the public eye. What we publish in the peer-reviewed journals doesn't often see the light of day. But when we have a lot of passion about what we are publishing that gets two more popular media, and I've been lucky and very fortunate to have a voice now in the broader media perspective through Keynotes through major news organizations, and now I feel like the population that I am researching has a voice in the regular societal norms of getting to higher levels of educational attainment.

Specifically that relates to adults with some college degree oftentimes on the fray and on the sidelines of what is important to the fabric of an institution, very traditional institution now is becoming part of the normal conversation because of shifting demographics, and I love the fact that these adults now have a voice, a way and a path to finishing degrees and now practices that are more friendly to welcome them back and instead of saying we'll give you another chance as institutions. We are now saying give us another chance because we're doing it differently. I love the quote from Sarah Ansel that really goes to the heart of being student ready rather than having and saying our students need developmental work. We need to be student ready, and now we as institutions are adapting and through my research we are finding ways to adapt and it is so great to see that hard work and that diligent effort to get in the weeds and produce high-quality content actually seeing the light of day and make an impact on how we operate as institutions.

**KL:** In this next clip we get to hear a lesson from Kevin Anselmo from episode 52 on sharing your research in traditional and digital media. Take a listen:

**KA:** Hey there, Katie. Congratulations on three years of podcasting. That is a great accomplishment. I know as a fellow podcaster, one of the most difficult things is to keep the momentum going after you have actually started a podcast so well done. So I wanted to share with you an answer to the question about something that I've learned as it relates to research communications. I'm approaching this from my perspective, for you, I know you're aware perhaps some of your audience isn't. Actually lead workshops on how to communicate research and one key learning that I've been able to glean over the past year is the importance of follow-up. So when I do my research communications trainings workshops now, I make it a point to focus on the 70-20-10 of organizational learning. So 70% of the way that we learn is through hands-on actual projects, 20% is through interaction with peers, and 10% is a one-off workshop. So therefore for someone like me, who does a workshop, Basically, I'm worth about ten percent. The real learning takes place through interaction with peers and through direct project work. So therefore whenever I'm doing a workshop now, I make it a point to incorporate follow-up projects that are directly related to the content. So I encourage your listeners who might be involved in training others about how to communicate research or who actually take part in any sort of training, keep in mind that the training that you're going to receive is just a small part of the equation. The main impact comes when you are actually putting into practice some of your learning insights I should mention the 70-20-10 model for organizational learning is a framework developed by the center for creative leadership. And so it's not just my own opinion something that's been research-based and tested out and I highly encourage others to consider using that approach to some extent as you think about your own research communications and education. Hope that's useful, and Katie, congratulations again on going into the third year of podcasting and I look forward to listening to more of your content.

**KL:** In this next clip you'll hear from Dr. Candace Foley from episode 53 with Nina Leonhardt on teaching research methods. Take a listen to her research lesson from the last year.

**CF:** Well, thank you for allowing us to have a follow-up to this question about the research lesson that we've learned in the past year that could help other researchers because our students are predominantly non-traditional at the largest community college in the State University of New York system, and we're non-residential we found that our ability to engage in and to connect our students with research experiences relies on the theory that not one size fits all and in that regard, we've found. To engage our students we've been able to embed research in our courses. We've also had some grant support that has allowed us to have students have interdisciplinary projects centered on a civic engagement theme, particularly to our environment, which is a coastal island off the coast of Connecticut and in the Atlantic Ocean, and therefore we have a water problem here with an aquafer system and also waste disposal. So we've been able to engage many disciplines around a central stem theme which is the water quality on the island and that's been also a way to increase the engagement and the participation of many students and also over time because the project like this can be built upon and scaffolded with multiple courses from multiple perspectives.

The other thing that we find that is very helpful in the community college environment to connect students with research because we don't necessarily have a large budget for equipment and they tend to engage in off-site research in peer-to-peer community building which creates a scaffolding of local regional ecosystem of support, and we can use the online component with our introduction to research methods course, which we have previously developed that they take concurrently along with their external research experience which connects them back to our college for academic credentialing and then therefore that also builds a compendium of evidentiary project based research that we can present to our other students who are considering these opportunities as well.

**KL:** In this clip. You'll hear from Dr. Kyle Niemeyer from episode 56 on open science. Here's his research lesson learned.

**KN:** So I think what I have begun to learn of the last year and probably started before this, but particularly the last year is the importance of doing a good job of estimating how long something is going to take. This can be reviewing a paper, this could be, you know, taking a look at a student's code, or you know working on an assignment for a class, or making a quiz, or grading really anything. It is almost always going to take longer than I think it's going to take, and so what I think the experience is starting to show is A: that it takes longer and B: that I need to do a good job of trying to estimate how long it's going to take in order to properly, you know, schedule my time and actually do all the things that I promise I'm going to do. Particularly so that I don't end up, you know bailing or ghosting on things like journal paper reviews or things like that.

That's my that's my big lesson learned of this year and I'm still it's still a work in progress because I don't think I'm actually still doing a good job at this but I have at least learned that I'm not doing a good job of it and I need to get better.

**KL:** I hope you've enjoyed hearing some of these lessons learned from our past guest. Don't forget to stay tuned for next week's episode and the week after that where we're going to share even more clips of different lessons from our previous guests on the show. If you want to help us to celebrate our third-year anniversary of “Research in Action” head over to iTunes and rate us or leave us a review. We'd love to hear from you there. Thanks for listening.

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