Episode 154: 3-year Anniversary Part 2

# KL: Katie Linder

**CS:** Carole Sargent

**ML:** Micky Lee

**TW:** Tasha Wyatt

**JF:** John Fritz

**VCP:** Valerie Clayman Pye

**JG:** Joanna Garner

**WM:** William Marelich

**BA:** Bryan Alexander

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

# [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.

**KL:** Hi, there are a listeners. I'm back with more clips from past guests in celebration of our three-year anniversary of “Research in Action” and if you'll remember the question that I asked our past guest was to share the research lesson that they've learned in the past year that could help other researchers. Let's dive into some more clips.

In this first clip, take a listen to Dr. Carol Sargent from episode 57 on publishing and top journals with some of the research lessons that she's learned in the past year that she thinks could help other researchers.

**CS:** I'd really like to start with the journals first. And even though I had said that before this past year, it was really in this past year that we start, we really started seeing the value of it in a powerful way, because Journal editors for the most part of trying to start conversations and they're creating in their journals bodies of literature and sites of knowledge that are supposed to be the center of a conversation and that rarely happens for them the way they wish it would. What ends up happening is authors are still sending in articles that they have written in isolation. So they've written this article alone or at the library or out of the research site or in some other thing than in deep immersion with the journal and some authors have pushed back on me on this and they said well, look, I read the journals in my field and I said, I understand that but are you really hunting for a point of mutual engagement before you start writing up your research results? You can have so many interesting results and some people whether its data driven or whether it's not doesn't really matter but something about your inquiry has yielded a result and it's fascinating to see how many people are aware of what's going on than it is in the journals, but they don't write starting there.

So, editors have had kind of almost begged me on this because once in a while, someone will submit something and the editor will notice that there's a jumping-off point for them. Wow, it would have been really great if you could have mentioned that paper we published in 2016 or that somehow you could have incorporated this whole other school of thought and the author is not quite ignorant of it. I think it's too strong of a word but the other wasn't thinking about it and so it didn't really end up with the effect can be walked like walking into a cocktail party. I say in starting to just talk. Without really hearing what other people are saying first. However, when you do it the opposite way when you keep the journals in mind, we actually had some really beautiful connections. One of the most powerful was one of my faculty authors who was asked to be the editor of a special issue and it was because the journal felt that he had so well captured what it was they were trying to do. In their in their conversation, they felt like he was really reflecting back to them what was going on. So we just had another one of those actually a woman just came in a couple of days ago and said, I'm so excited a journal has actually asked me to referee a whole round table that will be published in the journal and it's partly because they feel that I sound, you know, on message.

So that's been my biggest research result. And I think that the reason I discovered it this year and not as much in previous years, although we've been talking about it is now we're starting to see the results. I can take years to recommend something for people to actually do it and get something good for it. But what they're getting is relationships with editors. They're coming back from conferences and reporting to me that they're being asked to sit on conference panels where the journal is present. And they're not exactly being asked to speak for the journal but being asked to speak as the journal frames itself for new Scholars, and I feel like that's a real sign that we're onto something.

**KL:** In this next clip you'll hear from Dr. Micky Lee from episode 65 where she talked about balancing research and parenting. Here's what she had to say:

**ML:** So I have learned two things in the past year, they are related. The first thing is meeting that lie is very important and I think I have always known it to be this way. But you know, what I learned is now I am more inclined to write books than journal articles. And also one thing I learned is for publishers, especially commercial publishers, they really want to work with authors that can deliver on time.

So because I have built up a reputation of someone who would turn things he did not only on time but also early I have adapted to a really good relationship with a publisher a commercial publisher. So two of the latest book that I have, contra to do I think not if I'm pitching a proposal because they actually invited me to send a proposal in and also because I think I have built up a reputation of you know, being able to deliver my manuscript on time. There was one instance that if I'm before I responded to the reviewers of my book proposal the publisher already got a green light, you know about for my proposal to go through so, you know, what it means is regardless of what the reviewers of the book proposal say. They're willing to cite this book. So that happened and then another book project also by the same book publisher, you know, they just say, “hey, I really want to work with you on another project” and initially I thought well, I'm not sure if I want to write another book now, but they actually pitched the idea to me, you know, do you want to write this book and I just thought well, you know sure I can think about it.

So, you know, being able to deliver things by that by the deadline if not earlier. I find it's like really important and I think, you know, related to is if it is possible not to say no if you can afford the time and energy to do it don't say no, even if you are in doubt of whether you should take on a research project that other people are as if you want to do, you know. You just say I need to think about it. You know, I will reply to you by a certain time because you know, what I have learned is very often when you begin to say no people were just saying, well, it is not like you are not interested in it. Now, they will take it as you are just not interested in them or in the idea. So even if you are unsure my suggestion is you tell people that you need time to think about it or if you are not sure about it now you tell them by what time you know, you will have a much more definite answer. So two things that I have learned is once again deliver your news report by the deadline if not earlier because that will actually gain you a lot of, proposal, you know people actually pitch to you that vice versa. And the second thing is, you know, don't just say no, you know, you can tell people you need time you can ask what more information but just don't say no right away.

**KL:** In this next clip you'll hear from Dr. Tasha Wyatt from episode 69 on unexpectedly transitioning to a new research area. Take a listen to Tasha's lesson from the last year.

**TW:** So I am an educational researcher in a medical school, which means that I primarily collaborate with physicians and basic scientists. And these two groups of people have very different relationships with research than I have as a qualitative researcher. So the physicians actually interact with patients all the time if they do interact with researchers around kind of evidence-based medicine. So they're looking at where studies have taken place where kind of drugs were used how many people were in the studies? And then I have basic scientists and basic scientists tend to have sort of a post positivist perspective around research, a lot of pre-post and intervention kind of work. So with this, sort of two population group that I interact with and I try to support the research needs. I've had a really hard time getting them to embrace qualitative research.

So my tact in the last three years has been, okay, so let's talk about you know, what is qualitative research whether the data source is having analyzing take a very neighbor maybe higher Ed approach to teaching somebody how to do qualitative research and that hasn't really worked out all that well. And I decided that this last year I would take a different approach.

So when I have fellows come into my educational research fellowship or I have folks come in that need consultations. My new approach is to say tell me what you do, describe a typical day for me, what kinds of things make you stop and say “Oh, that's actually really interesting,” I wonder what's going on and what sorts of things you just kind of ponder keep you up at night. Because it's you can't quite figure out what's happening. And once I get the stories out of them, then I'll ask them what they've come to see me for what kind of research they want to do. But that initial conversation about what they notice and what you find interesting actually is my Segway into helping them see the importance of qualitative research and where they could fit it into the project that they've come for consultation. So in some ways it's kind of a back door that I found based on their interests, rather than sort of like an inductive approach to learning how to do qualitative research rather than a more deductive approach where I teach them how to do it and then they go and do it.

**KL:** Our next clip comes from Dr. John Fritz who was on episode 72 on researching course design and. Here's what John had to say about his research lesson from the last year.

**JF:** Yeah, I think in reflecting on this past year, one of the things that I'm really starting to realize is the research is important, but getting the word out is as well. And there's a group at our university that is focused on scholarship of teaching and learning and one of the things one of my colleagues, Linda Hodges always talks about is the dissemination component how you get the word out? Because the research doesn't become research until people know what it is. Until they hear about it and I had an interesting example of how that works, this this past summer we had an interesting collaboration with Blackboard, vital source, which is our e-textbook provider, Blackboard is our LMS, where we were able to combine those data sets and find among other things that we could predict with 72-98% accuracy who was going to get a D or an F. By week four of our 15-week semester. I won't go into all of the details, but it was pretty reliable and in terms of its dependent on how students use those to those tools, but it was really interesting to think that you know, final grades don't have to be the only trigger for an intervention. The interesting challenge is what do you do with that information and it's and it's a good discussion to have but you can't have that discussion of people don't know what your findings are and so blackboards blog posted the study. I can provide the links to it if you want it and then Ecampus news picked it up campus technology picked it up. What was interesting though is that my own campus had not done anything with it because I hadn't really told them a whole lot about. But they found out about it through these other outlets. They talked with me. We ended up doing a nice little story on it in the campus news. And now I'm having those conversations with leadership that I'd like to have about what if anything do we want to do with this information at week 4. Of the semester what's doubly sort of galling is I used to be UMBC’s PR director. And so the fact that I didn't you no avail myself of the same things I used to do when I was working with faculty researchers. It was I had the sort of oh duh moment, you know that I should have engaged them a little sooner.

So, you know from the standpoint of doing research. Trying to make an impact. That's great. But sometimes you need help in getting the word out to others and sometimes even helping to craft what that message is. And so, you know, when you're buried in your research, you're you know, you're in the weeds as it were but, you know being able to find those nuggets of you know interest that can sort of engage people is really important and increasingly now, I'm starting to see. More of a focus on things like storytelling with data. I'm working on a sort of a course idea of finding and telling the stories in data. There's an interesting book called visual storytelling with data. I think its Lynn cold mafic. I think it is but you know, I'm starting to see you know, this combination between there's a high curve of analytics in data. That now, the human element needs to catch up with and as how do we get the word out? How do we connect people to the impact of our work, more importantly what if anything can they do with the findings to try to try to impact students and learning so that in a lot of ways I've been through different parts of this but to have it all kind of come back to me that, you know, I kind of first got the story out. Maybe externally for some credibility sake but that got the interest of the internal campus news. And now I'm able to have a conversation with folks about you know, that the learning management system or E-textbooks could be more than just a content delivery device. They could be a real-time diagnostic of student engagement. If you'll accept those kind of digital Footprints as a proxy for engagement.

**KL:** I hope you're enjoying these lessons from our past guests as much as I am. We're going to take a brief break and when we come back we hear some more lessons back in a moment.

The “Research in Action” podcast discusses research in higher education that has a direct and immediate impact on faculty staff and students across the world including topics that directly benefit Student Success here at my own institution student success is a top priority and we all work towards that common goal. Oregon State University Ecampus student success counselors recently developed the dynamic Ecampus Learning Community where all online students can receive robust support the student success coaching throughout their academic journey establish an academic support network and build lasting connections with their peers around the world more than 90% of students accepted the invitation when it launched and it's been a resounding success tour the community yourself at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/elc

# Segment 2:

**KL:** Our next clip comes from Dr. Valerie Clayman Pye, who was on episode 77 on practice-as-research. Here's Valerie's research lesson learned in the last year.

**VCP:** I think one of the biggest things that I've learned through the research process in this last year is to really be in conversation with the research. So to not only process the research in order to write but to write in order to process the research, has been one of the biggest things which connects to embracing the unknown and the ideas about starting before you're really ready and also just to allow room for one to be the student in your own research in addition to being the expert. That's what my years taught me.

**KL:** Take a listen to this next clip from Dr. Joanna Garner who was on episode 81 on effective presentation slide design. Here's Joanna's lesson.

**JG:** So the lesson I have learned this year, the research lesson, I have learned this year is to take research and take your theories and go into new settings with them. So the example that I wanted to talk about is for my own work at the center for educational partnerships here at ODU. We have formed a researcher practitioner partnership with a new Museum that recently opened on our campus called The Barry Art Museum and together with the director of the museum and the staff at tea set up here and Museum. We are formed a researcher-practitioner partnerships. And so far we have two products that I just want to plug real quick. So one product that we have is called the visitor reflection studio and it's a place with in one of the galleries where visitors can come and instead of looking at amazing pieces of art. They are creating their own Reflections and their own drawings and writing about the art and about how it connects to their own life and it's based in some work that I've done previously on visitor identification and engagement with Museum settings. So that's one piece that we have. A second product to that partnership is a gallery educator program. So we are combining the fact that this is an art museum where we will have educational tours with the fact that we're connected to an institution of higher education, and we're currently in the middle of doing professional development for a cohort of volunteers so that they can create their own tours in the museum. So those are examples of things that I have learned in the past year about taking your research into new settings.

**KL:** Our next clip is from Dr. William Marelich who was on episode 91 with guest host. Dr. Mary Ellen Dello Stritto on the applied quantitative perspective. Take a listen.

**WD:** So one of the lessons I learned in the last year in terms of doing applied research and it's something that comes up occasionally, but definitely last year I've experienced it is this idea of trusting your theory or framework that you are applying when you're doing research. So for example there's a large intervention study that I've been involved with for the last few years, and really the bulk of the analyses on it taken place in the last 12 months. This is big intervention study applying a couple different Frameworks and the initial analyses when I started crunching numbers organizing the data crunching the numbers the initial analyses really didn't show a lot going on. That in from there you just sit and especially if you're working from a grant you sit and go. Okay. Well like what happened here?

So in other words what you what you don't do is you don't say you don't throw up your hands and say well I guess there's nothing here normally, especially if you're working with a theory or some type of framework or model, especially something that's established. What you need to do is trust that theory or framework you, you know, in other words while we should be getting results here. This is an intervention, you cross-check your methodology to make sure there weren't any holes any threats to internal validity leakage to leakages when the control group finds out what the intervention group is doing. So just to, kind of make sure that those things haven't taken place. And then you move on and say okay well we should be getting some findings. Why aren't we getting findings? And so this actually happened in the last year where some initial runs over to the summer yielded not no results but results that were fairly weak so, then as more senior analyst I you know, I sit and take a step back and go, “okay, well what's up here?” So what I end up asking in these situations and I got I did this recently is you know, something is a something as simple as are the measures were using whether they are predictors or outcome variables were they were they scored correctly? Simple as that the next question and luckily they were so that was good. And then the next thing that I'll ask this case I did ask this is well the items in the measures were using do they actually reflect what we were intending to change with the intervention. And this is something where if you're using, you know, published established measurement scales. Let's say a measurement scale on self-esteem, you know, it's well if you're if your intervention is focusing on affecting just a couple different areas of self-esteem then above a broader measure of self-esteem and all the items aren't going to really reflect what you're trying to change the more direct thing. We were actually working with something called family routines. And so this is with the sample of mothers and adolescents and with family routines. The intervention was focused more on getting parents and kids eating dinner together more regularly family routines. When you're raising kids a lot of research points out that if you have constant structure some family routines in place that that actually you get better, you know outcomes for children and adolescents etcetera.

So in the intervention were trying to suggest the families, you know have breakfast together have dinner together. Do this together, do that together, but a lot of family routines measures, especially when we were using add some other items thrown in because they were they were developed. The family routines measures are developed to generalized all sorts of different populations and situations and the intervention we were dealing with which was a something to do with health, you know, we were pinpointing very specific things. So there were able to take a step back and go okay, you know, we’re not getting some from the broader measure. However. If we take a look at things what we actually tried to affect its like, “wow, we are we are getting findings here.

So it's a way of going into an established measurement scale and asking some hard question. But what did we try to change and then did we actually get that those direct changes are not so that's another thing that that I ended up doing was kind of drilling down into that particular couple. She was there and then the other thing that really sticks out with me was you know where the right statistics applied in other words when we when you go in and you you're doing a complicated study where and this is something with my graduate students I point out that they'll be doing Masters theses and they have like one outcome and we're two outcomes in for predictors. I'm like, so when you get out and real applied research you have. Ten outcomes or 15 outcomes you're looking at and you could have for any of those outcomes you could have five predictors or predict or something like that. You can have complex models at work.

So things complicated very quickly when you get out in the real world of applied research. So here are the right statistics applied or performed. Well, you asked, Okay, overall you were trying to show this particular theory or framework to be viable. So we're trying to show an intervention group is doing better than a control group. So especially longitudinally is you know, do you want to go in and do take a look at mean differences over time or you're more interested in doing Trends? And if you're going to do Trend analyses, are you looking simply at linear trends or quadratic or cubic? And this is something again, I faced in the last the last year we're coming in and saying, okay, are we really interested in pure linear trends and applying for what we were doing something like growth curve modeling and only looking at linear trends and the initial analyses. That's all I was doing because it was for me it was easiest to program. It was just boom done and I thought you know, I took a step back and took a look at some of the research that's like, you know, probably especially with intervention studies that are longitudinal over a number of different time points. You're going to get an initial increase in an intervention group or decrease, depending on what you're trying to get the group to do and that's going to happen right after the intervention. So pretty much the first time point you're going to get an effect and then you get things that sometimes taper off. So in other words, maybe looking at linear trends, linear growth trends, that's not the way to go because you're always going to get some type of curve in there. So not always but a lot of times you will so in that case then you take it was like well, maybe we take a look at mean differences and take a look at Baseline assessment versus this follow-up period and this and this and this and assess that way so as opposed to trying to explain why we might get a quadratic or cubic effect to the effect Looks like a funny s shape while quadratic is an inverted u-shaped or u-shaped instead of going that way and then trying to explain that sometimes it's like let's just take a look at mean differences and see what we could change here. We don't get change here. We can explain that in terms of initial change after an intervention.

So that's another kind of big thing that I ran into and had to address something again. I learned to relearn and then and then the final thing which this is the thing I found the most interesting out of everything I ran into this year. So this is the new thing for me was taking a look at change over time and just taking a look at an intervention groups have a baseline assessment and then you have the intervention occurs. And then you have one of the early follow-up period so, you know, we should get a change if the model is correct at the Frameworks, correct, and again in aggregate losing kind of actually using. Nice published scale we just were not getting fine. So it wasn't getting any findings and I kept looking at that and in this case and all the items look like they reflected what we were trying to change and I said, well, you know, but take a look at time point one and time point to take a look at Baseline take a look at the first follow-up period all the I always scores on the items all increased and they all increase on the follow-up time period. And so basically across 20 items everything took a jump up, which is what should have happened based on the intervention. We were trying to increase something like family monitor parental monitoring or something like that. So everything's like took a bump up. And it's like well, okay and aggregate it in terms of a scale score. It wasn't a significant change.

However, we can ask, Well, what is the probability that all 20 items, you know are going to increase in the follow-up period compared to the Baseline and that's in you know here, you know, I'm not trying to sell I mean ultimately it's a small effect. It's a small it's something that arguably probably isn't reportable, but it. As give some evidence that wow, okay, the intervention was doing something it did show a little bit of an increase and then that kind of gives you hope okay, we're doing something and actually that's something. I did write up for one of the papers are working on we ended up cutting it out because honestly it's week, you know, it's hey, we just showed you showed increases across all the items. And there's the probability of that is less than 5% happening and I used some bizarre non-crime. Trick statistic and the people I work with we're kind of like well, this is good but it gives us hope but boy, I don't know it's a little you know, it's could be argued be a little weak and I was like, yeah, that's true because it is but it does kind of show it's a way to come in and say they look we're doing something here. And at that point when I was crunching the numbers and writing up the results it that was kind of a Tipping Point for me to put maybe let's try. The analysis at a different direction.

So that that's kind of in a nutshell. So there's a especially when you're in the midst of analyzing data from a large grant and writing things up and trying to interpret things, you know coming in and saying well, they're totally isn't anything here probably isn't the best way to go. So you need to kind of come in and say, “All right, well, where it where did we go wrong?” Okay, we didn't go wrong. So what other are there different ways we can look at the data are there different ways we can do wanted to make comparisons we want to do trends. Do we want to how do we want to look at this? Is there a way to drill into some of the established items? Etc. So those are kind of the big things that I experienced this year.

**KL:** In this next clip you'll hear Dr. Bryan Alexander from episode 97 on researching the future sharing his research lesson from the last year.

**BA:** My name is Brian Alexander and the lesson I learned was the power of networks. That's not a new lesson. It's a lesson that a lot of us have been talking about for probably 20 plus years, but I was really aware of that by several things happening in my research one was. Finishing my new book and then realizing just how many people had worked on it with me and I don't mean my editor who is fantastic and I don't mean the production staff, they're great. But what I mean is hundreds of people had contributed stories, reflections, thoughts, feedback to me in the process of writing it and sometimes it was me trying out ideas on them, but it was also them bringing to me content that they thought I should pay attention to and I really felt like a spider in the middle of a giant web and in the course of this and I was doing my acknowledgments page and was just sprawling getting longer and longer so many people I thought that with my monthly FTT report and I take, I've always thanked people for suggesting stories in it, but I'm always thanking in footnotes and now, I built this section or the past few months about the section and introduction and that's just getting bigger. And then the last month, we celebrated the three-month and three-year anniversary the future Trends form, which you've been a guest on and I was really, it was impressive that they were 2,600 people who were participating in the community, but also just how many folks had contributed housing time setting comments people like you have been guests. It really astonishes me it.

I was trained as a humanist and in the humanities, we really practically believe in isolate individuals. That's how we do our scholarship or research. If we co-author something it is will not happen that some copyright laws based copyright law is based entirely on the idea of the creative single individual in this just really brought home to me how much of my research is really collective, collaborative, distributed, networks, social. It's not quite the wisdom of the crowd. It's really the benefits the power of networks. So that's my research lesson for 2018-2019.

**KL:** I hope you enjoyed hearing even more clips of lessons learned from our past guest on the show. Make sure to stay tuned to next week's episode where we're sharing even more Lessons Learned. If you want to help us celebrate the three year anniversary of research and action head over to iTunes and leave us a rating or a review. We'd love to hear from you there. Thanks for listening.

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