Episode 160: Stephen Jenkins

**KL:** Katie Linder

**MEDS**: Mary Ellen Dello Stritto

**SJ:** Stephen Jenkins

**KL:** You’re listening to “Research in Action”: episode one hundred and sixty.

[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.

**MEDS:** I'm your guest host. Dr. Mary Ellen Dello Stritto, I'm pleased to bring you another episode in our periodic series focusing on quantitative methodology and statistics. On this episode, I'm joined by Dr. Stephen Jenkins, he is currently the interim executive director of University Housing and Dining Services at Oregon State University. He has 18 years of experience in higher education student affairs with several institutions. Stephen recently completed his doctorate of education and educational leadership post-secondary education at Portland State University. For his dissertation, he studied the academic advising experiences and learning of online learners.

Thank you for joining me today, Stephen.

**SJ:** Thank you. It's great to be here with you.

**MEDS:** What got you interested in the topic of academic advising for online Learners?

**SJ:** Absolutely. So it's actually kind of interesting, I am a non-traditional student, so I didn't start college until I was 24, I started at a community college, I transferred to a small regional, and then transferred from there to a large public institution. And so as a non-traditional, low-income, student of color, multiple transfers – so all of the different things that we know as student affairs, people as we know as economic and educational researchers actually have challenges or issues for students to say achieve their educational goals, and those are the things that I experienced myself as I was going through this process. And then I had the opportunity to work in multiple institutions going from the large flagship state institution down to one of the smallest institutions in the states, and one of the things that I realized is that we need to provide more and different ways for non-traditional learners, for rural learners, for all different kinds of learners to be able to access higher education, and I don't know that we've always done a really good job of that. And so as I was doing my research for – actually I wasn't even in the research - I'm trying to figure out what I wanted to study – uh do my research on for my dissertation, one of the things I was looking at very specifically was rural learners. But then as I started looking at how rural learners were accessing higher education, one of the things I looked at was online learning and had the opportunity to then connect with an academic advising collaborative that was started at Portland State University, where I was doing my doctoral work, and I had the opportunity to connect the online learning piece to academic advising. And I think this is a critical - academic advising is a really critical piece of how we expand access to higher education and help students to be successful once they actually are able to access it.

**MEDS:** Great - um and you mentioned a collaborative. Do you want to tell us about what that is?

**SJ:** Absolutely. So at Portland State University, Dr. Janine Allen and Dr. Cathleen Smith, both of whom are emeritus faculty, back in - beginning of the 2000s, started of looking more closely at academic advising. And one of the things they wanted to do was look at academic advising at a cross-institutional perspective, so small institutions, large institutions, public and private as well as community colleges. And so they started reaching out to academic advising folks and other academic leaders at these different institutions to see if they would be interested in engaging in this economic advisor in research- and so in the end, there were nine institutions total. So - reaching all kinds, so – public institutions, private institutions, some of the largest institutions in the area, some of the smallest institutions in the area, and a couple of community colleges as well. So a really broad perspective - broad set of perspectives around the experiences that students have that academic advising.

**MEDS:** Interesting, and that - that's quite a collaboration across different groups. That's pretty rare, isn't it?

**SJ:** I would say so (yeah), especially looking at the research and academic advising. So much of it is single institution research, or if you have multi-institution, they tend to be similar institutions or just a couple of institutions, maybe two or three institutions. So to have nine institutions that had such a breadth of types of institutions was pretty unique in this research.

**MEDS:** Great. So maybe you can tell us a little bit about, you know, some of the background or some of the - the kinds of research in this area kind of as a backdrop for your study.

**SJ:** Absolutely. So looking at online advising in particular, some of the earliest research you can find in this comes from the - right around the mid-90s to the late 90s. Robert Curry out of Old Dominion University did his dissertation research actually looking at academic advising for distance learners. Online learning was in its nascent stages at that point, so it's hard to look at specifically online learning, so he looked at distance education. And what he did was actually looked at institutional responses to academic advising, so what were - what were institutions providing for advising, as well as what kind of tools are we using to provide advising?

**MEDS:** Right and thinking back to the early 90s, this was - distance learning was really distance learning, right (precisely)? Yeah, so that's a different context than we have today.

**SJ:** Absolutely. So a lot of, probably still what we would consider correspondence courses (correspondence, yeah), were in some cases mass duplication of videotapes, videocassettes and send them out, and those kinds of things. So - so exactly. So that's what he was looking at, were institutions that were doing that kind of education. And one of the things you said at the very end of his - so he then turned, like a lot of folks, he turned his dissertation into some peer-reviewed literature, and - but one of the things that he said at that point was we need to do more research on this. So some of the other research you see from the very early days of online education - we're talking the early 2000s now, was really around student services. So, we really talked about how do we provide the curriculum in online education, and then people started talking about, “Okay, now that we have these students online, how do we provide student services to them?” And so really a lot of the research was around what student services do online learners want? And so they were looking at a variety of things, whether it was academic advising books or services registration, health services, student clubs and organizations, career advising. They were looking at a lot of different student services to see which ones were important for online learners to have. One of the things they found continuously is the academic advising, or in some cases is called registration assistance or those types of things, generally almost rose either up to the top or one of the top two services that online learners were wanting. They wanted that academic advising function, so that is one set of research that was happening. The other types of research for - happening to advising for online students typically were around technology and just the advising tools, so a lot of it was a how do we extend advising to these students? So research around how do we do advising over the telephone, how do we do advising over email? When social media started coming into play, how do we use Facebook, or Myspace, or other types of social media tools to extend advising out to these students? And the other one were advising tools, so how do we provide information to students? So for instance, the use of portals, or degree mapping, or those types of things where students could – there’s more self-service, so students could go in and see where they were and their degree plan, those kinds of things. So most of the research tended to focus on those areas, there was a very little research actually - actually going around and talking to students about what their experiences with advising was. And so that's really where the genesis of my research and what I wanted to look at came from, was realizing we don't know a whole lot about what students want from advising, what they found important from advising, how satisfied they were with advising. And then without knowing that, what we were left with was really thinking about, “Okay, what do we do for students who are on campus, and then how do we just do that for online students?” Well, I think there are some critical core components to academic advising that makes sense, um certainly we need to do it for - for online students and for on-campus students, but we didn't really know what was the most important and what online learners really wanted, and so that's really what I wanted to take a look at.

**MEDS:** And isn't it surprising that there wasn't any research really asking them those questions? (Oh absolutely) That's kind of amazing, if you think about it.

**SJ:** Yeah, you know, it's interesting because again, uh Curry, was actually a chapter author in a couple of the additions of the *Handbook of Distance Learning*, which is for people who are in distance or online learning, is kind of the guidebook you go back to, I think it's in its third or fourth edition at this point. And it was funny because at the end of each chapter of each edition he'd say, “Yeah we need you to do some more research” because a lot of it ended up being reiterating kind of the research that had already been done - he had already talked about, but really again saying we need to do some more research in this area.

**MEDS:** All right, so we're going to take a brief break and when we come back, we'll hear more from Stephen about his methodological approach and data analysis.

The “Research in Action” podcast is a team effort, and I want to give kudos to our Oregon State University Ecampus multimedia team who ensure the podcast is the high-quality production that it is. OSU Ecampus is home to award-winning multimedia developers who create innovative tools that improve the learning outcomes among online learners. Take are internationally recognized and nationally awarded 3D microscope for example. Believed to be a first-of-its-kind, this academic breakthrough effectively puts a microscope in the hands of distance learners worldwide. Learn more about our innovative efforts at ecampus.oregonstate.edu/microscope.

# Segment 2:

**MEDS:** So before we get into talking about the methodological approach and the analysis that you used, I think it might be interesting for us to hear a little bit about the theoretical background that you used to help us understand your study.

**SJ:** Absolutely. Crooksten and O’Banion in their research started looking at what was - what was academic advising as a field, and that's where the first mention of the idea of developmental advising came about. And so they had set up these ideas that we have prescriptive advising which is the idea that we tell students what classes they need to take, we tell students what they need to do to graduate. It is very prescriptive in the sense of you - just the checklist things that you need to do. Developmental advising was the idea that we need to help students also understand how these things can act, so how does my general education coursework connect to my degree? How does all that connect to what I want to do as a career? How does all that connect to who I am as a person, how I want to proceed in my life, what kind of person do I want to be? So it has this idea of development of the whole person, and that was an important part of developmental advising. So it's again, really the first time that stared – stared to be discussed at that point. And so what Janine and Cathleen found though was that it was almost taken as gospel, and so in a sense what people started saying was prescriptive advising is bad and that developmental advising is good, so there was on this good - bad spectrum (wow) type of pieces. So their argument really was that good academic advising or quality academic advising consists of both prescriptive and developmental aspects, because what we know is that students do want developmental advising. They do want to feel like they are known as an individual, they do want to think that their skills and their abilities and interests are being considered as their advisor is giving them information; they do want their advisor to help them make meaning out of their experiences in college. But they also want to be told you got to take these three courses if you’re going to graduate (Right, right), they want to be told you know, “Here's the timelines - you got to meet these timelines if you're going to get graduated on time.” So they want both of those things, and so this dichotomy between prescriptive and developmental was really unhelpful. And so rather than have this is dichotomy between these two types of advising, what Janine and Cathleen talked about is we need to develop a model that talks about quality academic advising. So in doing that they developed a framework that included 12 functions of academic advising that fell into five overarching –what’s the word I’m looking for; domains (okay) – domains of academic advising. So the integration domain, so how do you integrate your learning into an overall whole? Uh referral domain, so we're getting referred to both academic and non-academic resources as you need them. Information domains, so these are things like how do things work, you know, timelines, receiving accurate information so knowing that whatever your advisor is telling you is true and accurate, and will help you succeed. Uh individuation, so they want their advisor know them as an individual, they want their advisor understand their skills, abilities, and interests and help them use those things to figure out where they want to go. And then finally shared responsibility - that the idea that advising is not just an advisor telling a student what to do, but also the student really engaging and that relationship in a way where they share responsibility for the students ultimate success. And so using this framework, Kathleen and Janine actually have published several peer reviewed articles around using this quality academic advising model framework to look at of these functions what do students find important? What do faculty find important? Is there a - is their disagreement between what faculty think they should be providing in advising and what students think that faculty should be providing in advising? And then also the impact of satisfaction on these, and there is as well as some learning outcomes on overall advising learning, so what do students learn, what do they - are able to do, and what do they know as a result of engaging in these advising experiences? (Interesting) So the focus of the study was - this was a non-experimental survey - survey based research study. So again, there was very little prior research in online learning, so it's very hard to set up an experiment where we tested one condition against another. There had been research on students generally that Cathleen and Janine had done, so there were some basis of evidence and research that had been done in this area that really was exploratory. I really wanted to understand the experiences of online learners and describe that experience. This was existing data, so we had surveyed, again, institutions - nine different institutions, I just - think over just over 30,000 students total (wow) over these nine institutions. And so what – again, because I wanted to look at online learners, and specifically I wanted to look at learners who were taking their entire degree program online. So uh - so excluding hybrid learning, excluding students were doing part on campus part online - I really wanted to look at students who were studying completely online. That left three institutions who at the time were offering degree programs that were completely online that were part of this research collaborative. And so - there were roughly a little over seven thousand respondents from those three institutions and the three institutions included a very large research institution, a very small public four-year institution, and then a community college. So a lot of variable data came from a lot of different areas, and the survey itself is - so this is survey that went out to all registered students to these institutions and then I filter those data down to students that were degree-seeking, and that was important because a lot of students just come back to take a class or two, or those kinds of things, so I really wanted to look for students that were degree-seeking. And then at the community college, we paired it down even more to look at students who were planning on getting a four year degree (oh interesting), so they may be pursuing an associate's degree at that time, but their ultimate goal is to transfer some point and obtain a four year degree, so that way I wanted to feel like we're comparing a roughly similar set of students in terms of their aspirations.

**MEDS:** What were you mainly looking at?

**SJ:** So a couple of different things. Someone was looking at were there differences between on-campus and online learners, both in how they rated their importance of the different academic advising functions – and so do they rate those differently, and then did the online learners, do they rate the functions differentially within the functions themselves? So in other words, we had 12 advising functions, was there differentiation between each of those 12 advising functions? Do they just say they're all important, or they’re all not Important? So that was so using t-tests to compare the two groups, and then using with-in subjects ANOVAs to differentiate between the different advising functions (functions, okay). So that was one area - so those are a couple of the analyses that we use. I also use the multiple regression analysis, because I also wanted to understand what was unique about being online, and so I did - online students differentiate between the different academic advising functions as a result of being an online student versus their age, or gender, or institutional type, or other types of factors. And then - so we are using multiple regression analysis to look at that. I also wanted to see if there were differences between online and on-campus students, looking at how frequently their advised and where they receive their advising information. So - so looking at that were they getting their advising less than once a year or never, were they being advised at least once a year, were they being advised more than once a year? And then in terms of location, were they being advised by an advisor, were they using advising tools or websites, catalogs, those types of things, or they getting their advising information from friends, classmates, etc.? And for those analyses they use the chi-square analysis, so pretty simple analysis (Okay). And then the - the last part that I really wanted to look at was, again looking - we had several learning outcomes that we wanted to look at and we wanted to see based on looking specifically just at online learners, whether - how frequently they're advised or where they receive their advising information affected how much learning came out of the advising experience. And so for those, we use the ANCOVA analysis of covariance, where we used the learning outcome ratings. So, you know - example, you know, is that it's important to have a significant relationship with my advisor, was one of the learning outcomes. And we believe that the worst learning that has been received from their advising experience, the more higher they would rate that function, or that learning outcome. And so we used that, and then we controlled for – oh, and then we looked at on that one for instance, both the location of advising as well as frequency advising, and then we control for other variables - so gender, GPA, institutional type.

**MEDS:** And those are the covariance and ANCOVA, right?

**SJ:** Yes. We wanted to control for those, so that we were looking very specifically at online students and the experience that they are having on those learning outcomes, and it wasn't being influenced by age, or gender, or those other covariates (Okay). So ANCOVAs - and then the last one was I wanted to really look at satisfaction. So if you are satisfied with your overall learning experience, does that have an influence or impact on your advising learning? And for that we use the multiple regression again, so we can control for things like gender, and we - you know, gender is an example - we know that generally speaking women were more satisfied with their advising experiences than men were. So we felt it was important to control for something like gender, because otherwise we can isolate the impact of being an online student on that experience. Another one was GPA. We -there's a lot of research out there that says students with higher GPAs tend to be more satisfied with their experiences on campus. So there is, again in that multiple regression looking specifically online, but we also wanted to control for those other - those other variables may have an impact on the satisfaction ratings.

**MEDS:** Okay, so that's a lot of statistics (It was). So we're going to take a brief break, and when we come back, we will hear more from Stephen about the overall findings and implications of his research.

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# Segment 3:

**MEDS:** So, Stephen, you had a really broad range of statistical analysis in your study, and I think that's one of the benefits that you have of having a really large data set, is - is having statistical power to be able to do all of these different analyses, which is really exciting for those of us who like to talk about quantitative methods and statistics. So maybe we can pick up with your sample sizes and we can speak to that power question?

**SJ:** Absolutely. So the beauty of this, like you said, was that we really did have pretty large sample sizes. So for instance for the - so the overall number of students that were surveyed for the study were just over 33,000, I believe were actually sent the survey. Now our response to the survey was then a little over 19%, so 6,368 completed the survey, and completing the survey were then also considered eligible to be considered as part of the study. So of those 6,368 roughly 970 or so were online learners and the remaining - remainder were on campus learners. So there was difference in size between the two samples, but both samples were significantly large enough to where we were able to use pretty normal parametric statistics that have a lot of validity and our power was certainly - we certainly had a lot of statistical power. In fact, we were very thoughtful about what kind of error, standard errors, we used or - post hoc test, you know, using - so we used the Sidak correction for instance, or ANCOVAs, to make sure that we weren't. Uh because of the multiple test we're doing and the multiple co-variants we had, we didn't want to - there's always the danger of cumulative type 1 errors (Right, right). And so by using a Sidak correction, we're able to avoid finding - getting those multiple cumulative type 1 error issues.

**MEDS:** Right, and can you explain type 1 error for listeners who may not know that.

**SJ:** A type 1 error is finding a - essentially getting a finding when there really isn't a finding. It's an erroneous finding, essentially. And the more tests that you run, especially in a data set this large, and you're running multiple tests or you’re doing multiple regressions with lots of covariates, the more likely that you're going to get these type 1 errors, and so you have to do a - apply a correction to that. Two of the most common types of corrections are this Bonferroni, which is one that most people know, and then the Sidak correction is another one. Um, we chose the Sidak, because this was an exploratory study. The Bonferroni correction tends to be really, really conservative. The Sidak correction is still pretty conservative – and, but it didn't wipe out any - it didn't result in a type 2 error, which would be to say there was no correlation or no finding when there really was a finding. And given that this was again exploratory, there is no existing research on this. We thought that was an appropriate level of correction. So I would say the first major finding that we had was when we went into this and when I was doing my literature review, one of the things that I found is that oftentimes distance learners, or online learners are completed with adult learners. And so in many ways when we talk about how do we reach online learners, we see a lot of folks saying “well, they’re are adult learners, so just teach them like you would any other adult learner.” What I found was that that's largely consistent, so that the findings that I got were - were largely consistent with the research on adult learners. So the things that they find more important in the information and integration of functions, for instance reflected desire for devising this task or problem centered, so it's not theoretical, they want to take the learning that they get and apply it in a real way (Interesting). So - but online learner still difference in pretty significant and important ways. So what we found is that online learners, even we controlled for age, we still found significant differences in how online learners rated 8 of the 12 advising functions (Mmm). And so I think it's, in terms of further research, should be really important test for us to figure out what is the difference between online learners and adult learners, because while a lot of the research is similar, there's obviously some differences there that are unique to online learners. I'm not certain what those are yet, and I think that's an area that's right for future research though (Okay). The one area where online learners significantly differed from on campus learners, was in this idea of they want accurate information. Now, it was the most important function both on - for on-campus and online learners, but for online learners, it was particularly important even when controlling for all the other factors. So, you know, I'm guessing they're online learners, we know that are more likely to be older, married, have children, they’re working full-time, many of them have prior college credits, and so these life circumstances really create less time for them to manage class work and academic requirements. And inaccurate information can really cause a delay or even non-completion, so that accurate information is really important (Yeah. Clearly). Yeah. Integration is also really important. So online learners need to know that their academic advising will help them integrate their learning and their academic experience with their life and their career goals. So like adult learners, their problem focus with their education, most of them came back to education, because they wanted to change careers, or enter a career, or make some life change, and so they really want to understand how what they're learning is going to connect with her life goals.

One of the other areas we found was that for the most part, online learners rated less important things like add a class opportunities, and then also academic and non-academic resources. So they were less interested in being referred to tutoring, they were less interested in being referred to internships or other types of things outside of the classroom. However, and we looked at the standard deviation on this particular test and what we found was this this referral to outside resources - the response on the importance rating is actually one of the largest standard deviations for that result (Ah, okay). So what that tells me is there's a significant portion of online students, minority still, but a significant minority that still desires access to those and referral to those out of class opportunities in academic and non-academic referrals. So - so clubs and organizations, internships, career advising, those kinds of things - I think we need to do a better job of figuring out which proportion or what portion of online learners want access to that, and then figure out how better to serve them. So I'm not sure that we're doing a great job of serving online students with those services all of the time.

The last two, one is frequent advising improves learning from advising, so one of the things we found is that the more frequently students were advised, the more they learned from their advising experiences. So students who are advised infrequently or not at all, had the lowest rate of learning from advising, which makes sense (Yep. That's good to know). There are - even if you're only being advised once a year, there's still a pretty significant difference from getting advised once a year and getting advised more than once a year. Students who were advised more than once a year, report significantly more learning from the advising, than students who were advised only once per year.

And then finally satisfaction matters (Yeah). When online learners were satisfied with the learning -with their learning that they received from advising, they actually reported more learning from that advising experience. And I think of that Alexander Astin’s adage that is too difficult to argue that student satisfaction can be legitimately subordinated to any other education outcome, and I think why that's so important, is because learning predicted, or sorry - satisfaction predicted learning, the more satisfied students were, the more they learned. And I know over the past few years we've seen push back on that - that I think sometimes faculty and educational administrators are concerned about using satisfaction as a really important rating of learning or program evaluation as a [*indiscernible*] on program evaluation, but I'd argue this students who are satisfied learn more, and so I think that's something we need to continue to consider there – is student satisfaction. And probably a take away on this too is that I think academic advisors who received frequent professional development, who are trained well, who have the appropriate resources are also the academic advisers who are going to have the resources and the information, you know, again accurate information is so important, to be able to provide that to our advisees and increase their advisees - these students satisfaction with their advising experience. Often times an academic advisor is the one consistent contact that a student has with the institution (Right), so their faculty may change over the time, they may not have the same faculty even over a course of time, even if they were admitted into the program their admissions counselor - that goes away and that relationship goes away. It's really the academic advisor that has a consistent relationship with the student throughout their entire experience.

**MEDS:** So that's a really interesting set of findings. What was - was there one or two that surprised you most out of those?

**SJ:** So I think that the integration one, I hadn’t really thought about that before I went into - went into this research, and part of it was I figured adult learners with - already have developed more the ability to make sense or make meaning of their experiences. But I think higher education is such a different experience than work or other life experiences, that even adult learners - even folks a lot of life experience, still need help and still find helpful an academic advisor or some other mentor that helps them make meaning of the experiences their having as their taking their classes, and as they're navigating the general education curriculum, and as they are taking some of these courses that they just can't figure out how it makes sense to - what they're trying to achieve. It’s that academic advisor, its that mentor that helps them create meaning out of that experience.

**MEDS:** Great. So are there any other kind of applied pieces that we can take from this or that you want to recommend that people kind of take from this, or have we covered them all?

**SJ:** Yeah, I think we've covered most of them. Yeah, I think again advisor training, making sure advisors have, yeah, absolutely accurate information at all times and always communicating that to our students is just so critical.

**MEDS:** So do you have other suggestions for listeners who want to learn more about the topic?

**SJ:** Yes, so so when it comes to academic advising generally, I think I would refer you back to Smith and Allen.

**MEDS:** Okay,

**SJ:** And full disclosure Janine Allen was my advisor, doctorate advisor, so I do have some bias there. And really it was her research. A lot of the research I did was in almost a replication is some of the prior research that she had done, well she and Kathleen had done. And so and I think they have a really cogent and powerful argument about how we need to really move away from this idea of developmental versus prescriptive advising, and that the quality academic advising model makes a lot of sense instead of to spend some time with that.

In terms of online learning, the place that I really continue to go back to was that *Handbook of Distance Education* that I talked about earlier. Yeah. It's a kind of a hugely important, it's almost the Bible in a sense, the distance education. I think new edition just came out maybe a year or two ago.

And then the last piece is a lot of the research on distance and online education is not US-based. It's time for Canada. Australia has a huge amount of research when it comes to distance education online education, and I think when you think about the population centers in both of those countries and think about how distributed the population is in those areas, it makes sense that a lot of the research on distance and online education would be coming from those international sources.

**MEDS:** That's a really interesting point. I had thought about yeah,

**SJ:** So I think sometimes we have a bias towards research that's happening in the US and I think given that the idea behind online education's were breaking down all these borders and there's these barriers, that we should be absolutely interested in what's happening in other countries that are doing really good work in online education, right?

**MEDS:** That's a great point and we'll put links to all of those resources in our show notes. So thank you for talking with me today, Stephen. Thanks to our listeners for joining us for this week's episode of “Research in Action.” I'm Mary Ellen Dello Stritto join us next week for another episode.

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# Bonus Clip:

**KL:** In this bonus clip for episode 160 of the “Research in Action” podcast, Stephen Jenkins talks about using existing data and lessons learned from his research process. Take a listen.

**MEDS:** This is used in an existing data set, right? So it existed before you had designed your study. What are some of the things you had to consider in terms of designing your study when you're working because a lot of us don't work with existing data sets, we actually collect our own data. Yeah, so can you talk about that?

**SJ:** So yeah, definitely pros and cons. Yeah, so that the obvious pro was its easiest thing here so that you don't have to collect it. A huge data set that I had to access you, which is really important. Some of the cons were that I can customize your questions, of course, so I had to take the questions as they already existed on the survey instrument and that also had an impact and thinking about being thoughtful about how I selected the participants from this large data set. So when the data were collected the researchers then necessarily ask specifically of the institution are these online students, are these on campus students? Now the data did, the survey did ask where do you take your classes? And so students are able to say primarily online or primarily on campus. For one institution, another institution, we were able to actually get from the data system whether they were admitted is online students are admitted as on-campus students. And then the other institution was asked the question was where do you primarily take your classes and. The options were primarily on campus or primarily at a distance.

**MEDS:** Hmm, interesting.

**SJ:** So I would say and that's a listen limitation and my dissertation where I said, I feel like we mostly captured students who are fully online, fully doing a degree program online, but I can't see that for absolute certain because self-report, and they're reporting where they're doing their courses, so there could be some error in there. But I think on the other hand with self-report data I know there's a lot of criticism aimed at self-report data. On the other hand, how else you get those data?

**MEDS:** Yeah totally agree. So do you have any wisdom you can share with others about the process of doing this research or the mechanics of it?

**SJ:** Um, so funny enough, I think earlier we talked about the broad range of statistical tests that I use.

**MEDS:** Yeah.

And one thing that I might suggest is I was really ambitious and the doctor will soon I may have chosen to be a little less ambitious how I did that because there was a lot to analyze and unpack as I did that research. And, you know, shockingly enough perhaps this was less than what I had planned on doing to start with you.

**MEDS:** That always is the case.

**SJ:** Yeah, so obviously I had to come back even more so so yes, that's there's one piece is yeah, maybe not being quite as aggressive. The data is always there, you can always go back to it

**MEDS:** I think that may be more of an effect of you having access to this really great data set that you want to, you know, get what you can in terms of understanding from that data. That's a really good problem to have.

**SJ**: It is, and I think, you know, in terms of other wisdom is is that when you're looking at the research and several folks keep saying, “Boy. This is the gap in the research here.” It's not just a suggestion, it's really there's a finger pointing out where you can do some research and where there is opportunity and take advantage of that.

**KL:** You've just heard a bonus clip from episode 160 of the “Research in Action” podcast with Stephen Jenkins talking about using existing data and lessons learned from his research process. Thanks for listening.