Episode 32: Tom Cavanagh & Kelvin Thompson

**KL:** Katie Linder

**TC & KT:** Tom Cavanagh & Kelvin Thompson

**KL:** You’re listening to *Research in Action*: episode thirty-two.

[intro music]

# **Segment 1:**

**KL:** Welcome to *Research in Action*, a weekly podcast where you can hear about topics and issues related to research in higher education from experts across a range of disciplines. I’m your host, Dr. Katie Linder, director of research at Oregon State University Ecampus.

On this episode, I’m joined by two guests, Dr. Tom Cavanagh and Dr. Kelvin Thompson.

Dr. Tom Cavanagh is Associate Vice President of Distributed Learning at the University of Central Florida (UCF). In this role he oversees the distance learning strategy, policies, and practices of the nation's second-largest university, including program and course design, development, and assessment. In his career, Tom administered e-learning development for both academic [public and private] and industrial [Fortune 500, government/military] audiences. A regular presenter at academic and industry conferences, he is an award-winning instructional designer, program manager, faculty member, and administrator. In 2014 he was named an Online Learning Consortium Fellow. Tom's research interests include e-learning, technical communication, and the societal influence of technology on education, training, culture, and commerce. He is also an award-winning author of several mystery novels and a co-host of TOPcast: The Teaching Online Podcast.

Dr. Kelvin Thompson serves as the Director of Online Design & Development Strategy for the University of Central Florida's (UCF) [Center for Distributed Learning](http://cdl.ucf.edu) with a faculty appointment as a graduate faculty scholar within UCF's College of Education & Human Performance. He has collaborated on the design of hundreds of online and blended courses over the past eighteen years. Kelvin oversees CDL's strategic initiatives, including accessibility activities, and he developed the [BlendKit Course open courseware](http://bit.ly/blendkit) as part of UCF's Blended Learning Toolkit. His personal research interests center on how interaction affects learner engagement. Kelvin regularly addresses groups throughout the US on topics related to online and blended learning and educational technology, and he also co-hosts TOPcast: The Teaching Online Podcast available on iTunes. Kelvin holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree from The Florida State University, and a Master’s in instructional systems technology and an Ed.D in curriculum and instruction from the University of Central Florida.

Thanks so much for joining me, Tom and Kelvin.

**TC:** We are glad to be here. Thanks for having us.

**KT:** Indeed.

**KL:** So, I thought that we would start by just, you know, clearly from your bios, you are busy guys. You have these administrative appointments, you’re also running this TOPcast: The Teaching Online Podcast. And similar to me, I’m also an administrator and I’m also working on this podcast, we’re busy. But one of the key components of our jobs is knowing what’s going on with distance education research and perhaps other forms of research as well. I thought we could start just by talking a little bit about why we think reading research is important. Why we’re trying to make time for it. So, in the work that you guys do, why is it important for you to be kind of keeping up with the research?

**TC:** Well, this is Tom, and I guess maybe I’ll start with that. I think it’s really critical to kind of know what’s going on so that we don’t spend our time doing stuff that’s already been done, you know. If I was, let me take sort of a silly example, but if I was in some sort of meeting and I proposed, you know, “We need to really find out if this online learning stuff is good or not,” people might not take me seriously. Because there’s a whole corpus of literature about that exact subject. And so, I mean, that’s a bit of an extreme example, but when we look at key initiatives that we are potentially going to pursue, especially in emerging area like, just say, badging or adaptive learning or something like that. You kind of want to know as much about it as possible to mitigate as much risk as you can. And going to the literature is obviously one of the first places that you can. Now I’ll say this before Kelvin chimes in, I never have enough time to actually read the literature. I read a lot of abstracts and I rely on a lot of other people that read a lot more than I do.

**KT:** That sounds like something I would say. I don’t read books, I just read the backs of books.

**TC:** Yeah, yeah. But I do my best to try, to try to keep up. And I do that also by talking to people who point me towards like key things that I should read, as opposed to me just sort of trolling through various journals and hoping I get lucky.

**KL:** Yeah, you make an excellent point. I don’t think any of us are sitting in our offices with a couple free hours of time just, you know, bumming around the internet looking for articles to add to our to-read piles.

**KT:** At least not for long.

**KL:** Yes, exactly. Maybe in the nooks and crannies of our administrative lives.

Kelvin, what about you?

**KT:** I think what Tom said is right. I think especially in, speaking just from our online ed world, I think a lot of our practice, I mean at this point yes we’re a young field compared to a lot of other disciplinary areas. But we’re not an un-researched field. And I think as we work with faculty, I mean you know the faculty development world, you’ve come out of that. As you work with faculty and you talk about the teaching-learning process, it’s kind of nice that this isn’t just coming out of our heads or other body parts. It’s actually, you know, there’s research literature and there are principles. And so being informed practitioners, scholarly practitioners if you will, I think you get a little more credibility with faculty and administrators in other disciplines than if we did not.

**KL:** That’s also just a really important point of, you know, when you’re in certain situations where someone asks for your opinion, I think it’s always helpful just for your own credibility to be able to say, “Well, this is what I know, but I know it from the research. I know it because I have a sense of what’s going on in the literature.” How often is it that people will ask you for that kind of information? Is it something that you just are trying to keep up with so that you can bring it into meetings as you feel appropriate, or are you actually having faculty or other administrators seek that out through you, hoping that you know that literature and that knowledge?

**TC:** I’ll chime in maybe first on that. And it happens fairly regularly, but I couldn’t tell you it’s like every week somebody asks me this. But I can think of two examples where recently this has happened. Where I was in a meeting and it happened, there was a university wide committee and it had wide presentation by faculty, some of whom do not really teach a lot online in certain disciplines. And I got really challenged after the meeting by one of the faculty members about basically the efficacy of online learning. He was really questioning just some core fundamental value of online learning. And I was able to say, “Look there’s a whole body of literature and I can help put you in touch with that.” And we’ve got some colleagues here who spend an awful lot of time in the literature, and connected them together. And I’m not sure if he was completely convinced, but I was speaking his language sort of to Kelvin’s point. And this wasn’t just our opinions, this was based on actual scientific literature and, you know, research methods.

The other example is one that has to do with something that seems to come up periodically, which is something I think everybody in online education struggles with to a certain degree, which has to do with academic integrity. Are students cheating online? And it’s a question you get asked a lot. And there is a large body of literature about both just general cheating, as well as specifically cheating online.

**KT:** That’s a good example.

**TC:** We’ve got kind of an annotated bibliography that we put together for a previous taskforce that I keep handy, that I can hand to people and say, “Look, yeah, kids and students cheat online, but they don’t cheat online in any greater numbers than they do face-to-face. Here’s the kinds of cheating they do. Here’s the literature from scholarly journals that kind of backs this up.” And that’s been really useful for me.

**KT:** You know, just to chime in on that too Katie. I think another angle on this is, I think maybe riffing off of Tom’s last point about academic integrity literature that, I think we also want to have research literature guide our operational data collection and analysis, right. So, it’s one thing to know that this is what the literature says about academic integrity in general, academic integrity in the online setting specifically. But then it’s another thing to say, looking at our operational data with our Office of Student Conduct, what are we seeing actually coming through? What’s being reported? What cases are being, are finding that students were in violation? How much of that, what’s the proportion online versus face-to-face? So, how does that calibrate?

Like, for instance, if we were to look historically and nationally and internationally at online education, broadly speaking, the literature would say that well there’s going to be high withdrawal rates in online courses and programs, and students aren’t going to succeed all that well. And so, you’d say, “Ok, that’s something I know about online education.” That has never been our experience here at UCF. We’ve been collecting data since, you know, over the last twenty years, since the beginning. And our withdrawal rates have never been anywhere near what’s been reported in the national literature. And we could speculate why that is, we’ve got ideas, but, you know, it’s good to know operationally what’s happening and how that calibrates. So, I think there’s a tension between research literature and operational data if that makes sense.

**KL:** I think both of you brought up a really important point, which is just this idea of research really informing practice and being able to look at research from a really practical perspective. Of, you know, what does it mean? I think sometimes when we look at research, it can be very abstract, we can kind of think about it, you know, not really in an on-the-ground, you know, what does this mean at our institution. And how does what we’re seeing at our institution compare, as you’re saying Kelvin, to the larger literature? And that seems to be kind of a really important component for both of your jobs, both on the kind of administrative side, but also working with faculty and helping them with their teaching. To be thinking about how does this literature really inform our practice?

**TC:** Yeah, and also contributing to the literature.

**KT:** Yes.

**TC:** Being participants in it and so the kind of institutional data that Kelvin’s talking about that we track all the time gets published in some of these same peer-reviewed journals and other places where we present. And can become really, I think, useful contributions to the wider discourse community.

**KT:** Yeah, good point.

**KL:** That’s excellent. Well, I think, you know, we’ve got a good start here thinking about why research is so important to each of our work. We’re going to take a brief break. When we come back, we’ll talk a little bit about how are we finding these things to read and how are we organizing it. Back in a moment.

[music]

# Segment 2:

**KL:** So, Kelvin and Tom, now that we’ve talked a little bit, you know, why reading research is so important to our work, I thought we could talk a little bit about how we’re finding these things to read and how we’re organizing it. Because I think, you know, sometimes in my office I just start to generate a stack of things and then try to kind of squeeze in, you know, where I can get to this reading in various bits of time that I have throughout my day or throughout my academic term. But tell me a little bit about, you know, what are the kinds of things that you’re seeking out to read? Are they articles? Are they reports? You know, what are some of the things that are getting added to your digital or your actual to-read stack?

**KT:** Well, this is Kelvin. I’ll start with that and say that first as a preamble I guess two things, right. I do seek out some things to read, but also more of a meta-level I try to put myself in oncoming traffic. How’s that? So, I try to put myself, taking a, I guess, Danah Boyd maybe used this information as a stream metaphor a number of years ago. If you put yourself in the stream of information coming at you in all kinds of ways with what should be really, really good content, then it’s less of a Dewey decimal card catalogue file cabinet kind of structure and more of this organic flow kind of state where there’s at least the possibility of an intersection happening with good content and a serendipitous moment, you know. Whether you’re going to take it right then or whether you’re going to tag it for later use, as I guess [indistinguishable] would say.

So, here’s examples, right. So, I’ve got a number of email subscriptions it seems like that I’ve developed over the years from of course the obvious things like listservs and things like that, but I was thinking specifically of journal publishers. Oh, a number issue just released. So, I skim those, you know, there’s all kinds of those that come in. Whether that’s on the phone in the morning I skim through or in the office. There’s Twitter, of course, is a big thing, and I really appreciate it. I mean Twitter’s a great community in general if you’re following the right people, but if you’re following the right, right people then you occasionally get folks who will basically comment on, annotate on either research literature or professional practice literature, which is very helpful. And so in that sense it’s helpful. Now, so, I’ve got all that stuff coming at me, probably weighted a little bit more to the professional practice literature than the pure research literature.

And then seeking out I try to do that by necessity as well. Put myself in situations where I have to periodically do it because if I don’t put myself in that context, then I won’t, you know. So, you have projects where you make it a point to, you know, consult the literature on this particular topic or you’re going to present or you’re going to write. And so it forces you to have to stay current and true. It keeps you honest. Does that make sense?

**KL:** It does and I love that idea. I mean I also do the email alerts and I’m also seeking out Twitter. And usually what ends up happening is something will come across my desk where I can’t read it right that moment.

**KT:** Yes.

**KL:** But I know that I want to in the future. And I typically, you know, will either throw it into my citation management system, Zotero, or, you know, I’ll print it out right there because, you know, I want to take it with me on a plane trip or something like that.

Do you have ways to kind of, as you’re seeing these things come through if one of them gets kind of flagged for you, what do you do with that?

**KT:** Do you want to respond to that Tom?

**TC:** Yeah. That’s actually probably one of my biggest challenges because I think my answer was going to be basically what Kelvin said without actually saying it was putting myself in front of oncoming traffic.

**KT:** I like to say things like that. Usually it results in a spit take from Tom.

**KL:** Yeah, you make it sound so dangerous.

**KT:** That’s just the way I roll there Katie.

**TC:** Well, research is not for sissies, Katie.

**KT:** That’s right.

**KL:** That’s true.

**TC:** I would say that, you know, I have some inbox management strategies that I use like marking stuff.

**KT:** Deleting it all.

**TC:** Yeah, everything from Kelvin goes in a folder that never gets read.

**KT:** I suspected that. I suspected it.

**TC:** No, like, you know, marking stuff as unread is my cue to get back to it. Or, you know, reading lists. Or I do the same thing, I print out stuff and then I find myself not reading all of it because I end up with these giant piles of paper, but I do bring them on airplanes or I take them other places, bring them home over the weekend with great intentions.

**KT:** I find that my briefcase gets to a heavy point. I’m like, “Why is it so heavy? Oh, look at all this stuff I printed to read. Time to do something with it.”

**TC:** But then there are the ones that I think is sort of the allegory which you described Kelvin, which I sort of think of as utilitarian, you know. Because I’m working on this thing, I need to know about, you know, other people working on this thing or other research. And I tend to, you know, be in conversation with various people at conferences or committees that I’m on, or whatever it might be. You tend to cross paths with people who can point you at things and save you an awful lot of time. Or in many cases, those are the people that wrote the article that can save you a lot of time and not make mistakes that they have already made. So, I don’t know, maybe Kelvin, you have a better way of managing the flow of information that comes in. Because I’m afraid that my inbox strategy is probably not scalable.

**KT:** Yeah, right, no kidding. No, I’m kind of right there with you. If it’s Twitter, I might favorite things. So, here’s a real practical thing, Katie. You know, you’re like, well, ok, you tag it for later use and then what do you do? So, Twitter, just for me, I will favorite stuff when I’m just kind of glancing through. “Oh, I think I might want to look at that later.” And then what I try to do, and this is kind of like in that Stephen Covey and Merrill and Merrill *First Things First*, you know, kind of a tyranny of the urgent quadrant thing of try to make little time to actually go back and look at the stuff I’ve already screened, right. So, you actually go through and you’re like, “Ah.” So, you just go to your favorites. Don’t go to like your timeline, go to your favorites and skim through that. “Oh yeah, right. I wanted to look at that.” And you can actually take some time and go through a little more carefully. So, applying that same principle to other sources I think you can do that as well, as long as you can find the things. Whether that’s in your heavy briefcase or in your unread email.

**TC:** I’ll also prioritize I think referrals from people I know and trust.

**KT:** Yes.

**TC:** Over listservs that I might be a member of.

**KT:** That’s excellent.

**TC:** Like if Katie, you sent me something or if Chuck Ruben [sp?], who often sends me things, sends me something. I’m going to take a second look at that probably before some general listserv that I’m on.

**KT:** Or something that I sent you that’s in your folder that you’re never going to open.

**TC:** Yeah, that’s right.

**KT:** I thought so.

**KL:** Well I think based on what you guys have said, you know, one of the things, it’s not like there’s one system that works for everyone in terms of making sure that this stream of information that’s coming at you is constantly being curated. But just picking a system that works for you, and that you’re going to remember. Like, Kelvin, when you’re talking about how you kind of pull things eventually from Twitter. You know, if you know that you’re going to eventually kind of go back, I do the same thing with Zotero, I’ll kind of just create a folder that’s just to process. This is a folder that I need to eventually kind of go through and work through and categorize and figure out how I’m going to use the stuff that’s in there. But I have that particular process for myself, and it’s not necessarily going to work for everyone.

**KT:** Right, yeah.

**KL:** But I did want to ask you guys, are you typically, you know, readers who are liking to print things out and take things with you, or are you digital readers?

**KT:** That’s a good question.

**KL:** How are you organizing your information that way?

**KT:** I go both ways. What about you?

**TC:** Yeah, I was previously I think a printed out, paper-based, hard copy guy. But I’m growing more and more digital as I age because I’m finding it harder and harder to manage paper in my life. And digital is I think easier for me, even if I save a copy of it somewhere, if I name it something, I can always find it later through a search. Like, what was that thing again? I remember that? And it also allows me sometimes to say, ok, I’ve got this link, I’m checking my email now. You know what, I can take the ten minutes to read this research brief and I’ll do it right now. And I’ll click the link and I’ll read it, and then if it’s something that’s really important I’ll save it or I’ll print it out. But for the most part I can get the gist of it that helps keep me informed digitally because it’s immediate and there’s a link in the message I got or whatever it might be. As opposed to something longer that I print out, and honestly airplanes are great because I’m sort of forced to disconnect and stop doing work, and can actually read some stuff.

**KT:** I agree with that. And I think sometimes the way I interact with a text, be it digital or paper, varies. Like there’s sometimes where I want to really engage with the text, so paper’s great because I’m a mark-it-up person, right. And, yes, you can do that in digital formats, but it’s a little bit more cumbersome and it depends, you don’t always have control over the original digital source for annotation and so forth. So there’s that. But then, like sometimes the digital reading, like Tom, if I’m doing that, you know, it’s beautiful. Ctrl+F is my friend if I’m looking for something and I can read thematically, right. And that’s kind of a nice point as well where some texts, some online full text articles, the references are, you know, hyperlinked and you can go right to another source. And that’s nice, and I wouldn’t be able to do that as readily if I’m just in the paper mode. So, it kind of depends on how I want to interact with it.

**KL:** Love that. We’re going to take another brief break. When we come back, we’ll talk a little bit more about strategies for finding time to read all these things coming at us in our information streams. Back in a moment.

[music]

# Segment 3:

**KL:** So, Kelvin and Tom, as we’re kind of finding all these things that we need to read – the research, the reports, the syntheses of what’s going on in the literature – we have to find the time to actually read these things. And I’m wondering if we can talk a little bit about that. What are some times, we mentioned travel in the last segment, which is a huge one for me. But are there particular things that you’re building into your calendar or specific times that you are finding yourself typically reading these kinds of things that you’re collecting?

**TC:** This is Tom. I’ll start. I’ll preface this by saying that I do not do this well. So, it’s a constant growth process for me. But yeah, I have tried that and I have found that it just doesn’t work given the nature of what’s expected of me here. I do not have, like I can mark off every Monday morning from 8 to 10 and read stuff. That’s impossible. But, you know, I have every intention, and so I have tried various, you know, physical, mechanical means to force myself to do it.

One example that Kelvin likes to laugh at me about is I had some chairs in my office that I moved out and I commandeered a kind of unused couch from our graphics room. It’s like a little love seat and I moved that in. It fit perfectly in this little space where these two chairs were. And I thought, “I’m going to use that couch because it’s comfortable. I’m going to sit there and there’s good light, and I will, when I have a spare fifteen minutes, I will read a journal article or something.” And I haven’t done that so well, but I’m going to get there.

**KT:** Geography is destiny. But I think that speaks to, I love that. I think that speaks to, though, the fantasy world that we all live in. You know, we all have these fantasies, right. I think there are people out there who really do schedule this time for reading and they really do have the kind of Dewey decimal card catalogue filing system for research articles. You’re probably like that Katie.

**KL:** You know, I’m not and I kind of think it’s an urban legend.

**KT:** Yes.

**KL:** I think it’s kind of one of those things that we’ve all heard about and we aspire to, and it’s just not real.

**KT:** Exactly. So, to me, I love the couch thing because it speaks to this fantasy life that we have. And then there’s the reality of we’re doing this stuff on the go. So, you know, like the Twitter favoriting and then coming back around at some later date and checking that. Or, as you said, Zotero tagging, or, you know, I do, for online sources, I use Diigo. And so I’ve got a tag in Diigo. So, I really do think in terms of being motivated by necessity, and so if I am continuing to push forward on something, I’m going to have to go back to those sources if they are of any value at all. Now along the line I think there’s always this little nagging, you know, fantasy voice in my head. “You really should be reading. You really should be.” So, if I’ve got stuff ready at hand, it’s more likely than not. If I’m waiting to get my haircut, if I’m waiting on picking up my daughter from somewhere, if I’m in line at the drive thru, hopefully not at the stoplight, you know, or anything. Any of those little moments, if I’ve got ready access, so maybe that’s especially digital and networked, I can at least look at something. But Twitter’s one thing, a full research article is another thing.

**TC:** Yeah, and I think a part of my reading strategy is kind of recasting it as staying informed.

**KT:** Yes.

**TC:** Which means it’s broader than just reading scholarly literature, which I probably don’t have the time I would like to do. But it means reading *Inside Higher Ed* or *Chronicle* or, you know, podcasts like *Research in Action*, which I can listen to while I job around the neighborhood.

**KT:** Which, by the way, yes I do too. I think that’s a great resource because I do the same thing. Not job around the neighborhood because, you know, I’m busy having another donut. But listening on the way to work or on the way home maybe, in the car. That works.

**TC:** Yeah and so I wouldn’t consider the TOPcast podcast a scholarly piece of media.

**KT:** What?

**TC:** But maybe it’s adding value to somebody in helping keeping them informed. And I do the same thing with other kinds of podcasts. And I wish there were more in this space that we kind of live in because I would listen to them. Because I find multitasking extremely useful, whether I’m driving or jogging.

**KT:** Yeah the audio thing is very powerful. And I’ll add another thing there. Because we’re producing a podcast and Katie, maybe you find this as well, it’s one of those necessity things, right. While I know people think that we just make stuff up in TOPcast and they’d be kind of right.

**TC:** Kind of.

**KT:** We do actually eventually look up stuff. And so it kind of forces you to kind of, you know, know what you’re talking about.

**TC:** Some of that’s self-preservation. You don’t want to sound too stupid by not knowing something.

**KT:** Just a little bit stupid is just the right amount of stupid.

**KL:** Well, I think that’s actually why I contacted you guys to come on and do this particular segment.

**KT:** Because we’re just the right kind of stupid.

**KL:** I know that, you know, when I listen to the episodes of TOPcast you’re frequently mentioning reports or, you know, some kind of research or something that’s outside of your own opinions or your own experiences. And I think that that’s what actually makes it a really valuable resource. And we’ll definitely link to that podcast in the show notes so listeners can take a listen to it.

I mean I think one of the strategies for finding time to read, I think this, you make such a great point that, you know, Twitter is so different from a research article. I mean it seems like an obvious thing, but all of these things are not the same when we’re trying to carve out time. And they need different kinds of brain space. And I’ve found that what is most effective for me is if I have a time windfall where a meeting gets cancelled and I was expecting to be using that time for something else. It allows me to kind of insert maybe some reading or something like that, but I also I can’t leave that reading, you know, especially that academic reading to like a Friday afternoon because I’m just tired.

**KT:** Yeah.

**KL:** And my brain is a little bit fried. So I think that, you know, being intentional about it and making sure that when I do pull out a research article to read, it’s in a time and place where I feel like I can actually pay attention to it is also pretty significant.

**KT:** I think that’s really astute because reading an *Inside Higher Ed* article is different than reading a peer-reviewed journal article, but they both have their time and place. And, you know, that’s an interesting strategy and one that I may try to implement. That if something falls through that I was planning to do something else with, I’m going to look at that as found time. Because, I mean, frankly, I’m always behind. I am always letting somebody down.

**TC:** I thought that was just me.

**KT:** With an email that needs to be returned or something I have to work on, but if I was not planning on using that time for that anyway, maybe that is a great way to create a little space for some of this extra kind of research.

**KL:** And, well, it definitely necessitates that you have a stack of things that’s kind of ready at hand. And I do, and so I just look at my stack and say, “What can I do in the time that I have?” But the other thing too, and I think a couple of us mentioned this, was travelling. I definitely take a stack of reading with me on the plane, and typically it is paper copies just so I don’t have to worry about finagling a laptop in the midst of turbulence. But that’s another key time for me, when I travel. I mean that’s time that I can really just kind of be paying attention, focusing, trying to get through as many articles as I can. And sometimes that’s for a particular research project, but other times it’s really just trying to catch up, as you were saying.

**TC:** Yeah, I totally agree. In fact, I will be said if they ever kind of allow people to kind of have unfettered Wi-Fi on airplanes because I like disconnecting on airplanes. And it kind of forces you to not do all the things that are distractions in the office and gives you that, as you said, sort of brain space to kind of do that kind of reading.

**KT:** I guess reflecting on this as we are talking about it, I think a mental game I play with myself sometimes is the paper copy print-out of journals or whatever. I can sometimes make the mental game that that’s recreational and fun because it’s not this device where I’m doing my work so often.

**KL:** That’s interesting.

**KT:** So, I’m sitting on the patio with a cup of coffee and a pen and the paper, so it must be fun time or something, you know. It’s a luxury. Skewed I know.

**TC:** You’re really playing games with yourself aren’t you?

**KL:** I was going to say, I like that mind game. That’s pretty good. So, one last question I have for you guys is have you ever been engaged in any kind of scholarly reading group where you’re actually trying to do this kind of work with other people? I think it’s, again, something I’ve heard of. I know other folks are doing. Some are using Twitter for it, I think. But is that a technique you’ve heard of or done yourselves?

**TC:** I’ve heard of it. Outside of my Ph.D. program years ago, not really, I haven’t. It’s an interesting idea though.

**KT:** Writing group, yes. Going through like a collegial book discussion where you’re all reading like the same book or something, yes. But not like bringing dispirit sources and talking about that or individual journal articles or that kind. No, I haven’t.

**TC:** There are some groups on campus through the Faculty Center.

**KT:** Yes.

**TC:** That do some of that work. And I’ve just never personally engaged. I know some of our colleagues here at Center for Distributed Learning have.

**KT:** Yeah, right. It’s also like the book discussion thing like we’re all going to read this. You know, *Minds of Fire* or whatever. We’re going to read that and talk because it has implications. I guess it could spin off into the other, like you bring in outside reading. Like, “This made me think of this article and I brought it in. And here, I brought copies for everybody.”

**TC:** Sometimes I sort of feel like I have that need met, and maybe not as in a scholarly way, but through the professional organizations that I’m a part of.

**KT:** Yeah.

**TC:** And the networks of people that I meet with. We have conversations about, you know, various issues in the space that we all work in.

**KT:** Yeah.

**KL:** Well, thank you both so much for sharing your experiences and your practical tips and knowledge in this area. It was really fun to talk with you.

**TC:** Likewise.

**KT:** Yeah. Absolutely. We’re big fans.

**TC:** Absolutely.

**KL:** Great. Well I’m so glad to have you on and love your podcast as well. Thanks also to our listeners for joining us for this week’s episode of *Research in Action*. I’m Katie Linder, and we’ll be back next week with a new episode.

[music]

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