**TWR - episode 104**

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You're listening to think right revised episode 104. Hey there, and welcome to think right revised a podcast that offers a peek behind the scenes of productive writing life. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder. On this episode. I thought I would talk a little bit about researching in a team environment.

And this is something that I don't think I often talk about because I'm just doing it. It feels so like natural and part of my day-to-day work because I do lead a Research Unit. That has myself to other full-time researchers and an admin person who supports our work as well and it's just like part of my day-to-day work.

And so I don't always kind of take a step back and think well a lot of the things that we're doing are kind of different from how you would do this if you were just researching by yourself, and I thought it would be useful to chat a little bit about that and some of the things that I'm learning from this team environment in the past.

I've definitely collaborated with other researchers, but I have not led a research team. Until the work that I'm doing right now with OSU with Oregon State eCampus. And so one of the first things that I think is kind of interesting when you're researching in a team environment and this is going to seem obvious but it's an important component of it is that your productivity is definitely boosted.

And this it means that we are usually working on multiple projects at one time because different people in the team can take a lead in different areas and we're also often working on projects that are at drastically different stages. So there may be one project where we're in the process of data collection simultaneously movie working on another project where we're doing data analysis and simultaneously to that we may be disseminating actively another project through things like webinars or.

Print Publications or sharing at about social media, you know about things that we're doing that are done and that we're putting out into the world. And so there's definitely a pipeline and a pipeline was something that I became familiar with when I was researching, you know years ago because I was trying to move multiple projects forward at one time.

And this was particularly true right after graduate school when I was trying to publish out a bunch of the things that I had written as part of, you know, graduate school seminar papers conference papers. And so I was actively kind of moving multiple projects for it at once and this is something that is very natural for me as a researcher to juggle multiple projects at once.

I know not Everyone likes to do this and you can definitely be successful but kind of moving one project forward at one time and depending on your bandwidth. What you have available to you and the kind of job you have and all of that. You may only be able to move one project forward at one time.

But I've always been someone who likes to have lots of different things going on at once keeps you from being bored. It helps me to be able to switch between projects if one of them feels kind of stuck and so when I started leading This research team that felt very natural to me to have kind of a pipeline where we would have projects at different stages.

We would have to track that we would have to strategically plan when certain projects were going to be released when and even just in this past week. I was sharing on. Social media that I have created kind of a visual charts for the next couple of years that helps my team see in any given term we run on the quarter system at Oregon State.

So at any given quarter, what are we working on when it comes to right now? I think there's about seven different projects that we have happening all at the same time and it allows us to kind of visually see. When are they at their different stages? It's kind of a modified Gantt chart. If you're familiar with what that looks like.

I just used a table in word. So it's not fancy. I'm not using any kind of special software with it. But I did kind of color code. You know, when are we doing the data collection? When are we doing the data analysis? When are we doing the right up? When are we doing the dissemination? And really what it allowed us to see by visualizing.

That way was that there are certain times when we're kind of overlapping a little bit in terms of when we're disseminating and what that tells me is that we have a little bit of a buffer so that if we're trying to be kind of disseminating something regularly, whether that's not necessarily every quarter, but like a couple times a year we'll have like a pretty major project that we release whether that's a book or a report from a study that we've done and we're going to kind of push.

Out over a series of months through conference presentations through webinars through other ways of disseminating it what we could see with that overlap is that we have some buffer in there that if a project ends up getting pushed, you know back a little bit because it's taking too long to go through IRB or we're not getting the recruitment that we wanted from our first round and we need to go through another round of recruitment that allows us to have kind of some wiggle room within working on those projects.

Now also I think researching in a team environment, there's a lot of balls in the air and it's really important for me as the person who's leading the team and kind of trying to have the vision of when that pipeline is kind of functioning and when it's not I need to know what everybody's up to in terms of their projects.

And so the way that we have done this that I think has been effective for now at least. Is we do meet weekly as a team and we update on where every project is in the pipeline in terms of what are the next steps? Is there anything that's kind of getting hung up or bottlenecked and if so, why and is there anything that maybe I need to do as a leader of the team to kind of move it forward and we also have various other things that are kind of Maintenance projects that are going on in the background.

We have a database that we keep updated. We have some professional and faculty development program. We run so there's all these things that are kind of happening in addition to the research projects that were contributing to that could cause something to fall behind or that could cause something to be deprioritized in any given week.

And so by creating the Gantt chart that kind of shows. Where are we supposed to be at any given time within a period of a quarter or you know, the next couple of months it allows us to stay kind of realistic about what are we actually moving forward? And is it going to work given the the other kinds of workload that we have now, the other thing that gets kind of layered into all of this is stuff like Conference travel, so especially in the fall and the spring.

We have a lot of Conference travel and it's we are out kind of disseminating our work where networking with other researchers and it's important for us to be able to know that those are going to be slower periods of time. We're not going to have as much time at our desks, for example, and even though we can kind of take some things with us when we travel it's not going to be as productive as if we were sitting at her desk in the office.

And we're also away from each other. So even though we're communicating via email and things like that. It's not the same as being able to walk over to someone's office and ask them a quick question. So all of that means that that kind of research time can be a little bit. It can be impacted by the travel and by people being away.

This is also true of things like summer vacation times and other things like that. So I'm very thankful at this point that my team is relatively small. I'm not juggling a dozen people schedules and trying to make sure that we're able to move things forward. I actually think that we're a highly functioning team for the size that we are and were able to get a lot done but it's definitely a project management skill set that I need to be able to.

Kind of make sure that I'm moving projects forward and not just me moving the project forward, but that I'm delegating work to the appropriate person on my team so that they're moving projects forward. The last thing that I think is important to mention about researching in a team environment. Like the one that I have is it's really important that when I delegate something I truly delegate.

And I allow the person that I'm delegating something to take complete ownership of that thing. Now, I'm definitely going to check in and hold them accountable and make sure that I'm there as a resource if they need to ask questions or if they're not able to get something done in the way that they want and they need me to help them.

But I think it's really important that when I hand something off to someone I'm truly handing it off and I'm not micromanaging them into doing that project. Now this is a lot easier for me because some of the projects I hand off especially to my assistant director and our postdoc there statisticians and I am not so there's literally work that I cannot do that they have to do because I don't have the skill set to complete it and that makes it really easy to hand it off to them because I don't really know how to complete it but there are other things that it's a little bit harder and I definitely have to remind myself like know this is their project they're going to run it in the way that they're going to run it and they will come to me if.

Have questions or concerns and I have to let it go so that I can focus on other things that I'm the only one that can move forward when it comes to the team. So those are just a few thoughts about researching and a team environment. This is definitely something where I could do a several episodes.

Series about different elements of this. So if there are specific questions you have about this. I would love to hear from you. You can always email me a contact it Katie Leonard artwork. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender. You can connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore lender, or you can always write me a letter Katie lender PO Box 1621 in Albany, Oregon nine seven, three two one.

I would love to hear about your experiences if you've researched in a team environment or any questions that you have about. Specific kind of experience. Thanks so much for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of think right revised show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie lender dot work / podcasts think right revised is part of the radical self-trust podcast Channel a collection of content dedicated to helping you seek self-knowledge nurture your superpowers playfully experiment live your core values with intention practice loving kindness towards yourself and others.

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