LAANE

Learning Assistance Association of New England

Fall 2018   **LAANE Newsletter**   Volume 29, Number 1

LAANE To Hold 35th Annual Conference at Fitchburg State University Featuring Keynote Speaker Terry Doyle

The Learning Assistance Association of New England will host its 35th annual conference at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, on **Friday, November 2, 2018**. This affordable one-day conference provides education professionals from across New England opportunities to learn from and connect with each other. This year's theme is *Putting Learners First: Empower. Engage. Excite!*

Read the preview about Terry Doyle, keynote speaker, on page 2. He will be speaking about how to encourage students to take a more active role in their learning.

The registration deadline is **Friday, October 19th.** Register for the conference and review sessions abstracts at www.laanechapter.org.

Please contact Norman Beebe, LAANE vice-president and conference coordinator, at beebe@gcc.mass.edu with any questions.

2018 Keynote Speaker Preview: Terry Doyle

Professor, author, and nationally recognized educational consultant Terry Doyle will deliver this year's keynote address on developing learner-centered instruction and support, based on the latest brain science research. Terry holds the title of professor emeritus at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, where he worked for thirty-eight years. From 1998 to 2009, he served as the senior instructor for faculty development and coordinator of the New to Ferris Faculty Transition Program for the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.

Terry is the author of *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning into Practice,* which was featured in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*'s Selected New Books in Higher Education in 2012, and of *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment: A Guide to Teaching in Higher Education,* which was originally published by Stylus in 2008 and recently translated into Mandarin. He also co-authored the 2004 book *New Faculty Professional Development: Planning an Ideal Program.*

His latest book, *The New Science of Learning: How to Learn in Harmony with Your Brain,* is written for college and high school students. It has been described as breaking new ground in helping students understand how learning happens; in it, Terry and his co-author Todd Zakrajsek suggest a new paradigm for how students should prepare themselves for learning. The book was a finalist for the 2013 USA Best Book Award in the category of Education/Academics.

Terry is the CEO of Learner Centered Teaching Consultants and, with co-author Todd Zakrajsek, is working on a new book for college teachers, *Engaging Students in the Learning Process: Understanding How Research Is (or Should Be) Revolutionizing the Way We Teach.*

Since 2000, Terry has given workshops and keynote addresses at a hundred regional, national, and international conferences. During the past ten years, he has worked with faculty in Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, South Korea, and Canada, as well as faculty at two hundred different colleges and universities across the United States.

In his LAANE keynote address, Terry will describe how learning happens in the brain and ways to encourage students to take a more active role in their own learning. He will also share the teaching practices, supported by twenty years of neuroscience, biology, and cognitive science research, that—when used effectively—optimize the opportunities for students to successfully master the learning outcomes of their courses.

Check out more information about Terry and his research at
www.learnercenteredteaching.wordpress.com

President's Corner: It's Going to be a Fast Ride with the iGeneration

By Crystal Bickford, Southern New Hampshire University

As we start a new semester, it's interesting to think about the students in our classroom. The year 2018 was the start of the newest generation: the iGeneration, Post-Millennials, Homeland Generation, Founders, or Plurals. Regardless of the preferred name, we will be seeing new traits in our students, and as such, our adaptation for student success is paramount.

Some of the preliminary research indicates that these students are even more grounded in technology; in fact, one report indicates that some 92% of GenZs already have a digital footprint (Beall, 2016), indicating both their constant link to technology as well as their need to share their individuality. They also expect businesses to be loyal to them, not the other way around, and a higher number will enter the workforce after high school, thus pursuing post-secondary degrees online.

These factors, and others, will impact our classrooms. In a *Forbe's* article, "How Generation Z is Shaping Education," the author posits, "Gen Z-ers tend to embrace social learning environments, where they can be hands-on and directly involved in the learning process. They expect on-demand services that are available at any time and with low barriers to access. And they tend to be more career-focused earlier on in their college careers" (Kozinsky, 2017).

Gone are the days of passive learners, note-taking, lectures, and the like. Students are fast-paced and want classroom immersion experiences that are engaging, collaborative, and fast-paced. Likewise, they want to expedite the college experience, taking only courses they perceive as relevant to their immediate career goal.

In short, our discussions need to think about how our classrooms and our teaching strategies will meet this fast-paced, energetic, and eager group of students. Successful teachers will experiment, and likely, invite students into conversation about what works in the classroom. Having in-class discussions, offering mini-focus groups, reading current literature, sharing with colleagues, and examining technological options are all great ways to start the shift in our pedagogical approaches.

If you're interested in being more involved in LAANE's or NADE's initiatives, please contact via email at c.bickford@snhu.edu or by phone at 603.341.8722. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

References:

Beall, G. (2016). "8 Key Differences Between Gen Z and Millennials." *HuffPost*. Retrieved from
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-beall/8-key-differences-between_b_12814200.html.

Kozinsky, S. (2017). "How Generation Z is Shaping The Change in Education." *Forbes*. Retrieved from
https://www.forbes.com/sites/sievakozinsky/2017/07/24/how-generation-z-is-shaping-the-change-in-education/#2241481c6520.

LAANE HOLDS 34TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT RIVIER UNIVERSITY FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. LINDA NILSON

By Diana Lerman, Regis College

Education professionals from across New England gathered at Rivier University in Nashua, New Hampshire, on October 20, 2017 for LAANE's 34th annual conference, *Shifting Landscapes: Building a Foundation for Student Support*. Dr. Linda Nilson delivered the keynote address entitled, "Transforming Students into Self-Regulated Learners: Supporting Students to Support Themselves." Nilson is the director emeritus of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation at Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

In her presentation, Nilson described the philosophy on learning that many students hold. First, students may feel that they have no control over their own learning; they see it as "something that is done to them." Second, they believe learning in college should be easy. This is not an entirely irrational expectation given that many students were not challenged in their past learning experiences. Third, if students are not able to successfully learn, they may believe it is the fault of the instructor or they may believe—as detailed in the "fixed mindset" work of Carol Dweck—that they simply do not possess the innate ability required to be successful.

Nilson stated that the "antidote" to these misconceptions is for students to develop self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning (SRL), as defined by Nilson, is "the conscious planning, monitoring, and evaluation of one's learning in order to maximize it." According to Nilson, there are three dimensions to SRL: emotion and motivation, the physical environment, and metacognition.

In her book *Creating Self-Regulated Learners: Strategies to Strengthen Students' Self-Awareness and Learning Skills*, Nilson (2013) writes that "emotional control" is an "essential part" of SRL and that a student "must motivate herself to tackle a learning task by consciously affirming her interest in doing it, its value to her, her sense of self-efficacy, and her desire for mastery" (9). In her keynote, Nilson stated that students may view themselves as "a victim to [their] emotions" and need to learn how to manage their emotional responses through strategies such as reframing.

In terms of the physical environment, students need to consider the best place for them to complete their learning task—a coffee shop? library?—and other conditions such as caffeine intake, temperature, and when best to take a break. They should identify and address potential distractions such as putting their mobile device in another room. Experimentation with settings and conditions and reflection on those experiments

("How did this environment work for me?") will lead to an optimal environment for learning.

Finally, students need to analyze the task at hand by asking themselves questions such as the following: What kind of task is this? What is my goal? ("By the end of the chapter, I will be able to . . .") What strategies should I use? (Nilson noted that there are many strategies but many students do not know them.) As students move through their learning, they should continue to evaluate: Are my strategies working for me? Is my thinking on the topic changing at all?

Nilson also discussed that addressing errors is an important component of self-regulated learning. We need to explain to students that errors are learning experiences and need to provide students with practice detecting and analyzing errors. Nilson noted in her PowerPoint presentation that "students"—with the exception of those in STEM and health/medical fields—"*over*estimate their abilities and knowledge (except possibly the best students) when they know the *least*."

In her presentation, Nilson shared examples of error exercises as well as other activities that encourage the development of self-regulated learning. These and others are described in Nilson's book, *Creating Self-Regulated Learners: Strategies to Strengthen Students' Self-Awareness and Learning Skills*. In addition, for a limited time, a copy of Nilson's PowerPoint presentation and her handout from her keynote address are available on the LAANE website, www.LAANEChapter.org.

Diana Lerman is an academic coach at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts, and a LAANE board member.

2017 Conference Awards

By Diana Lerman, Regis College

LAANE 2017 STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

The 2017 LAANE Student Scholarship was awarded to Shiv Thakur, who will graduate from the Commonwealth Honors Program at Bristol Community College (BCC) in Fall River, Massachusetts, this spring. Shiv is a chemical engineering major who plans to continue his studies at a four-year institution in the fall. The $500 scholarship is awarded to a student who has completed at least 6 credits of developmental coursework and at least 24 credits in total and has earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.20 or higher.

In addition to excelling in the classroom, Shiv is very involved on campus. He is a math and chemistry tutor, vice-president of the Asian Club, treasurer of the BCC International Club, BCC student ambassador, member of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Club, and a member of the BCC Dance Club. He is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and has received at BCC the President's Volunteer Service Award and the Community Leadership Award. Shiv devotes significant time outside of school to working so that he can financially support himself and assist his family in Nepal.

In his application essay, Shiv wrote that his developmental education coursework had "changed my life dramatically" and had "been a way to connect me to my future dreams." It had allowed him to "communicate better, participate more at the college, and be recognized by faculty and administration." Shiv credited developmental education with giving him "more confidence to become a successful student and to eventually help other students."

Jacci Barry, professor of reading and ESL at BCC, wrote that Shiv "is uniquely motivated to reach his academic goals and has worked hard to support himself and his educational expenses." Professor Barry described Shiv as "tenacious" in pursuing his academic and professional objectives and as a person "with an appreciative heart and a good sense of humor."

The LAANE board congratulates Shiv on his many impressive accomplishments and wishes him continued success.

Students eligible for the 2018 Student Scholarship Award are those who at the time of application are enrolled in a bachelor or associate degree program; have completed at least 6 credits of course work that is developmental, English language learning (ESL, ELL, ESOL, etc.), stretch (i.e., extending beyond one academic term), and/or co-remediation; have earned at least 24 credits; and will be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits in the upcoming spring semester. Please visit our website, laanechapter.org, to learn more.

Diana Lerman is an academic coach at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts, and a LAANE board member.

2017 Conference Photographs

PEER TUTOR COLUMN:
HOW A PEER TUTOR CAN HELP A TUTEE SUCCEED

By Stephanie Bitsoli, Regis College

Tutoring can be a tricky profession. Every student you work with has a different learning style, attitude, and major. These are all significant factors in their success. But, there are several things that the tutor can do to help the student make academic progress. This includes establishing a relationship with the tutee, using prior knowledge when having had the same professor for a course, and talking to your supervisor about any problems that may arise. Communication, from personal lives to assignments to problems, between the tutor, tutee, and supervisor is essential to helping students achieve success.

During the first session with any new student, it is important for you, as a tutor, to get to know your tutee. Ask them about their major, or whether they live on campus. This helps you build a relationship with your tutee and shows that you are an engaged tutor who cares about the people you are serving. A simple three minute introduction helps to establish trust. Continuing to develop your relationship will help the student feel comfortable talking about his or her struggles in the course. As well, discussing the assignment, exam, or project in depth will help you better understand the expectations placed upon the student and in what direction to go.

During my first semester tutoring in the writing center, I had a student who was retaking introductory English for the third time. Though he was required to write a textual analysis paper for his final, his first draft read like a film review. After a brief discussion, I realized that writing a textual analysis paper for the next day would be incredibly difficult for him, so I asked him who his professor was and walked him down to that professor's office to ask for help. She reworked the assignment for him so that he could submit his film review, and he ended up passing the class. Taking the time to talk to him in-depth about the assignment was crucial in getting him the extra help he needed. It helped in establishing the trust required for him to tell me how much he was struggling.

Having actually had the same professor as our tutee is also extremely beneficial, as it helps us better understand the expectations of the course. Effectively tutoring a student does not require having had the same teacher, but it definitely helps. In the fall of 2017, I began working with a new student who needed psychology tutoring for a class with a professor whom I had taken in the past. Her particular area of struggle was in studying for the exams, and I was able to give her tips based on the professor's teaching style. I was able to tell her not to rely solely on the study guides, but instead to learn every important vocabulary word,

and to read the textbook to supplement the professor's PowerPoints. On a subsequent test, she earned an A—, which was an improvement over the C's she had been receiving.

When helping a student in a class that you both have taken, it is important that you do not badmouth the professor. You must find the fine line that validates the tutee's feelings without condemning the professor. You may validate the tutee's frustrations with the class, but encourage the student to remain optimistic about achieving a good outcome. You must also caution the tutee that the advice you're giving is based solely on your experiences, exams, and assignments as the professor's teaching style or exams may have changed over the semesters.

Should students be struggling in a specific area, or if they appear to have a deeper issue, keep your supervisors in the loop. They will know when a student requires additional or specialized help. I once had an international student struggling with a weekly writing assignment for a communications course. We had worked together before and had a good rapport. The student needed to compose six sentences of information, but he had failed to read the required text on which the assignment was based. The session was about an hour of the student asking me what the text was saying instead of our working on a draft about what he had read. This was especially concerning because the student did have a content tutor for that course, but it appeared that more sessions were needed for him to work through the material.

Thinking that the student was having an off day, I let it slide until it happened the second time, and then I informed my boss. We discussed the student's issues with patience and ways to make sure the student was getting the tools needed to be successful. It was beneficial for both of us; it provided me with a better picture of the student, and made my boss more aware of the student's ongoing issues. When in doubt, talk to your supervisor. It ensures that everyone has an up-to-date perspective on the students and their issues, and helps the students get the support they need.

This is just a snapshot of what a tutor needs to help a student be successful. Thankfully, there are a variety of resources available from professional development conferences to literature that can assist tutors in their continuous growth.

Stephanie Bitsoli is a senior humanities and secondary education major and a peer tutor at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts.
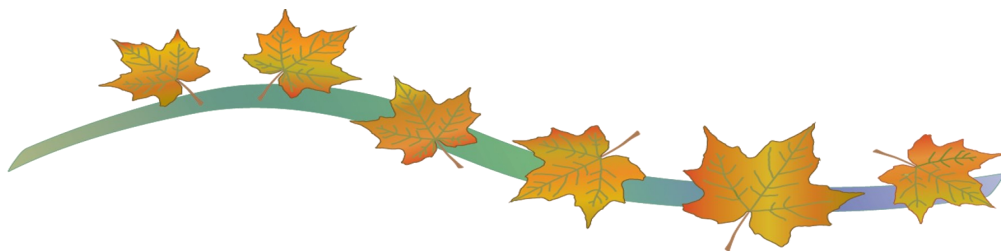
THE CHANGING STUDENT SUPPORT ENVIRONMENT

By Allison Muise, Endicott College

I began my career in student support as a peer tutor as a freshmen. Since then, I have worked my way up to Associate Dean of Academic Resources. In the 10 years that have passed since my very first peer tutoring appointment, a lot has changed. For the past few years, I have had many discussions with my colleagues on how to best support the whole student, meaning in a holistic manner. We can no longer just support the student from a strictly academic framework; we must shift our practices to support the whole college student. Students cannot focus on what is happening inside the classroom if they are anxious or stressed. As such, student support areas need to be more aware of student needs and how to create a safe and low-stakes learning environment.

As part of the requirements of completing my doctoral program, I wrote a dissertation on what traditional-aged college students identify as salient to their consistent and voluntary participation in peer tutoring services offered at their institution of higher education. Total, I had 16 participants from three small, private, liberal arts colleges in New England. The participants identified various reasons for their continued participation in peer tutoring.

All of the participants stated they attended peer tutoring because of the environment. The overall environment was a combination of the physical setting, the atmosphere, and the positive emotions generated during a session. These three elements helped the participants to reduce their stress. Stress is considered "the top factor impacting academic performance" (ACHA, 2014 as cited in Ickes, Brown, Reeves, & Martin, 2015, p. 19) and was reported to negatively affect academic performance in at least one in every three college students. Rogers (2013) argued that in an effort to reduce stress, college students needed to be taught mindfulness. Though students are not actually practicing mindfulness in tutoring centers, both the tangible and intangible environment of the tutoring center may have conjured some of the same effects of mindfulness for the tutees, such as positive emotions (Dirkx, 2008).

In order to shift the landscape of student support, we need to build spaces with a holistic focus. We need to think about creating safe, comfortable, and judgment-free places to practice critical thinking. Students benefit from a space to experiment and make mistakes without the fear of a teacher or classmate judging their work. When students are free to make mistakes and even have a peer support them through the mistakes, the students are more likely to enjoy the learning process. Enjoyment has lasting effects and helps the students to retain and internalize the material even more (Coleman, 2014).

Additionally, because peer tutoring is learning with another person, peer tutors need to present themselves as low-stakes. Otherwise, the tutee could view the peer tutor as another classmate there to judge their work. As a result, the peer-to-peer relationship is also an important component of a low-stakes environment. The tutors need to be encouraging, supportive, trustworthy, and reliable. Even though the tutor is a peer and not perceived to be as intimidating as a professor, students still fear failing in front of their peers. Therefore, the tangible and intangible environment are not enough to make the learning process low-stakes, the human environment must also be nonthreatening.

Allison Muise is the Associate Dean of Academic Resources and the Director of Tutoring Resources at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts.

References:

Coleman, T. C. (2014). Positive emotion in nature as a precursor to learning. *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, 2*

(3), 175-190.

Dirkx, J. M. (2008). The meaning and role of emotions in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 2008*(120), 7-18

Ickes, M. J., Brown, J., Reeves, B., & Martin, P. D. (2015). Difference between undergraduate and graduate students in stress and coping strategies.

California Journal of Health Promotion, 13(1), 13-25.

Rogers, H. (2013). Koru: Teaching mindfulness to emerging adults. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning,* (134), 73-81. doi: 10.1002/tl.20056

RESEARCH REQUEST:

DO YOU RUN AN ACADEMIC PROBATION PROGRAM?

Michael Foster from the Academic Enrichment Center at Curry College is pleased to announce that he has been granted a semester-long sabbatical leave, beginning in January of 2019, to conduct a study of best practices in academic probation programs at colleges and universities in greater New England. The objective of the research is to produce a comprehensive talking points document to present to Curry administration, faculty and staff and help inform the College as it endeavors to devise a new and innovative approach to helping guide our students on probation back to solid academic footing.

As part of his research, he hopes to connect with LAANE colleagues across the region and visit a cross-section of colleges to investigate programs, practices and ideas elsewhere that have yielded positive outcomes. If anyone is interested in contributing ideas or would be open to a site visit at your campus, please feel free to get in touch with him via e-mail at mfoster@curry.edu anytime. Thank you!

Leadership

Elected Officers

President
Crystal Bickford
Associate Professor of English
Southern New Hampshire
University
Manchester, New Hampshire
learningassistancene@gmail.com

Vice President and Conference Coordinator
Norman Beebe
Co-coordinator, Peer Tutoring
Program
Greenfield Community College
Greenfield, Massachusetts
beebe@gcc.mass.edu

Treasurer/Membership Coordinator and Website Administrator
David Lindenberg
Coordinator, Learning Differences
Support Program
Southern Vermont College
Bennington, Vermont
dlindenberg@svc.edu

Newsletter Editor
Selina Marcille
Assistant Director, Wolak Learning
Center
Southern New Hampshire University
Manchester, New Hampshire
s.marcille@snhu.edu

Recorder/Archivist
Leslie Van Wagner
Director, Writing & Resource Center and Peer Mentoring Program
Rivier University
Nashua, New Hampshire
lvanwagner@rivier.edu

Interested in becoming involved in LAANE? Visit our website, www.LAANEchapter.org, or contact us at learningassistancene@gmail.com.

LAANE Board at the 2017 Conference

Back Row (left to right): Crystal Bickford - President (Southern New Hampshire University), Diana Lerman - Outgoing Newsletter Editor (Regis College), Leslie Van Wagner - Recorder (Rivier University), Kenneth Walker (St. Anselm), Selina Marcille– Incoming Newsletter Editor (Southern New Hampshire University)

Front Row (left to right): Sharon Cronin - outgoing Vice President (Great Bay Community College), David Lindenberg - Treasurer (Southern Vermont College), Norman Beebe - incoming Vice President (Greenfield Community College), Kim Donovan - Vendor Co-Coordinator (University of New Hampshire Manchester), and Jeanne Hughes - Vendor Co-Coordinator (Southern New Hampshire University)