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***Join Us for LAANE's 33rd Annual Conference on Friday, October 21st in Nashua, New Hampshire***

Join us at Rivier University in Nashua, New Hampshire, for LAANE's 33<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, *Game On! Training for Academic Success*, on **Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>** with keynote speaker Sarah Kravits of Montclair State University. The registration fee is \$100; adjunct, \$75; and student, \$40. The deadline to register for the conference is **Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**. Visit our website, [www.LAANEchapter.org](http://www.LAANEchapter.org), to register today!



Keynote speaker Sarah Kravits is an author and educator who has been training faculty and students in the area of college success for over 20 years. She is a co-author on the *Keys to Success* series published by Pearson Education, including *Keys to College Success*, *Keys to Community College Success*, and *Keys to Effective Learning*, and has given workshops and trainings on student success topics at a host of colleges around the country. Sarah teaches student success at Montclair State University and is an academic success coach and trainer for LifeBound. As a Jefferson Scholar alumna from the University of Virginia, she continues to embody the Jefferson Scholars Program goals of leadership, scholarship, and citizenship through her ability to inspire college students to succeed as learners and in all aspects of their lives.

Conference host Rivier University, a short distance from Nashua's downtown, is an hour from Boston and two hours from Hartford, Providence, and Portland. Founded in 1933 by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary and Sister Madeleine of Jesus, Rivier is a Catholic, coeducational, not-for-profit university offering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees.

For more information about Rivier, please visit the university's website at [www.rivier.edu](http://www.rivier.edu).



In addition to the keynote address, the conference will offer 14 sessions covering a wide range of topics:

- ◆ **“Engagement and Learning Through Gamification”**
- ◆ **“Developing Your Social Media Strategy”**
- ◆ **“What’s in a Name? How Language Matters in Creating an Inclusive Environment”**
- ◆ **“A Triumvirate of Writing Support: Creating Partnerships to Help International Students Achieve Academic Success”**
- ◆ **“Academic Coaching for Student Success: The Person-Centered Approach and Narrative Therapy Techniques”**
- ◆ **“From Academic Skills to Academic Success: A Community-based Response to Student Academic Underachievement”**
- ◆ **“Getting to know the CRLA’s New, Online ITTPC Application for Tutor Training Program Certification”**
- ◆ **“Improving Learning for Developmental Math Students with Hidden Disabilities”**
- ◆ **“Personal Flotation Devices: Designing Co-requisite Instruction for Composition”**
- ◆ **“Opening, Closing, and Practicing”**
- ◆ **“Experiential Activities to Increase Student Metacognition for Collaborative Learning”**
- ◆ **“Knock, Knock! Who’s There? Adult Learners at the Community College Door”**
- ◆ **“Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Considerations in Developing Cross-Curricula Writing Courses”**
- ◆ **“A Problem-Focused Approach to Learning Mathematics”**

Please visit our website for a complete listing of session abstracts and to register by **Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**: [www.LAANEchapter.org](http://www.LAANEchapter.org). We hope you will join us!

*LAANE thanks Redrock Software Corporation and Townsend Press for sponsoring this year’s conference.*



## President's Corner

### *You Can't Pour From an Empty Cup*

*Crystal Bickford, Southern New Hampshire University*

The popular *Facebook* meme “You can’t pour from an empty cup” continues to circulate. The message, of course, is to take time for yourself, as you can’t give to others what you don’t have. Although we likely agree, many of us find that taking that time is incredibly difficult as we juggle teaching loads, committee assignments, and administrative responsibilities in addition to fulfilling personal and life responsibilities.

As I conclude my twentieth year as a LAANE board member, I pause for reflection. First, I’m older than I ever thought I would be, and I certainly question how that time has passed so quickly. But at a professional level, I’ve also taken pause to think about the way in which LAANE has evolved—not so much as an organization, but as a dynamic group of individuals who come together on a regular basis.

Sadly, one of the biggest changes I’ve witnessed is that of people’s time and availability. One of the organization’s successes is that we currently have the largest board since I’ve been involved in the organization. We can divide responsibilities and workloads;



however, we recognize the fact that having the time to meet is harder. All of us are required to do more within our institutions—to the point that some of our organization’s issues are being moved to online discussion platforms as our face-to-face meetings become increasingly difficult to schedule and maintain.

With that being said, I make myself take the time to be involved, as I learned, early on in my career, the benefits of working within such an organization. At the start of my career, I had mentors and those with whom I could talk and ask questions. As my career became more anchored, there were opportunities for growth. When I lost my job, it was LAANE members who rallied around, taking my résumé and offering employment suggestions. As a mid-career professional, there were leadership opportunities. And perhaps, above all of these experiences, I’ve developed lasting friendships. Taking time out of my day to make meetings, answer organizational emails, and take on additional responsibility hasn’t always been easy; however, over the course of my career, LAANE has been one of the best investments I have made of my time. When I’ve felt depleted, LAANE has been there.

As LAANE, and NADE, continue to work towards providing student scholarships, creating networking opportunities, supporting scholarship, and being an active voice in the challenging world of learning assistance, I encourage each of you to think about taking that time to fill your cup.

*Crystal Bickford is an Associate Professor of English at Southern New Hampshire University and the president of LAANE.*



# ***Coaching Students to Overcome Academic Adversity***

By Susan L. Petrucelli and Julie R. Bodnar, American International College

## **Introduction**

A majority of students' goals focus on what they want to accomplish or what they perceive as success in college. Turning attention to their future, students have the ability to add useful meaning to their life. Academic coaching, which is relatively new to education, reaches students in a way that holds them accountable for their achievements and failures. Coaching does not involve how people react to a situation but how they address their challenges through thinking of solutions that work for them (Drake, 2008). Interestingly, "the etymology of coach comes from a metaphor of a bus that transports someone to someplace they want to go. A coach literally helps people get to their desired goal" (Williams, 2015). In education, some students withdraw from finding a solution to academic woes and feel they lack the power to succeed. Thus, academic coaching is a powerful tool when used in conjunction with classroom instruction to help students become independent thinkers and overcome academic hurdles.

## **Elements of Coaching**

The basic premise of good coaching provides a trusting relationship and connection between the coach and the coachee. Bresser and Wilson (2010) identify that the core of coaching strengthens self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is the ability to reach a goal by assessing challenges followed by empowering oneself to participate in behavior changes as one overcomes an obstacle (Zimmerman & Clearly, 2006). Bresser and Wilson (2010) denote that good coaching experiences encompass eight facets: responsibility, self-belief, blame free, solution-focus, challenge, action, trust, and awareness. The elements of coaching help students make better decisions, solve problems that are holding them back, learn new skills, and progress forward in their academic goals (Bresser & Wilson, 2010).

A study from Stanford University compared one-on-one coaching for 8,000 students to a group of 5,500 students who did not receive any coaching (Bettinger & Baker, 2011). The researchers collected data on their retention after 6, 12, 18, and 24 months, and the results of the study found that the groups that received coaching increased their retention and completion rates from college (Bettinger & Baker, 2011). Academic coaching is an instructional tool to use with students to help them become motivated to persist through their college coursework (Barkely, 2010; Petrucelli, 2014). Further, Duckworth's (2013) research suggests that a sustained interest in a commitment to learning, grit, increased confidence, and self-efficacy leads to higher achievement. Thus, a resilient behavior is more likely to increase in the classroom as a result of utilizing the elements of coaching characteristics.

## **Process of Inquiry**

Coaching is the process of inquiry (Drake, 2010). Instructors who incorporate academic coaching into their teaching find an increase in relationships with their students and provide more resiliency for learning (Barkely, 2010; Bresser & Wilson, 2010; Petrucelli, 2014). Listening, posing powerful questions, and employing clarification are the three major steps to academic coaching.

First, as coaches, instructors need to be able to identify the type of listening they will be engaging in when they talk with their students. Research suggests that there are effective and ineffective types of listening (Bresser & Wilson, 2010). Ineffective listening types include waiting for a turn to speak, giving personal experience, and offering advice (Bresser & Wilson, 2010). The goal of coaching is not about what works for the coach but what works for the coachee. Thus, instructors who "tell" the student what or how something is or can be done may experience minimum engagement in course activities. On the other hand, Bresser and Wilson (2010) describe the most effective type of listening as active listening, which includes asking the speaker—the

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coachee—for more facts. Requesting more information and using nonverbal clues are techniques that the listener—in this case, the teacher—can use to lead instruction in academic coaching.

The second step of coaching involves using powerful questions. Powerful questions serve several purposes, including making the student think, guiding the student to achieving self-discovery and taking ownership, and helping the student identify cause and effect relationships for challenges in their academic lives (Bresser & Wilson, 2010; Costa, 2001; Costa & Kallick, 2008; Williams, 2015). Powerful questions include the following:

Why is this important to you?

What stops you from getting the grades you want?

After you accomplish this outcome, what is the next step?

What is holding you back?

What if you fail?

In a five-year study we conducted, teachers helped students self-identify their academic needs in the classroom (Bodnar & Petrucelli, 2016). Developmental education students identified a need for further assistance with their writing even after it was recommended and required that they use the services of the college's writing center. Findings showed that student use of the writing center grew exponentially. In fall 2010, 19 developmental education students utilized the writing center followed by fall 2011 with 35, fall 2012 with 53, fall 2013 with 84, and fall 2014 with 141 visitors for an overall increase of 642% (Bodnar & Petrucelli, 2016). Accordingly, sustained academic coaching correlates to continued student success rates.

Academic coaching's third step revolves around clarifying responses. Repeating back, summarizing, and reflecting shared information allows conversations to become solution-focused (Bresser & Wilson, 2010). An academic coach can summarize the information shared and continue to ask powerful questions. In the clarifying phase, instructors can prompt students to think and develop their answer to an obstacle. At this point in the coaching process, the momentum forwards the students' motivation to solve their academic challenges.

### **Core Motivation**

Using coaching strategies, teachers can shift the responsibility for learning and problem solving back to the student. It is necessary for instructors to assist students in identifying and exploring their core motivation, as it will empower them with the self-confidence to address future obstacles. Whitmore (2009) emphasizes that limiting teaching and increasing coaching can help increase what is attainable for a person. Facilitating student learning as how to manage one's weaknesses is as important as taking advantage of one's strengths. Gaining insight into how core motivation impacts the potential for success or failure in any given task leads to the development of self-awareness and funnels into productive, forward-focusing plans. Instructors who assist students in identifying and exploring their core motivation will help them grow and empower them to solve their problems.

Challenges to personal growth must be identified and addressed, so as to eliminate barriers and enable students to succeed. It is vital in academic coaching to know one's own "core motivation." A tool created by academic life coach John Andrew Williams "points to the natural strengths of core motivation as well as usual blind spots that limit and hinder your success" (Williams, 2015). Williams (2015) identifies the nine types of core motivation as Perfectionist, Helper, Doer, Artist, Thinker, Friend, Optimist, Defender, and Peacemaker (see table 1 for motivation type details). It is important to note that, though aspects of many motivation types may be present, there will be one that stands out the most, therefore, taking precedent over the rest.

Once a facilitator identifies core motivation, an action plan must be put into place. Teachers taking part in this process are modeling the desired behavior. Incorporating life experiences as a relatable factor helps students to

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Table 1. Core Motivation and Personal Growth

Challenges to personal growth	Exercises that help personal growth
<u>Type 1: The Perfectionist</u> Being too hard on yourself. Being too serious. Not taking time for yourself for fun and pure enjoyment. Demanding perfection and not accepting every part of yourself.	Improvisation and activities like improv are outstanding for type 1's. They let you act without getting stuck in your thoughts. Taking time out of the day for fun and laughter.
<u>Type 2: The Helper</u> Doing so much for others that you forget to take care of your needs. Becoming too involved in relationships. Becoming demanding when you are not recognized.	Write out what you want for each area of your life and determine clearly what balance you want to achieve. Set aside time to treat yourself as you would treat another person.
<u>Type 3: The Doer</u> Not realizing that your worth is who you are, not what you have accomplished. Sacrificing personal relationships for the sake of a goal.	Relax your focus on success and put your focus on what would fulfill you. Clarify your values and what's really important to you.
<u>Type 4: The Artist</u> Overidentifying with emotion, especially sad emotion, without moving into action. Resisting change if it is not dramatic. Feeling unworthy.	Practice changing perspectives and choosing those perspectives that empower you to get what you really want. Create a positive vision for your future life.
<u>Type 5: The Thinker</u> Overanalyzing and being stubborn. Avoiding people and opportunities that seem overwhelming. Being extremely private. Not moving into action.	Meditation. Especially short meditation during the day to check in with your emotions. Then move into action. You must act on what you decide.
<u>Type 6: The Friend</u> Not trusting yourself or others. Thinking about worst case scenarios. Wanting to keep knowing more before making a decision. Doubt.	Check in with fear. Practice changing perspectives and choosing those that move you forward in a positive direction. Positive affirmations work for 6's.
<u>Type 7: The Optimist</u> Thinking that something you don't have will be better than what you have. Constantly trying to avoid pain and not meeting responsibilities. Being distracted.	Clarify a mission statement and take small action steps to accomplish it. Meditation is very important to 7's. Exercise discipline.
<u>Type 8: The Defender</u> Being stubborn. Denying weakness and sensitivity. Fighting an attempt to be controlled and trying to control others. Acting in ways that make success harder to accomplish.	Focus on the gift that you can give to others. Listen closely to others and practice empathy. Resist being stubborn and constantly resisting others. When healthy, 8's turn into 2's.
<u>Type 9: The Peacemaker</u> Ignoring problems and trying to be comfortable always. Not meeting problems when they first start and avoiding conflict at any cost. Not knowing what you really want.	Clarify a mission statement and commit to taking action steps. Practice asserting yourself and saying no to small things. Refuse to be passive aggressive. Instead be assertive.

Note. Adapted from *Academic Life Coaching Super Training Guide 1.0* (p. 64), by J. A. Williams, 2015, Portland, OR: Academic Life Coaching Inc.

understand the process as it applies in a practical environment. Consequently, teachers who use concepts and theories in conjunction with students' life experiences help students develop knowledge, transferable skills, and the ability to persist. Moreover, teachers become aware of their strengths and weaknesses as classroom instructors, allowing them to explore changes to lesson plans and perhaps an overhaul of outdated syllabi. Individual growth closes the gap between teachers and students allowing for a more trusting relationship and the necessary willingness to accept and, more importantly, partake in change.

### Conclusion

Academic challenges in the classroom and thinking for oneself can be an obstacle for learning for some students in higher education. However, academic coaching strategies can be used as a teaching instrument to help empower students to find solutions through intentional inquiry-based instruction. An instructor who uses the components of coaching, such as Bresser and Wilson's (2010) coaching elements with Wil-

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Williams's (2011) core motivation types, helps to empower students with the confidence to "own" their successes and failures while also applying their knowledge beyond the classroom. Teaching with coaching and its characteristics has the potential to stimulate discussions with students as they learn to take ownership of their decisions and plan for a promising future. As these successful classroom experiences increase for a college student body, so does the possibility of higher education retention and graduation rates.

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*Susan L. Petrucelli has her doctor of education in teaching and learning and works as the Director of Developmental Education for American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts. Her interests and research include academic coaching, self-efficacy, and motivational pedagogy.*

*Julie R. Bodnar is the Director of the Noonan Writing Center and a Professor of English with a specialization in analytical writing and composition at American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts. She is also in the process of earning her life coach certificate. Her research and pedagogical interests include student-centered learning, self-efficacy, and academic-athletic life coaching.*

## *Rethinking Readiness: Exploring the Transition to College*

By Pamela W. Hollander, Worcester State University

The White House has defined college readiness as one of its top domestic policy priorities, just recently convening two major summits on the topic (Field, 2014). The new national standards movement has pushed us at “warp speed” from core curriculum standards to assessments to measure college readiness, but we have not fully examined what it means to be college ready. We have not fully understood why it is that roughly half of all high school students need remedial classes before being considered ready for college-level work (Mangan, 2014). Current public policies aim to eliminate the need for remedial college classes by ratcheting up instruction and expectations at the K-12 level, but if we do not find out what these students are missing, how can we expect them to be successful?

To explore the experiences students have as they transition to college, I have been drawing on my twenty years of experience teaching first-year college students, many of whom were developmental or remedial students. I conceptualize the first year experience as a two-way relationship between students and college, involving introductions, resistance or acceptance, collaboration and exchange of ideas, and learning. What I have discovered is the role that college plays as a cultural institution and how college helps or fails to help students make this difficult transition. What also emerges from my studies is that students need to have an intellectual and emotional connection to their own learning, and if they have not established this connection during their K-12 experience, it is unclear what that will mean for their transition.

To start with, it is important to acknowledge the difficulty many students have with making the transition to college from a K-12 education. This point is key considering the national movement to try to realign K-12 education to make a smoother transition to college through new national standards. Although this reform movement has identified the same difficulty with the transition that I speak of, the problem is that the reformers have not sufficiently explored the problems students face before deciding on the solution.

Another major finding from my research is the notion that “college loves selectively,” that the institution of “college” impacts the relationship between students and the first-year experience. The fact is, some aspects of students’ selves are welcomed by “college” and some are not. Many students come to college with vague notions of what college is. College is not an entity that gives unconditional love; college loves selectively.

From a students’ perspective, it is worth asking the question “Do I love college?” In my research, I try to get the students’ perspective, so we can begin to understand this two-way relationship more from the college student’s point of view—what the student’s experience is. For example, students can find “comfort zones” of particular classes or student clubs within the perceived hostile territory of college. They can draw strength from these “comfort zones” to help them succeed in college. Additionally, students use connections between ideas in different classes to create a more positive college experience—intertextuality—and can generate “love” for college through clubs and activities at their college, which reflect their own interest.

While only a beginning, I hope this reconceptualization of college readiness as a two-way relationship helps to widen and inform our conversations of college readiness. I think it is time that we in higher education have a voice in defining what college readiness is.

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*Dr. Pam Hollander is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at Worcester State University and has been teaching developmental education classes for over 20 years.*



## *One-on-One Writing Support That Fosters Student Persistence*

By Meg Baronian and Jan Thompson, Landmark College

For struggling writers, one-on-one assistance with writing tasks often makes the difference between failure and success, between giving up on a piece of writing or persisting through to completion. Therefore, designing one-on-one sessions with students that target the most immediate and pressing issues is essential and can be instrumental in helping students to succeed.

We teach at a college that features one-on-one support for students, with the idea that individualized attention can expedite academic progress. Landmark College, in Putney, Vermont, was founded in 1985 as a college for students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Part of our mission is “to transform the way students learn, educators teach, and the public thinks about education. We provide highly accessible approaches to learning that empower individuals who learn differently.” Students are encouraged to use academic support, through the Center for Academic Support, which is staffed by faculty members, including English professors, and to attend faculty office hours.

Students at Landmark have diverse learning profiles and learning styles. The most common diagnoses among our students are language-based learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and autism spectrum disorder, although students are often diagnosed with multiple learning disabilities and can face other issues that further complicate learning.

Writing, which is a complex cognitive undertaking, presents serious challenges even for those who do not face these kinds of difficulties. For our students, writing is often a task that requires excruciating effort and creates a great deal of anxiety. Moreover, the variety of problems our students face with writing are as diverse as the student profiles themselves. These difficulties can appear with the writing process, paragraph and essay structure, and clarity of expression. Processing issues can also play a part.

Many students have not established a writing process that is effective for them. For some, it may be that a particular stage in the process can be especially challenging—getting started, sustaining effort, bringing a piece to completion. Students can have difficulty with written output in general, which may or may not have to do with time or project management. They may over-generate or under-generate. Writing process is one aspect that often needs to be addressed in the one-on-one session.

Structuring and developing paragraphs and essays can also be an area in which students may struggle. Their awareness of rhetorical approaches may be limited, and they may have trouble incorporating material from sources.

Clarity of expression is another obvious area of concern in student writing. This is most apparent as errors in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling. Students with these issues have difficulty proofreading. They often can't identify the errors, and even when they can, may be unsure how to correct them. In addition, word choice may be limited or poor and may interfere with the clear presentation of ideas.

Beyond these fairly clearly identifiable problems, we also find underlying difficulties with processing. These can include deficits in comprehension, auditory processing, and memory, as well as slow processing or poor executive functioning.

Students who struggle with writing are more likely to persevere through a writing process when they are given the appropriate support. Many of us know that look of consternation a student may have on his face coming in to a writing conference. And we can empathize, as we all know how challenging writing can be. Researchers have found that “students with learning disabilities who attended learning support centers regularly were more likely to have higher grades and graduate college than those who did not” (Toriano, Liefeld, and Trachtenberg 35). We know students who we wish would come for writing support but who, for various reasons, do not. Getting these students just to show up can feel like a big accomplishment, but, of course, it is not enough. The conference has to produce results—if not a finished product, at least progress through the writing process.

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The writing conferences we speak of can be support center sessions or meetings with a student's writing instructor. There is usually more time for the former, and a narrower focus for the latter, during which the teacher may in some cases have particular feedback or questions for the student. Both can facilitate the student's progress as well as help build competence and confidence in writing. What makes for a successful writing consultation? Effective one-on-one sessions involve a number of steps and considerations.

At the start of a writing conference, it is important to prompt students to articulate what they want to work on and accomplish during the session. If students have difficulty articulating an objective, we can ask about the writing task at hand and help them establish a feasible goal.

It is also helpful, especially for students who may have self-management or executive functioning difficulties, to ask, "We have this much time; what can we reasonably get done? How should we proceed?" In this way, we both facilitate the work at hand and model how to plan.

Often, students will benefit from being cued with questions that can lead to brainstorming, discussion, and other types of process work. The discussion should be grounded in the assignment's language or in a pertinent text. Because some struggling writers may have difficulty with independent activation or follow-through, it is important to help students complete something concrete during the session. Whatever transpires, someone (teacher and/or student) should record ideas and information in writing or in graphic form in order to capture language and aid memory. As supportive faculty, we should not assume that students will always be able to go off and initiate further work independently based simply on their recollection of the one-on-one session. When space and time permit, some students benefit from continuing to work nearby, occasionally checking in with the faculty member.

At the end of a writing conference, it is important to get students to reflect on what they have just done. We like to encourage students to sum up the session and identify a next step or steps in the process that they can do on their own. Again, it is advisable to keep notes and have the student write notes as well, including a plan for continuing the writing project. Because collaborative interactions such as writing conferences externalize the thinking and writing process, they can assist student writers in developing metacognitive strategies, such as self-talk (Flower qtd. in Wilson 12-13; Bruffee 23), which students with learning disabilities often do not automatically employ (Wong 155; Graham 274).

There are a number of other matters to consider when planning writing support sessions. Some knowledge of students' learning profiles can be of great benefit to the writing consultant or teacher. It is as important to identify students' strengths as it is to understand their challenges. How do they learn best? What do they know about themselves as learners that can help them to address the challenges? Students are empowered when they are aware of their strengths and able to articulate their needs. Many students have difficulty verbalizing, so we sometimes need to draw them out. In addition, we are trying to help students develop strategies and processes that they can transfer, which will also enable them to take ownership of their learning. Students must understand that using support now will help them build future independence. Scaffolding and modeling are also essential. Some students have deficits in skills and knowledge that require extensive support. When students lack the experience to execute certain writing tasks, we can model them, but we also have to encourage them to actively engage and work to their potential, and sometimes they resist this because it creates discomfort. Sometimes it is just a matter of helping the student to get unstuck. This can be as simple as breaking down the process together and focusing on one step at a time.

A successful writing support session often leads to additional consultations. Engaged students are persistent. "The literature on college student persistence has shown that students who are highly engaged and who have a strong connection to faculty, staff, and other students are more likely to persist to graduation than their peers who are not engaged and who do not feel connected with others" (Pascarella & Terrazini, and Tinto, cited in Troiano, Liefeld, and Trachtenberg 42). In order to build such connections with students, we need to convey to them that we value what they are saying and recognize the effort they are investing in writing.

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*Meg Baronian is an Associate Professor in the English Department at Landmark College, where she teaches Research and Analysis and creative writing in the credit program. She also teaches Fundamentals of Writing in the Language Intensive Curriculum, which is part of Landmark's pre-credit program. In addition, Meg is an instructor in the Drake Center for Academic Support and is helping to create an online site for academic support at Landmark. She received a master of fine arts degree in writing from Bard College and a bachelor of arts degree in English from Barnard College.*

*Jan Thompson is Associate Professor of English at Landmark College, where she has taught since 1987. Her courses have ranged from developmental writing and reading to second-year college literature. Most often, she teaches EN1011, Composition and Rhetoric. In past years, she has been an instructor and administrator in the writing and academic support centers, and she recently co-chaired the English Department. Jan received a master's degree in English from the University of Delaware and a bachelor's degree in English and German from the University of Virginia.*

*Landmark College, located in Putney, Vermont, is a private college for students with learning disabilities, ADHD, and autism spectrum disorders.*



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## ***Book Review: Make It Stick***

By David Lindenberg, Southern Vermont College

*Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*  
by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger, and Mark A. McDaniel

*Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* combines elements of a self-improvement book and a review of scientific literature related to learning. There is an underlying assumption that many people struggle to learn new information because they either fall into a false sense of understanding and/or they believe the historical method of repetition until it sticks is the only way to learn. The authors explain these assumptions and then use the scientific literature to help suggest effective learning techniques.

The book is written in a way that mimics the authors' argument that interweaving information promotes meaningful learning. This interweaving allows the authors to also illustrate the stumbling blocks some professors have made in generating many quizzes in the hopes of improving the learning environment in their classrooms.

One of the major arguments the authors make is that learning should be effortful, and attempting to make the process fun and easy is unlikely to promote long-term learning. When speaking about the lack of research regarding how learning styles or learning preferences affect learning, the authors acknowledge that if tasks are too difficult, learning doesn't happen. It would have been helpful if the authors had spent more time discussing how to find that "sweet spot" for a classroom full of learners.

The authors provide one to two dozen citations per chapter. While many of these reference peer-reviewed literature, the authors illustrate the information using relevant stories and a layperson's vocabulary. The interviews throughout the book are compelling and provide a vivid picture of what the authors are trying to communicate.

If you are trying to provide evidence to colleagues regarding why they might want to change how they approach learning (either as teachers or students), the endnotes of this book will provide a vast resource. If you are trying to help others recognize that there may be better alternatives to their established teaching styles, or if you are interested in changing how you approach learning, this book provides an exemplary way to start the conversation.

*David Lindenberg is the Learning Differences Support Program Coordinator at Southern Vermont College and the Treasurer/Membership Coordinator and Website Administrator of LAANE.*

*Did you read a book over the summer that would interest your learning assistance colleagues? Write a book review for the LAANE newsletter! Please email Diana Lerman, LAANE newsletter editor, at LAANENewsletter@gmail.com to learn more about submitting a book review.*





## ***LAANE 2015 Conference: Keynote Speaker David Meketon***

By Sarah Bedingfield, Ed.D., Great Bay Community College

The highlight of the 2015 LAANE conference was the keynote presentation by David Meketon, “The Psychology of Achievement.” David works as a school-based research liaison alongside Dr. Angela Duckworth in the Duckworth Lab at the University of Pennsylvania, Department of Psychology. Dr. Duckworth is well known for her work on “grit” or “the tendency to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals.” You may have also heard grit defined as the “passion and perseverance for long-term goals.”

The Duckworth lab focuses on two major traits related to achievement: grit and self-control. During his keynote presentation, Mr. Meketon focused mostly on self-control, “the ability to voluntarily regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the service of a valued goal.” Relevant to self-control is self-discipline and self-regulation. According to Meketon, “Self-discipline predicts an individual’s final GPA above and beyond intelligence.” When we are self-controlled, we are able to resist those temptations that derail us from our goals, even those short-term daily goals. For a student, that means getting those assignments done on time. Self-regulation is “the ability to voluntarily advance valued goals despite conflict.” Some students have the emotional fortitude to overcome setbacks while others do not. A bad grade, a bad semester, or a difficult life experience can cause a student to withdraw from school. Unregulated emotions, like temptations, can derail a student’s goal.

Self-control is influenced by one’s own executive functioning, one’s beliefs and biases, and one’s ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. According to Meketon, engaging in mindfulness training can improve self-control and grit. It’s about *deliberate practice*. It’s about effort, self-awareness, focus, and desire. This short article is a mere fraction of the entire presentation but due to intellectual property, I am inclined to stop here. Instead, I encourage you to purchase Angela Duckworth’s new book: *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (2016).

*Sarah Bedingfield, Ed.D. is the Vice President for Student Affairs at Great Bay Community College in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and a board member of LAANE.*



LAANE 2015 conference attendees from the University of New Hampshire.



## *Awards*

### ***2015 LAANE Student Scholarship Award Recipient Savanna Costa***

The 2015 LAANE Student Scholarship was awarded to Savanna Costa, a junior at Southern New Hampshire University. Savanna is an elementary education major who credits developmental classes with her college success. Savanna explained, “The developmental courses benefitted me immensely. I felt comfortable vocalizing my thoughts. . . . The information that was covered refreshed my memory but also educated me. I felt more prepared and confident entering future math and English courses.” As a future educator, Savanna commented on the benefits of simplifying explanation of concepts, so students could better understand material. She liked the pace of the classes, which gave her not only confidence in herself but also a good foundation for her college courses.

Her nominator, Dr. Jeanne Hughes, spoke of Savanna’s work ethic and commitment: “Savanna is not satisfied with creating acceptable work; she keeps working on assignments until she has produced her best effort. As a student with perfect attendance and an excellent work ethic, Savanna is a model for other students.” Savanna’s work ethic extends beyond the classroom as she works three jobs to pay her tuition. She was very excited to receive this scholarship, and we look forward to her future as an educator.

*Eligible students for the 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 developmental course work and earned at least 24 credits, and will be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits in the upcoming spring semester. Please encourage your students to visit our website, [www.LAANEchapter.org](http://www.LAANEchapter.org), to learn more.*

### ***2015 LAANE Outstanding Contributor Award Recipient David Lindenberg***

At the 2015 conference, on behalf of the LAANE board, President Crystal Bickford presented David Lindenberg, the LAANE webmaster and treasurer, with the LAANE Outstanding Contributor Award. This award recognizes a significant contribution to the growth and development of the association. David is the Learning Differences Support Program Coordinator at Southern Vermont College.



David attended his first LAANE conference at the encouragement of his provost at the time. Looking back, he recalls that at that conference and the following conferences, “I felt reaffirmed about taking a developmental approach to educating and supporting our students. In addition to this reaffirmation, I was inspired to try new things in my support of students and in the process have made some wonderful ongoing connections with some great educators.” At David’s first LAANE conference, the board was in need of someone to keep the website up to date. Because he enjoyed dabbling in technology, David volunteered. He started attending board meetings and became more involved.

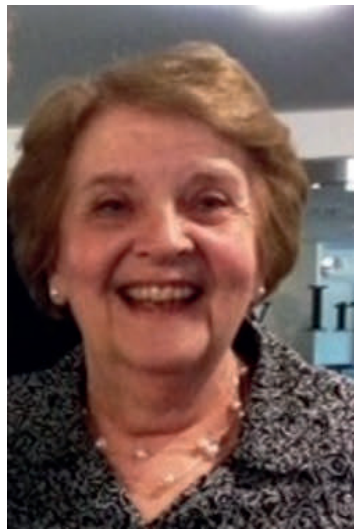
David’s contributions to LAANE as webmaster, treasurer, and board member are many. He has expertly maintained and improved LAANE’s website, and as treasurer, David has overseen LAANE’s accounts and helped lay the groundwork to ensure future smooth transitions between out-going and incoming treasurers. In addition, David has led breakout sessions and developed a summer workshop in Vermont for LAANE. Another recent contribution of his, a review of the book *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*, appears in this issue of the newsletter. The LAANE board is very appreciative of the time and energy that David has devoted to the organization.

## *Awards*

### *2015 LAANE Honoree Susan Lemire*

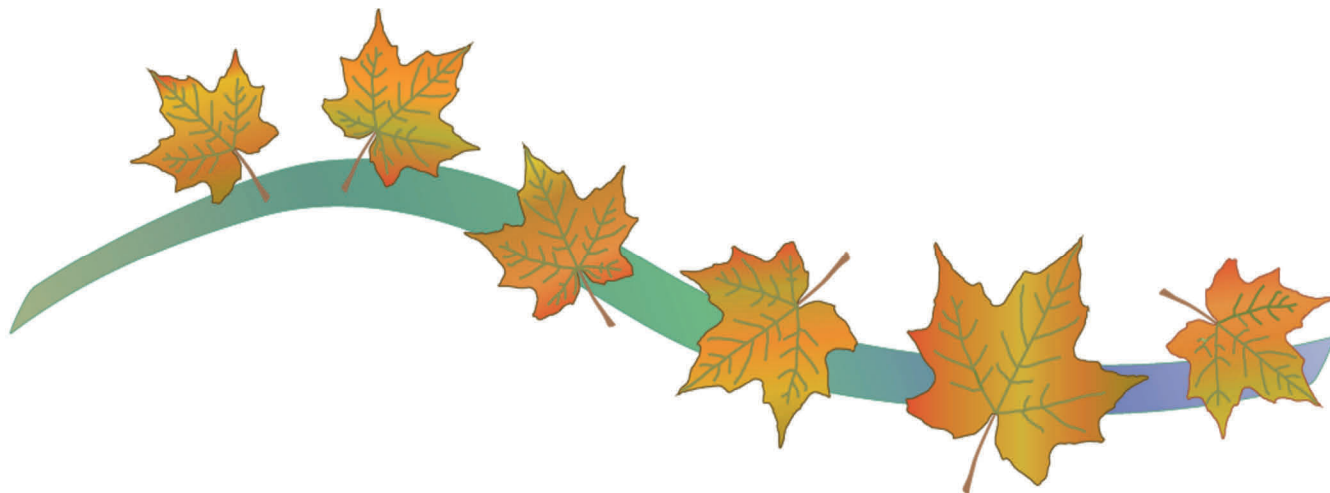
At the 2015 conference, on behalf of the LAANE board, President Crystal Bickford honored Susan Lemire for her outstanding contributions to the organization over the past twenty years, presenting Susan with a gift and the title of emeritus board member. In July 2015, Susan retired as Coordinator of Advising Services & First Generation College Students Program in the Centers for Learning at UMass Lowell after over twenty-five years of service. Susan was a member of the LAANE board for over twenty years. The board is deeply grateful for all her work and dedication to LAANE.

Susan's career in higher education began in 1988 when she was hired to teach reading and study skills to incoming freshmen at what was then the University of Lowell (now UMass Lowell). The students had provisional acceptance to the university through the Educational Opportunity Program and had to accumulate a minimum of 24 credits that counted toward graduation before they could be admitted to the college and major of their choice. Susan worked in the EOP program until September 1994 when she joined the Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services as an advisor and supervisor of tutors. Susan remained in that position—with a number of additional duties and responsibilities—until her retirement in 2015.



Susan began attending the LAANE conference in 1994 or 1995 and became involved with the LAANE board not long thereafter when she volunteered to assist the LAANE newsletter editor. A few years later, Susan was elected as newsletter editor, taking on the additional responsibility soon afterward of sending out LAANE's calls for proposals and calls to conference. Susan says she joined LAANE because the newsletter and conferences, and the occasional regional workshop, "provided support and innovative ideas for the work I was doing with college freshmen. I was also impressed with the people on the board and enjoyed getting to know them as friends and colleagues."

Susan's retirement plans include spending more time on her hobbies—knitting, sewing, and scrapbooking—as well as volunteering for charitable organizations, visiting historical sites and local museums in New England, and visiting with her grandchildren. LAANE wishes Susan a very happy retirement and thanks her for her many contributions to the organization and to the field of higher education.





## *Awards*

### *Maxine Elmont Honored at the National Association for Developmental Education Conference*

By Liz Cooper, Massachusetts Bay Community College

Dr. Maxine Elmont, a lifetime member of LAANE, was honored at this year's National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) conference that took place March 16<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> in Anaheim, California. Dr. Elmont was recognized for her years of service and dedication to excellence in developmental education with the creation of a new award in her name. The Maxine Elmont Award for Outstanding Alumnus of a Career Associate Program will be awarded to and recognize alumni who distinguish themselves in an education career and other areas of life. Dr. Elmont is a longtime chair of the NADE's Workforce Development SPIN and a NADE award winner.

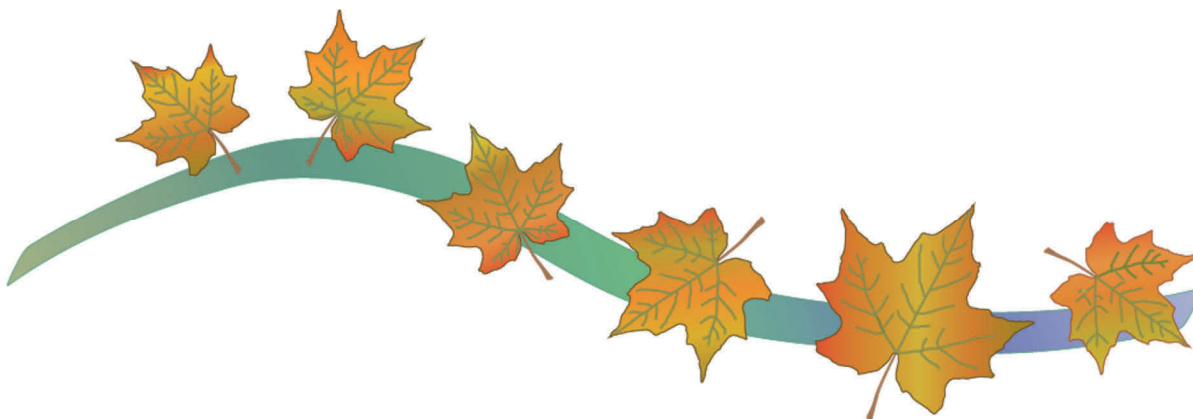


“The National Association for Developmental Education is pleased to honor Dr. Maxine Elmont for her years of dedicated service to developmental education by the creation of a new award in her name,” said NADE President Gwenn Eldridge. “Dr. Elmont has been an active and inspiring member of NADE for more than 30 years. We believe that this award is a perfect way to honor her devotion and commitment to helping all students to succeed in college.”

Dr. Elmont was the coordinator of the human services program and a professor of many social science courses for more than 48 years at MassBay Community College. “Dr. Elmont has been profoundly impacting the lives of our students for many decades,” said Yves Salomon-Fernandez, who was MassBay Interim President this past spring. “I consider her a great friend and mentor. I

cannot imagine anyone more deserving of this honor. It is great to see her legacy honored in such a way that extends her impact on a national scale.”

*Liz Cooper is the Assistant Director of Marketing & Communications at MassBay Community College.*





## *Leadership*

### *New Executive Board Members*



#### **Sharon Cronin, Vice President**

Sharon Cronin is the Director of the Center for Academic Planning and Support (CAPS) at Great Bay Community College in Portsmouth, NH. She has a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and started at the college as their Coordinator of Disability Support Services in 2002. In 2008 she moved into her current position, which she loves! Sharon is a NH native but has also lived in RI and upstate NY. She has been attending LAANE conferences since 2002 and has enjoyed them all; she figures it is

time to give back to this great association!

#### **Erica Hochberg, Secretary**

Erica Hochberg has been part of the LAANE executive board since 2008; this was her first year in an elected position. She has a master's degree in English and spent the first fourteen years of her career working in the areas of disability services and academic resources and with first-year experience programs at Muhlenberg College, Harvard University, Endicott College, and UNH Manchester. She is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a wonderful group of people to further research and conversation in the field of developmental education.

#### **Diana Lerman, Newsletter Editor**

Diana Lerman is an Academic Coach and Writing Specialist at Regis College in Weston, MA. She earned her bachelor's degree in English with a creative writing concentration from Middlebury College, studying British literature at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland during her junior year abroad. She holds a master's degree in English from Boston College and a certificate in copyediting from the University of California, San Diego. Diana encourages all members to consider writing for the LAANE newsletter; you can email her about submissions at [LAANE-Newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:LAANE-Newsletter@gmail.com).



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## *Leadership*

### *LAANE Executive Board*

#### **President**

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

#### **Vice President and Conference Coordinator**

Sharon Cronin  
Director, Center for Academic Planning and Support  
Great Bay Community College  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire  
schronin@ccsnh.edu

#### **Treasurer/Membership Coordinator and Website Administrator**

David Lindenberg  
Coordinator, Learning Differences Support Program  
Southern Vermont College  
Bennington, Vermont  
dlindenberg@svc.edu

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Diana Lerman  
Academic Coach  
Regis College  
Weston, Massachusetts  
LAANENewsletter@gmail.com

#### **Recorder/Archivist**

Erica S. Hochberg

#### **Annual Conference Proposal Coordinator**

Norman Beebe  
Co-coordinator, Peer Tutoring Program  
Greenfield Community College  
Greenfield, Massachusetts  
beebe@gcc.mass.edu

*Interested in becoming involved in LAANE? Visit our website, [www.LAANEchapter.org](http://www.LAANEchapter.org), or contact us at [learningassistancene@gmail.com](mailto:learningassistancene@gmail.com).*



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## *Upcoming Conferences*

### **National Academic Advising Association 40th Annual Conference**

October 5–8, 2016

Atlanta, GA

ATL: Advising to Learn

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Events-Programs/Events/Annual-Conference.aspx>

### **23rd National Conference on Students in Transition**

October 15–16, 2016

New Orleans, LA

<http://sc.edu/fye/sit/>

### **College Reading & Learning Association 49th Annual Conference**

November 3–6, 2016

Louisville, KY

Tracking Student Transitions

<http://www.crla.net/conference/2016/>

### **National Association of Developmental Education 41st Annual Conference**

March 1–4, 2017

Oklahoma City, OK

Winds of Change

<http://www.nade2017okc.com/>

### **National Academic Advising Association Region 1 Conference**

March 8–10, 2017

Verona, NY

<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Community/Regions/Region-1.aspx>

### **College Reading & Learning Association Northeast Chapter Annual Conference**

Spring 2017

Manhattan College, Riverdale, NY

<http://www.crlanortheast.org/spring-conference.html>



Join us at Rivier University in Nashua, New Hampshire, for LAANE's 33<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, *Game On! Training for Academic Success*, on **Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>** with keynote speaker Sarah Kravits of Montclair State University. The deadline to register for the conference is **Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>**. Visit [www.LAANEchapter.org](http://www.LAANEchapter.org) to register today!