

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

Unpublished Lessons Learned

Lindley Workman Alyea

<https://doi.org/10.58997/6.2sc2>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lindley Workman Alyea, MA, is director of the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) at Texas State University. Lindley recently received the Level IV (Lifetime) designation from ICLCA’s Learning Center Leadership program and has more than twenty

years of experience in learning assistance center management with primary expertise in Supplemental Instruction. She is actively involved as an SI Associate with the International Center for Supplemental Instruction, is a frequent presenter at state, national, and international professional conferences, and teaches University Seminar courses in addition to being a faculty mentor.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Learning with and from others profoundly impacts my past and present as both student and professional, defining my personal philosophy of learning assistance. As an undergraduate, I believed myself to be a student who led study groups, not one who sought them for my own gain. As a senior, I served as a Supplemental Instructor (SI), stumbling into an SI graduate assistantship when I mentioned starting a master’s program in English Literature and job hunting to my then supervisor. Oblivious to the impact of the collaborative

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experience at the time, I became fully conscious of it when I needed help passing my master’s comprehensive exam. I failed the first attempt, my first true test of academic resiliency. After I picked up the Kleenex, I began to question. What did I know (research)? And what did I think (application of the known or meaning)? I knew that my tried and trusted approach to preparation had not held up to the high stakes timed essay test. My second attempt was rogue: I bribed several classmates with beer and a meal, asking them to read and discuss so that I could learn with and from them.

I held a study group.

Our discussion provided new perspectives and helped forge my conclusions. What did I know (the text)? And what did I think (the meaning)?

Because I find myself asking these two questions so frequently, I can not fathom a learning assistance environment in which cooperation is not crucial. Like all those working in higher education, the internet provides the research of our most recognized scholars (the known). But unlike most, I have been fortunate to learn directly from many of those same individuals (application of the known as meaning).

As a result, my philosophy of learning assistance is that learning with others is the core of our field at every level, from developmental to doctoral to professional. I learned with and from others as an undergrad, as a master’s candidate, and in the last 19 years of my work.

While I do not know that it is possible to have absorbed their collective bodies of work, I can say that whether in board meetings, lobby bars, airport shuttles, or fishing boats, the greatest lessons delivered by these authors have been more practical, in candid conversations and mentorship.

Here are the unpublished lessons I have learned directly from scholars—the members of my professional study group over these last many years—all but the last a CLADEA Fellow:

- No matter the circumstance, there is no substitute for careful editing. (Karen Agee)
- Go boldly into new aspects of education and do so with creativity and charm. (Lucy McDonald while wearing earrings she made from thumb drives)
- Be your authentic self. (Russ Hodges hosting CRLA’s hospitality suite shirtless under a sparkly vest in Salt Lake City)

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- The greatest names in the field will make time to talk at length to any student who seeks them out and are all the greater for it. (Saundra McGuire and David Arendale)
- There is an inherent need for gold standard research in education. (Norm Stahl)
- The history of the field and its organizations must be shared to shape our direction. (Gretchen Starks-Martin)
- Listen to understand rather than to respond. (Sonya Armstrong)
- Embrace your path with passion and a Hawaiian shirt. (Rick Sheets)

- Give ‘em hell – always. (Gladys Shaw)
- The first question to ask is what the students need. (Carol Dochen)

At this moment in my career, I know that I still have so much left to learn, and I can’t wait to learn it with and from others.

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CLADEA

Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations

Congratulations to the Fellows Inducted March 2024

Victoria Appatova and Michael Frizell

The recent induction for Fellows was held at the Association for the Coaching and Tutoring Profession Conference in Charlotte, NC.



Victoria Appatova, PhD, is professor of English at the University of Cincinnati Clermont College. She has more than 30 years of experience in postsecondary literacy instruction and research. She has served as president of the College Reading and Learning Association, co-director for the Teaching Academic Survival and Success national conference,

and chair of the College Literacy and Learning Special Interest Group of the International Literacy Association. Her scholarship is focused on postsecondary literacy as well as effective learning environments for different student populations and widening access and participation in global higher education.



Michael Frizell, MFA, director of Student Learning Services at Missouri State University, is the chair of the Past Presidents Council for the National College Learning Center Association and editor of their journal, *The Learning Assistance Review*, and their first book, *Learning Centers in the 21st Century*. He holds an MFA in Creative

Nonfiction from the University of Arkansas. He writes biographies of the famous and infamous in addition to several fiction titles for TidalWave Comics and writes the forwards to the re-releases of Harold Robbins novels for Oghma Creative Media. His graphic novel, *Bender*, was released in 2018.