

## You Made It! Congratulations!

A semester of blood, sweat, toil, and tears—and of making a difference for our students and our communities—is in the books! Here's what you've accomplished this semester:

- Because of your work, one student who would not have passed has passed their class.
- You have helped one student achieve their goals, which will help them self-actualize into the person they want to be.
- Because one student will actualize their dreams, they will act as a role model for others, who would have given up on achieving success had they not seen role models around them that could.
- Because multiple people will be achieving their goals based on your work, they will build a more just, equitable, and successful future

for people you have never even met, and for generations of people that are yet to be born.

This is the great joy and the great pain of being an educator—those that we couldn't help right now are always so much more visible and so much more immediate to us, and those students that we have helped, and the

improvements that we've made to our world, are so much more hidden from us.

ILSADE hopes that you have a wonderful Winter Break, that you get some time to do the things you've wanted to do but had had to put off, and that you're ready to shape and improve minds again in the Spring!



## Remember, ILSADE Is April 20th!

Have you begun making your plans to join your ILSADE friends on April 20th for our Spring conference at Moraine Valley Community College? It'll be wonderful to see you! Here's what we have currently in store:

- Presentations! Workshops! Food! Venting time! Food! Food! (Did I

mention food?)

- Affordable prices so, in these lean times, you can stretch that dollar even further!
- Awards! Want to nominate someone for an award? Please visit the ILSADE website at <http://ilsade.weebly.com>.
- Are you traveling from a distance

and want to spend the night? We have discounted hotel options available on the ILSADE website at <http://ilsade.weebly.com>.

We hope to see you April 20th for your Spring 2018 conference, "Innovation on a Dime"! See you there!

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### Key Future Dates:

- NADE Conference Feb 21-24; <http://thenade.org>
- Nominations for ILSADE Awards and Scholarships due March 16; <http://ilsade.weebly.com>
- Proposals for Presentations and Workshops due March 30; <http://ilsade.weebly.com>
- ILSADE Conference April 20; <http://ilsade.weebly.com>

## Meet Your ILSADE Members!



**Gordon Stamper**

**Moraine Valley Community College**

**What led you into Developmental Education/learning assistance?**

During my English graduate student time at Purdue University Calumet, I was given an opportunity by the department to teach English 020, their developmental composition class at the time. The university had a diverse student population, both in ethnicity and age. It gave me invaluable practice for community college instruction. Later, I worked with developmental reading and college study skills students before graduation. Currently, it's my first semester at Moraine Valley Com-

munity College, and I've taught for Indiana's Ivy Tech Community College system for about five years.

**Why do you enjoy teaching Developmental Education courses/serving in learning assistance?**

It's rewarding to work with developmental learners. Some are returning students that need a confidence boost, while others are learners who have struggled with finding their writing voice, whether by literacy or language barriers. Observing their progress and growing assuredness is inspiring.

**What moment have you had in our field that stands out as a moment of pride?**

Professional highlights included being able to participate in panel work for the Indiana Teachers of Writing (ITW), and being invited to a Penn State Conference as part of a research group who studied what professors considered reasonable absences at a regional commuter campus. But the biggest reward is seeing committed students have later success, academically and professionally.

**Any advice to those new to the field?**

Be patient with students. Balance that with consistent standards and an insistence for their best efforts, and Developmental Education can be a great experience.

**What do you wish you knew when you entered the field?**

A greater awareness for the need of writing as a process to unclutter and sharpen the mind.

*Over the next few issues the ILSADE Times will introduce you to some of the members of our great community. This issue will spotlight various members of ILSADE and will continue with our members in following issues.*



## Meet Your ILSADE Members!

**Mandy Gerdes**

**Moraine Valley Community College**

### **What led you into Dev Ed/ learning assistance?**

I got my start in Developmental Education when I decided that an adjunct position was the best way to teach part-time while my three children were toddlers. This plan evolved to working as an adjunct at two community colleges once my children started school, which evolved to my full-time position. Between two schools, I had several sections of Developmental Composition each semester where I saw the need to better prepare developmental college writers, so they can reach their academic goals, for solid fundamental writing skills are essential across the curriculum.

### **Why do you enjoy teaching dev ed and serving in learning assistance?**

Working with students every day is the best part of my job. At Moraine Valley, we have a diverse student population which I think is one of the best benefits of working here. Every day, my students make me laugh, and I enjoy having a friendly rapport with many of my students. I believe the best way to tell when one enjoys their job is by how often they look at the clock. Most days on campus, I am shocked when it's time to go home because my day flew by without me checking the clock once!

### **What moment have you had in our field stands out as moment of pride?**

Every semester, I have moments of pride in my classroom when my developmental writing students improve their writing with each assignment, so it's hard to narrow to one. I really enjoy when I can see the metaphorical light bulb go off when students realize that can write well—it only takes effort!

### **What do you wish you knew when you entered the field?**

I wish that I was more self-aware that students don't always remember or understand what I teach rather than how I teach it. Meaning, for some students, the content is more memorable as long as I present it in a way they can understand. Einstein once said, "Education is not about the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." In our field, many of our students need to learn to open their minds to learning and let go of previous frustrations. Writing is a part of their everyday lives, and my job is to make sure they leave my class with the skill set to succeed academically and professionally.

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Want to help or have questions? Please e-mail  
Jason at [kingj59@morainevalley.edu](mailto:kingj59@morainevalley.edu).

**Want to make a difference?**

**Got Tenure Goals you need to fulfill?**

**Want people to hear your wisdom and experience?**

**Work for ILSADE! E-mail Jason at  
[kingj59@morainevalley.edu](mailto:kingj59@morainevalley.edu) for details!**

## Meet Your ILSADE Members!



**Jason King (he's the one in the front)**  
**Moraine Valley Community College**  
**President, ILSADE**

### **What led you into Developmental Education / learning assistance?**

I was originally a Social Science high school teacher but was getting tired of thinking historical thoughts about standing in lines at job fairs for history positions that looked like they were from the Great Depression. I took a Middle School Mathematics position in 2002 and it turned out that I liked it, and from there went on and got my Master's in Mathematics.

### **Why do you enjoy teaching Developmental Education courses / serving in learning assistance?**

Because I get to help people, and I feel like if you really want to help people this is one of the best places to be in Higher Ed. Every teacher can make a difference in their students' lives, but I feel like I'm much closer to a place of academic higher need than when I have taught in different subject areas.

### **What moment have you had in our field that stands out for you as a moment of pride?**

I really do love what I do every day – well, almost every day – and so I'm blessed with lots of little opportunities that make me feel blessed to do what I do every day. I have former students that have become college professors (and who I work with today),

### **Any advice for those new to the field?**

Be gentle with yourself. It's easy to doubt yourself, especially in the beginning. Hopefully you have good people around you that will help bolster you during the tough times and remind you that everyone makes mistakes in the beginning (and, let's be honest, that never really changes) – and the best you can do is your best, tempered with the humility to know when to ask for help and the ears to listen to the good advice you'll get. Good luck!

### **What do you wish you knew when you entered the field?**

You won't always be exhausted. You will, in the beginning, but in the fullness of time you'll be able to find efficiencies in lesson planning and grading, won't take student failures so personally (and, sometimes, you'll even miss the feeling of that pain when they don't do well), and will find your own unique way of making things work.

**Have a great break! Take pictures—we'll highlight some vacation photos in the next newsletter in January :)**



## Meet Your ILSADE Members!



**Michael Morsches**

**Moraine Valley Community College**

### **What led you into Developmental Education/Learning Assistance?**

I went to the Peace Corps in Jamaica to teach. When I got there, the school was closed and I found my way to an Adult Literacy program. When I returned to the US, I moved to Akron, Ohio and decided to stop by the university to look into a Master's degree in Reading. I walked into the first building I could find and saw a sign that said "Reading." I went in the room and talked to a nice lady, asking her for information on any reading programs. She kept asking me more and more about my experiences, and then offered me a job teaching College Reading. That completed my very serendipitous entry into developmental education.

### **Why do you enjoy Developmental Education courses/ serving in learning assistance?**

I enjoy the fact that there is no "re" in anything we do – what we do is developmental, not remedial. These are not the same human beings sitting in our classes that first experienced this content those many years ago, and we don't teach it the same way it was presented to them then. It truly is brand new territory each time we walk into a classroom.

### **What moment have you had in our field that stands out for you as a moment of pride?**

Too many to pick from probably; but most likely every time one of our staff and faculty is recognized for the good work we do.

### **Any advice for those new to the field?**

Show them you care about them, then you can beat the crap out of them . I wish I had focused more on process than product 30 years ago.

## Have a great winter break!



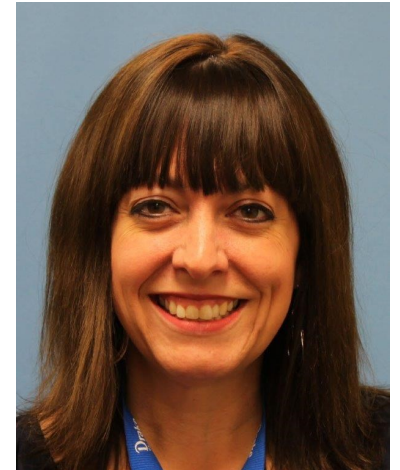


## Meet your ILSADE Members!

**Jennie Doke-Kerns**

**Des Moines Area Community College**

**President, Iowa Developmental Education Association (IDEA)**



### **What led you into Developmental Education / learning assistance?**

Almost five years ago, I took a position with Des Moines Area Community College as an Associate English Professor and head of the Academic Achievement Center on our small Newton Campus. I took the position in order to get my foot in the door with the college with the end goal of becoming a dedicated English faculty member. Though I had worked as a high school English teacher for 13 years, I had never worked in an academic support center. This position had me working with and assisting college students and high school completion students in our GED and later HiSET programs.

My experience leading our Academic Achievement Center and teaching Developmental Writing classes here at DMACC has changed the course of my career. I have found great purpose and satisfaction in working with these students, and I hope to enter into administration where I can continue to advocate for these students and shape the policies that most affect them on our campuses. I also became active in the Iowa Developmental Education Association, of which I am now the president. Additionally, I was appointed to a state-wide work group that is partnered with our Department of Education to identify best practices and to guide policy on developmental education at the state level.

### **Why do you enjoy teaching Developmental Education courses / serving in learning assistance?**

I love seeing students find success in education. For some students, the success they find in the high school completion programs or in their first semesters of college might be their first success in the classroom in many years. I believe in the transformative, empowering effect of education, and I love seeing students go further than they thought possible.

### **What moment have you had in our field stands out for you as a moment of pride?**

Often the small moments are the ones that stand out to me. I have seen a student break down in tears of joy at the news that they've passed the last HiSET test, meaning they've earned their high school diploma. I've had great pride in my staff, seeing how invested they become in their students, sometimes even coming in on their days off to work with a student that needs additional help. Overall I get the most satisfaction in seeing students meet and exceed their own expectations of themselves.

### **Any advice for those new to the field?**

Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and for your students. You as an instructor need sufficient time and resources to teach effectively. Advocating for yourself *is* advocating for your students. And be willing to be a voice for these students. Often these students feel lost and out of place in the college setting. Help our administrators and policy makers understand the lived experience of these students. Challenge the assumptions that people make about these students, and help others understand that there is no typical developmental student: each comes with her own obstacles, challenges, strengths, and experiences. Often those who don't work with these students want to prescribe a single solution to "fix" these students or developmental ed in general. This is impossible.

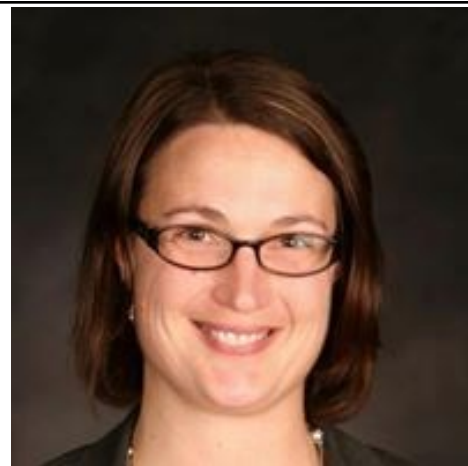
### **What do you wish you knew when you entered the field?**

I wish that I had found the network or other developmental educators sooner than I did. It took a while for me to understand how important those connections in the field really are. I applaud those who join their professional organizations or encourage collaboration with others from their own colleges. We have so much to learn from one another!



## Meet Your ILSADE Members!

**Jennifer Theriault**  
**Northern Illinois University**



### **What led you into Developmental Education / learning assistance?**

In a sense, I have worked within Developmental Education my entire life although I did not always know the name for it. I have been an educator for over twenty years in many different capacities. From teaching elementary school to GED and ESL classes to college classes, I have witnessed the challenges students face with reading, writing, and critical thinking as they move from one aspect of their educational journey to the next. I think everyone (including myself) needs support as we transition to new experiences and challenges. I always wanted to be a teacher (since I can remember) and hoped to facilitate learning. I ultimately found my way to teaching college developmental reading courses through my pursuit of a doctoral degree.

### **Why do you enjoy teaching Developmental Education courses / serving in learning assistance?**

I like working with college students as they transition into college because that knowledge and understanding is often part of a hidden curriculum. I enjoy providing students with a safe space to ask questions, grow, make mistakes, and truly understand what college expectations (particularly literacy expectations) will be.

### **What moment have you had in our field stands out for you as a moment of pride?**

A moment of pride for me was completing the Certificate of Graduate Study in Postsecondary Developmental Literacy and Language Instruction through Northern Illinois University in 2015. I highly recommend checking it out (shameless plug!).

### **Any advice for those new to the field?**

Try not to make assumptions about your students. Keep learning yourself. Appreciate and celebrate your successes. Follow Simpson's (1996) assertion for conducting reality checks – see what you really need to prepare your students for in your developmental classes!

### **What do you wish you knew when you entered the field?**

I wish I had more knowledge about the rich history of students needing explicit instruction to become strategic learners and meet the demands of postsecondary learning. Specifically, I wish I had a better understanding of from where postsecondary reading instruction has come. I did not appreciate how issues like assessment practices, conflicting models of reading instruction, and under-prepared students are not recent.