

LINDENWOOD

U N I V E R S I T Y

LEARNING ACADEMY



**The Learning Academy
Welcomes Dr. Betsy Ponder
Melick**

The Learning Academy is delighted to welcome Dr. Betsy Ponder Melick as the Director of Faculty Development for Lindenwood University. Dr. Melick will begin her new role on May 31, 2022.



Dr. Melick earned her Ph.D. in English literature from Kent State University. She is a scholar of medieval literature, and her research focuses primarily on the middle English romance genre. At present, Betsy is Assistant Professor of English and Faculty Development Coordinator at Northwest Florida State College. As faculty development coordinator, she plans and facilitates workshops and faculty forums that promote strategies for increasing student engagement and implementing active learning in the classroom.

As Director, Faculty Development at Lindenwood, Dr. Melick will lead the [R.I.S.E. Project](#) and work with colleagues across campus to ensure the Learning Academy continues to provide a rich source of development opportunities for our faculty and that all faculty feel supported in their professional growth.

Dr. Melick shared, “I am delighted that I will have the opportunity to contribute to the Lindenwood Learning Academy’s innovative and multifaceted approach to professional development. I believe that through meaningful development opportunities, both faculty members and students can experience more success and a stronger sense of well-being.”

We asked Betsy about this work and her dedication to faculty development; here’s what she had to say:

Q: What got you interested in faculty development?

A: I think my interest in faculty development comes from a few different experiences I've had. During my first year of teaching, I was part of a really wonderful cohort of other first-year instructors that met weekly and regularly observed each other's classes. Through that group, I came to deeply value opportunities to exchange ideas with other instructors. During grad school, I had a few different opportunities to plan and facilitate other idea sharing forums, like brown-bag lecture series and research symposia. Organizing those events was incredibly rewarding to me. I was drawn to my current faculty development position because it was focused on active learning, which has always been a crucial aspect of my pedagogical approach. I also love being involved in faculty development because it gives me the opportunity to learn so much that enhances my own teaching.

Q: You will be leading the RISE Project. What part of this are you most excited about as we head into the second year of RISE?

A: I'm excited about the RISE project because I think it's a wonderful framework that encourages faculty members to consider multiple aspects that contribute to excellence in teaching. I am looking forward to working on the RISE project because I think it will allow me to lean on some of my existing experience—the "Support" and "Engagement" parts of RISE are very similar to the faculty development I've led for the past two years. Inclusiveness and Rigor are both important to me personally, so I am especially thrilled to work on those two initiatives. I'm really looking forward to getting to work with faculty as they pursue these standards in their teaching.

Q: What is an example of something you learned that really changed your teaching for the better?

A: I think there are two concepts that both improved my teaching in significant ways. The first is a very common principle: that when you ask students a question, you have to allow time (more time than you probably think is necessary) for them to think about their responses before you answer your own question. In other words, get comfortable with uncomfortable silences! Once I grasped the importance of this thinking time, I started acknowledging and even encouraging that "awkward" silence by adding "go ahead and take a few moments to think about it" after asking a complex discussion question. This has helped me feel more comfortable with those silences, and when I indicate that the silence is intentional, it alleviates the tension that some students might

feel too. Committing to wait time after asking a question has considerably enhanced my students' engagement with course material and the quality of their participation in discussions.

Another concept that has been crucial for my teaching is that an understanding that classes can be effective even if it doesn't go according to plan. Sometimes, when I'm trying something new, I will tell my students and warn them that it might not go according to my plan, but that I appreciate them letting me try it. More often than not, just being honest about the fact that I'm trying a new approach helps the students be more open to the activity or assignment. I also think it's meaningful for them to know that I am invested in my own improvement as an instructor and continually seeking out new strategies. Embracing the fact that new strategies *might* fail (but failure on the first try is ok) has made me more open to innovation and helped me bring several really effective strategies into my courses.

Q: What part about Lindenwood are you most excited about as you join our campus community?

A: It's hard to pinpoint just one thing I am most excited about! I love that Lindenwood is an old institution with history, and I am looking forward to learning about how Lindenwood has grown and changed throughout the years. I'm also really looking forward to getting to meet the faculty members. I've always really enjoyed getting to connect with faculty members from different disciplines than my own and learn about their research and teaching methods—it's such a fun part of faculty development!

The Learning Academy is thrilled to welcome Betsy onboard in May. Brittany Brown, Employee Development Director, said, "Betsy has the necessary credentials and checks all the boxes that we were looking for in a Faculty Development Director. She not only brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, but she also fits our culture at Lindenwood." We can't wait for her to get here!



R.I.S.E. Project Recap

What a Difference a Year Makes!

As we come to the close of the first year of the R.I.S.E. Project, the R.I.S.E. Team would like to thank everyone for their participation in the many events this year. In case you missed it, here is a quick recap of Year 1.



- In August 2021, the project was launched with special events at the Annual Adjunct Conference and during Faculty Welcome Week. In addition to t-shirt launching by Dr. Deb Ayres, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, we kicked things off with special keynote addresses by [Dr. Sandra McGuire](#) followed by the [R.I.S.E. Project Town Hall](#) and a workshop by [Dr. Lolita Paff](#).
- Throughout the year, R.I.S.E. Scholars led [roundtable sessions](#) where faculty explored the pillars, research on benefits for students, and associated pedagogical strategies to enhance each pillar in their courses.
- The [R.I.S.E. Student Spotlights](#) provided faculty with insight into the experiences and needs of the Lindenwood student body and provided students an opportunity to share their learning experiences.
- Approximately 17 full-time faculty members decided to take part in [R.I.S.E. research](#) studies which aim to connect the dots between faculty

development and student learning and test the utility of the R.I.S.E. framework.

- Many took advantage of the helpful resources found on the [R.I.S.E. Project website](#), consulted with a [R.I.S.E. Scholar](#), participated in a professional learning community and other R.I.S.E. workshops.
- On April 3, Drs. Deb Ayres and Shenika Harris took R.I.S.E. on the road and presented “The R.I.S.E. Project: Elevating Learning for a Diverse Student Body” at the [HLC Annual Conference](#) in Chicago, IL.

Reflections from the R.I.S.E. Scholars

As you can see, it has been a busy year, and the R.I.S.E. Scholars can certainly attest to this! Beginning in Summer 2021, the R.I.S.E. scholars have been hard at work researching, learning, sharing, planning, and practicing to best help their colleagues design courses and create classroom cultures that facilitate effective learning for all students. When asked about their thoughts regarding the last year, the scholars had this to say.

I have truly enjoyed being a R.I.S.E. scholar for the College of Business over the last year. The aspect that I found most beneficial is the informal intellectual conversations centered around pedagogy. While it was valuable to study the literature and understand why certain methods/techniques are more useful and effective relative to others, it was also advantageous to see what my colleagues have been doing in their classrooms. Overall, this has been an enlightening experience that I was honored to be a part of. I hope that I have taught my colleagues some ways to improve their courses just as they have taught me ways to improve my courses. I am also grateful to my fellow R.I.S.E. scholars and Shenika Harris who I have learned a great deal from over the past year.



Dr. Javeria Farooqi,
R.I.S.E. Scholar for
Plaster College of
Business &
Entrepreneurship



Dr. Emilie Johnson, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Education & Human Services

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a R.I.S.E. scholar, and there are so many aspects that I have loved. It is tough to identify a favorite part, but I have to say working with the other R.I.S.E. Scholars and Shenika Harris has undoubtedly been a highlight. It is gratifying to be part of such a cohesive team, and I enjoy learning how the initiative impacts faculty in other colleges at Lindenwood. My biggest takeaway from year one of the R.I.S.E. project is that small changes significantly impact student learning. I am excited for year two of R.I.S.E. and to see the work of the R.I.S.E. Course Design Institute as these professors weave all four pillars into their course design and delivery. I would like to say a special thanks to Dr. Scheffler and the Leadership Team in the College of Education and Human Services for your support and encouragement of the R.I.S.E. project!

There have been many favorite parts, but I think my very favorite was being involved in a years-long project that centers on and enhances what we do best at LU which is teach. My colleagues are very enthusiastic about teaching, and I loved sharing ideas with them and hearing about their own pedagogical practices. We are never finished learning about teaching. Working in partnership with our students helps heighten enthusiasm, efficacy, and purpose. I am looking forward to continuing our CAH PLC to share ideas. I'm also looking forward to exploring new ways to integrate best practices in our classrooms. Big shout-out to Shenika for taking on a role she had not planned on--and rocking it! Deep appreciation as well to the members of CAH for their support and enthusiasm regarding the R.I.S.E. project.



Dr. Ana Schnellmann, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Arts & Humanities



Dr. Megan Woltz, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Science, Technology, & Health

My favorite part of being a R.I.S.E. Scholar has been reading the published literature on research-based best practices for how we can modify what we are already doing in the classroom to help our students learn better and be more successful, and then getting to share this information with my colleagues. My major takeaway from Year 1 of the R.I.S.E. project is that learning is a team endeavor! Obviously, students have to be willing to put in the effort to learn, but all the effort in the world won't be enough if our students don't understand our expectations and have no idea how to achieve them. That's where support, inclusion, and engagement come in – these pillars of pedagogy are about all the things instructors can do to make sure that if our students do put in the effort to learn, they will be successful. In year 2, I am looking forward to getting hands-on! We started the R.I.S.E. project getting faculty familiar with the rigor, inclusion, support, and engagement pillars – what they are, the research showing how they increase student learning and retention, and suggestions for how to increase these pillars in our courses. This was a necessary starting place to get us all on the same page. Moving forward, the R.I.S.E. scholars will be offering more workshops in which faculty can take their existing course materials and make tangible changes.

Help us plan Year 2 of the R.I.S.E. Project!

The R.I.S.E. Team is looking forward to continuing the journey of working together to establish a shared framework for effective teaching that will serve faculty from all disciplines and students from all groups. To best do this, we need your help!

The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete, and all survey completers have a chance to win \$10 in dining dollars. We hope that you will take a few minutes to share your thoughts and help us plan the second year of the R.I.S.E. Project. [Please click here to complete the anonymous survey.](#)



What's on the Horizon for the R.I.S.E. Project this Summer?

While we are coming to the close of the first year, the R.I.S.E. Team will have an active summer! Check out some of the upcoming activities for the R.I.S.E. Team.

Thanks to everyone that submitted an activity for the R.I.S.E. awards. Over the next couple of weeks, the R.I.S.E. team will review the 27 activities and select the award winners. We will notify all winners by email by May 23. Be on the lookout for an email to see if you are the winner of a R.I.S.E. award!

Later this month, eight faculty members will participate in the R.I.S.E. Course Design Institute (RCDI). The RCDI is one of the main components of the second [R.I.S.E. research](#) study which aims to track the results of intensive development experience and course redesign on faculty and student outcomes. The goal of this 4-day institute is to provide faculty with an intensive development experience where they review/learn strategies associated with the R.I.S.E. pillars and make significant progress in redesigning their courses around the R.I.S.E. framework.

RISE

**Course
Design
Institute**
May 19 - 23



Throughout the summer, we will add even more resources (e.g., research articles, suggested readings, tutorials, templates, examples, etc.) to [The R.I.S.E. Guides: Definitions, Research and Teaching Resources](#) section of the [R.I.S.E. Project](#) website. Be sure to take advantage of these helpful resources as you plan your fall courses!

R.I.S.E. Scholars' Summer Reading Suggestions

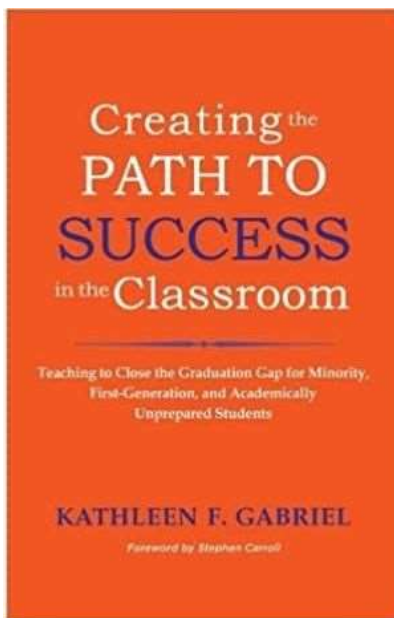
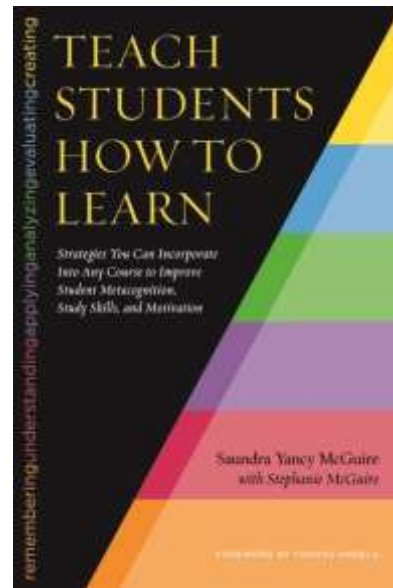
Looking for some resources to become a better instructor and improve your teaching? Please check out the R.I.S.E. scholars' top recommendations for some life-changing resources. **CONTACT THE LEARNING ACADEMY TO BORROW A COPY OF THESE EXCELLENT RESOURCES.**

[*Teach Students How to Learn*](#) by Sandra Yancy McGuire with Stephanie McGuire

"This book is a resource that I will keep handy. I appreciate the strategies they share that instructors can incorporate into any course to improve student metacognition, study skills, and motivation." - Dr. Ana Schnellmann, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Arts & Humanities

"I really enjoyed reading *Teaching Students How to Learn* by Dr. McGuire. I found that to be applicable across the board." - Dr. Javeria Farooqi, R.I.S.E. Scholar for Plaster College of Business & Entrepreneurship

"McGuire's *Teach Students How to Learn* was a huge game-changer for me. I gained a much better understanding not only as to WHY students struggle but HOW they struggle. The examples used in the book really illustrate McGuire's points. Teaching students how to learn is something vital in our profession--but we have to teach professors how to learn to teach students how to learn."
- Dr. Emilie Johnson, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Education & Human Services



[Creating the Path to Success in the Classroom: Teaching to Close the Graduation Gap for Minority, First-Generation, and Academically Unprepared Students](#) by Kathleen Gabriel

"This is a resource that I found very helpful for improving my own teaching." - Dr. Megan Woltz, R.I.S.E. Scholar for the College of Science, Technology, & Health

As you can see, it was a busy and productive year! We hope everyone learned some helpful tips and strategies for making their courses more rigorous, inclusive, supportive, and engaging. We look forward to continuing the journey of working together to establish a shared framework for effective teaching that will serve faculty from all disciplines and students from all groups in year 2!

Lindenwood Learning Academy

LARC 009
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, MO 63301
636-949-4408



Lindenwood University, Learning Academy | 209 S Kingshighway St, Saint Charles, MO 63301

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