

# The TAI Buzz

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## The Academic Institute: Inspiring Students to Achieve their Potential

*A Publication of Sherrill O'Shaughnessy & Associates*

*Spark the Dream... Ignite the Drive... Prepare for the Journey*

### **Recharging Your College Dreams – It is Never Too Late to Get to Where You Want to Be**

As college enrollment skyrockets around the country, today's students face unprecedented levels of competition when playing the college admissions game. It is easy for many students to feel discouraged about their admissions prospects because of gaps in their transcripts that are often merely the result of unique learning styles, remiss teachers or simply a bad semester.

At TAI, we are dedicated to working with our students' individual strengths to problem solve around these gaps and prepare any student, from any background, for a successful college experience. The truth is, with our flexible and individualized learning plans, it is never too late for a high school student to become college-ready.

At the heart of this process is motivation – finding the dreams that drive each student and leveraging this hope to inspire the hard work and dedication needed to get back on track for the college application process.

Success for college means not only having the right GPA or SAT score, but it also means knowing how to learn. Students who get stuck with the wrong teacher in their core classes at school often miss out on key opportunities to develop confidence not only in their ability to comprehend but also their unique study styles. Graduating high schoolers need to leave the classroom with the knowledge of the material and topics reflected on

### **A Note from the Director: Fostering Dreams at TAI**

*At TAI this summer, we are focusing on the value and the driving impact of dreams in achieving academic success. We have a widely diverse group of students who come through our doors, each with a different set of hopes for their future.*

*By establishing goals built around these important aspirations, we can help you get the right grades and succeed in the classes that will help get you where you want to be – whether that is into a top tier 4-year college on top of a Colorado mountain or into the best technical training program here in the Bellevue area, we can help to get you there. So for now, just open up your mind and choose your dream. We are here to help make them come true.*

*~ Sherrill*

their transcripts as well as a strong sense of how they most effectively learn.

When students have a negative experience in a classroom, they tend to get discouraged and miss the opportunity to gain study skills and this level of self-awareness. As discouragement grows, students stop trying and grades go down.

However, TAI offers a solution for the disillusioned student – through our Grade Replacement Program, students take 8 to 10 weeks to repeat courses with a C or D grade, focusing on note-taking techniques and new learning approaches. They take college-style notes, review and study them and take tests or write compositions. Students can concurrently take the new courses they need for their school year in the regular five month semester.

The program is rigorous and challenging, requiring a high level of commitment from the students and a nine-hour school day. In turn, it provides a prime

opportunity for a struggling student to demonstrate their dedication, tenacity and motivation to prospective colleges.

By creating a new, enhanced transcript, students do not erase their past but rather define a new future. They can demonstrate their motivation to develop the learning skills to succeed in college and form a bank of academic background for successful, sophisticated college work.

Grade Replacement represents only one of many options available to students who are looking to recharge their college dreams. Whether the goal is to ski every morning before class in the mountains of Lake Tahoe or to read textbooks on the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, anything can be achieved through renewed dedication and creative coursework. It is never too late – all it takes is the spark of a dream.

**For more information, email  
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## ~~ COLLEGE QUEST: On the Road with Sherrill ~~

*By finding the right fit at college, students can pave their own unique path toward achieving their dreams. This month, Sherrill focuses on one school that offers a personalized education in an inspiring setting, and a true story of one student's own path to success..*



### Sierra Nevada College

*A 4-year college for physically active students  
Incline Village, NV, [www.sierranevada.edu](http://www.sierranevada.edu)*

Sierra Nevada College offers students a chance to obtain a liberal arts degree in the inspirational surroundings of Lake Tahoe. As Tahoe's only 4-year university, SNC combines a comprehensive curriculum with the living laboratory of neighboring mountains and lakes. Students have access to endless opportunities for hiking, skiing, biking, snowboarding and discovering at any of the 10 resorts located within 45 minutes of SNC's 18-acre, pine forest campus.

SNC also offers a diverse and rich academic environment, with over 30 majors ranging from ecology and teaching to ski resort management, entertainment technology and entrepreneurship programs. The classes are kept small and intimate, with an average of 15 students per class. The student body comes from around the country and the world, representing 22 states and 9 different nations.

Sierra Nevada aims to prepare students for success in a sustainable world through a diverse, comprehensive and interdisciplinary liberal arts curriculum. With a small student body and intimate campus, this is an ideal fit for the student seeking an exciting opportunity to study away from home while spending time outdoors and getting the individualized support they need for academic success. For more information, ask Sherrill about her previous visits to SNC's campus or go to [www.sierranevada.edu](http://www.sierranevada.edu).

### From Dropout to Career Path: A True Story of One Student's Path

As his kindergarten teacher wrote on his first report card, Josh always "marched to his own drummer." As a child, Josh went through some IQ testing and was deemed "creatively gifted" – only later would his unique style of learning be given an official title by society: ADD.

Josh went through school as if on two separate paths at once – his creativity blossomed through a few inspiring teachers and he discovered a love for video games and the Japanese language. At the same time, he struggled in the more traditional classrooms and coursework that was heavy on reading assignments. Later in high school, this balance shifted and Josh's frustrations and struggles came to outweigh his triumphs and passions.

Sometime in his senior year, Josh gave up and quit school. He took on a series of temporary jobs, working at fast food chains or in warehouses. After years of juggling these positions, Josh felt lost and was not sure how to get back on track with the dreams that once propelled him through life.

One night, everything changed. Josh saw an advertisement for Collins College, a technical school in Tempe, Arizona that offers a BA degree in game design. Remembering his old hobby from childhood, Josh was inspired. He completed his diploma at BCC and then moved to Arizona and enrolled at Collins. Taking year-round courses, Josh was able to complete his degree in just 3 years.

In his senior year, Collins College helped Josh land an internship at a small game design company and then a full time position at a larger firm in Phoenix. Josh was able to complete the remainder of his classes at night while working full time during the day. Josh completed his BA degree in May 2007 and continues to work for the large game design firm.

Josh's story represents the principles we thrive on at TAI: through hard work, dedication and learning to believe and trust in his dreams, Josh went from dropping out of high school to finishing college and working in a career field that he has always loved.

# News and Events!

*Local and National Updates that Impact the TAI Community*

## **TAI's Curriculum Now Enhanced by Media Studies**

Jason Waldow, one of our newest instructors, has an advanced degree in Communications. Jason is passionate about the power of media and communication in education, and he has brought this knowledge to our English coursework at TAI.

Thanks to Jason, our students now study and participate in a range of media-related studies in addition to reading one classic novel per month and writing a five paragraph essay. Topics have included media ownership, media control, the Federal Trade Commission and the Disney, AOL, Time Warner and Viacom merger. Jason's students are also studying the effects of media on public opinion in the 2008 election coverage.

The coursework also includes elements of history, exploring the Civil Rights movement from various angles by reading Malcom X and discussing the media coverage at the time, and then evaluating how these issues impacted the course of America. Recently, a unit on political cartoons has also been added to the program.

Jason's coursework also provides students with tangible skills in applying media to educational development. This includes instruction in how to develop a PowerPoint presentation, conduct in-depth research, use a variety of resources, write an annotated bibliography and prepare concise five minute presentations which undergo peer reviews and critique.

***Jason's media course will be offered this Summer and again this Fall.***

## **Wednesday Seminars with "Professor Reggie"**

At TAI, we work hard to inspire our students and equip them with the tools to achieve their dreams. A key element to this mission is preparing students for the demands of college.

Wednesday Seminars with "Professor Reggie" offer students the opportunity to participate in a dynamic discourse based on the Socratic question and answer approach. Focusing on the most controversial issues of the day, this seminar series coaches students in how to form and express opinions and, importantly, learning how to learn.

For each session, Reggie provides a reading from a leading newspaper or journal on a selected topic. Students are assigned to read the article and with Reggie's guidance, they participate in separating out the facts to form their own personal opinions. Forming well-documented, fact-based opinions and discussing these ideas in an open dialogue is a part of preparation for the expectations of college. Wednesday Seminars also help our students to become more versed in how we all elect our leaders – a critical part of responsible citizenship.

This summer we will continue to explore the political conventions and the creation of a national platform. Students will also be expected to attend one Shakespeare Play in the Park and discuss this experience with Reggie.

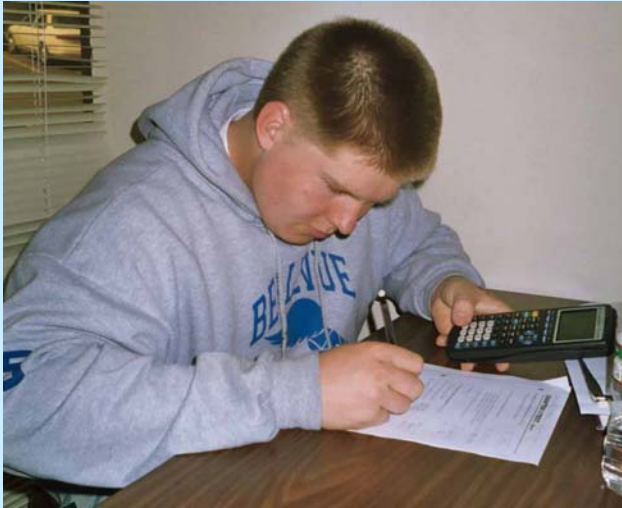
*These activities will provide an Honors Designation or a Current Events credit.*

## **Book Review: *The College Book – Colleges that Change Lives***

Based on the concept that colleges should enrich and empower students, former New York Times editor Loren Pope set out to identify schools that will "change lives" in this unique and innovative guide to the college search. The book highlights 40 creative colleges around the country that emphasize the community that higher education provides both during the college years and beyond. These schools also offer students collaborative, innovative educational experiences that fit individual learning styles and complement personal goals and dreams. For more information on the schools and the guide, visit: <http://www.ctcl.com>

## From the Students...

*TAI students share their educational advice, wisdom and experiences in their own words*



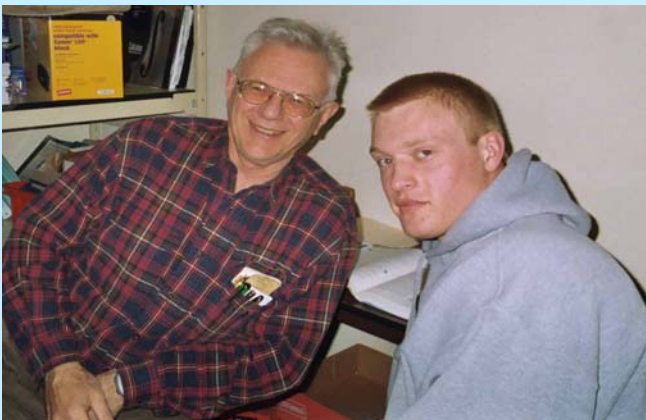
**Q. As a recent graduate, how did TAI help you achieve your dreams?**

*“TAI helped me find options. I chose the college that felt like a good fit for my personality and I am so happy. The professors are awesome and I love living in a college town.”*

*“What helped me were all those papers I had to write! College is so much easier after all that writing I did at TAI.”*

*“When I first came to TAI, I felt ready to give up on college and my dream to become a police officer. But I was able to make up classes and prepare for college, and now I am a Junior at WSU majoring in Law Enforcement.”*

*“TAI helped me find and get accepted to Loyola Marymount University in Southern California. I am now a Sophomore majoring in Communications, and I love my classes, my job and my friends.”*



**Q: What dreams do you have for your future?**

*“I want to graduate from UW with my Masters in Business. I plan on owning my own business and being an independent, successful young woman.”*

*“I want to go to Washington State University and become a kindergarten teacher.”*

*“I want to become a builder and develop houses and buildings.”*

*“I want to go to a good college and start a life in Los Angeles.”*

*“After college, I would love to become a detective.”*

*“I plan to attend WSU and become a psychologist.”*



**Q: What have you learned about studying at TAI?**

*“I have learned to stay organized and keep focused on school.”*

*“It is possible to do anything as long as you put enough time into it.”*

*“I learned how I learn the best. This has helped me succeed in all of my classes.”*

*“Before I came here, I didn't have very good study habits, but now I am learning lots of new ways of studying.”*

*“I have learned how to be more prepared for college.”*

*“Smaller classes are the key to learning.”*

*“I am more likely to get homework done quickly and efficiently if I do it right after school.”*