

SkillsUSA Career Essentials

Abby Underberg, ICCC, IOSS Corrections Consultant and Secretary, shares a new resource for adult educators in the state.



The Iowa Department of Education, in partnership with the 15 Community Colleges in Iowa, is pleased to announce the implementation of the Career Essentials suite through SkillsUSA. Adult Education and Literacy programs have

trained staff who can assist students in achieving this industry recognized credential.

In today's world, it's not enough for students to have just technical skills. If they want to advance their career potential and compete in today's job market, they need to stand out, be distinct and be a step ahead. That's a tall order. How can you ensure students are career-ready? Here's how.

The SkillsUSA Career Essentials suite engages students, including adult learners, in defining, implementing and measuring their career-readiness skills along every point in their educational journey. The curriculum generates high levels of student engagement and is built on evidence-based outcomes that support the industry-validated Career-Ready Assessment.

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The SkillsUSA Career Essentials: Experiences curriculum builds upon the life experiences of adult learners to help develop personal, workplace and technical skills. This course fits adults' lifestyles and schedules while advancing their transferable employability skills—no matter their occupational area.

Program Features

- Designed for learners age 20 and older
- Includes five workplace-based units and a Capstone authentic assessment unit, where learners develop a career readiness portfolio and interview materials and skills

- Is project-based in design, including instructor guides, learner instruction sheets, e-learning modules, pre- and post-tests, and scoring rubrics
- Includes formative and summative assessments in each unit
- May be taught synchronously or asynchronously in an online environment, face-to-face, or hybrid approach and may employ differentiation of strategy and pacing
- Designed sequentially to scaffold learning
- Is mobile-responsive and available on smartphones, tablets and computers
- Is accessible to learners with disabilities

E-badges are earned following successful completion of each unit. Learners earn the Career Essentials credential when course and post-assessment are passed at 80%.

Contact the Adult Education and Literacy program nearest you or check the [Your Future Starts Here](#) website to find out more information.

NOSS Update



Greetings from the NOSS board. As you may know, the previously postponed national conference has transitioned to a virtual conference in June. This includes the national math summit. We hope this makes it easier and safer to

participate, and we also hope many of our colleagues may find this to be an opportunity to discover the benefits of NOSS. Please share the news with any colleagues who may be interested, including friends you may know in our neighboring states. I know some of our neighbors are working to revitalize their chapters, and attendance at the

conference offers a chance for members to meet and engage with others.

As noted in previous communications, please remember that the Programs of Promise initiative is still accepting submissions. If you know of a program that helps our students reach their goals, consider giving them recognition at a national level: [Programs of Promise Application](#).

Among the benefits of NOSS membership, the organization partners with several publications that offer access to research, policy news, and shared insights. *Practitioner to Practitioner* provides a resource and outlet for NOSS members, and it may be accessed through the NOSS website. Members also gain access to *The Journal of Developmental Education*, a research publication addressing topics in our profession. When visiting the NOSS website, also note another recently highlighted publication of interest, *The Journal of Access, Retention, and Inclusion in Higher Education*, which encourages submissions from the NOSS membership.

Although virtual conferences may be the result of a serious challenge, they also offer the opportunity to easily attend the conferences hosted by our colleagues in other state chapters. Keep up with other upcoming events across the country on the NOSS website, including the Maryland chapter, which will be hosting a virtual conference on April 23. This offers a great option for professional development and a way to learn about issues in other states while connecting with colleagues.

Thanks for remaining engaged and involved.

*Dan Nelson, DMACC
NOSS Interim Vice President
IOSS Community College Representative*



This year's virtual NOSS conference, with reduced registration fees and no travel costs, is the professional development deal of the year! The conference features three keynote addresses and twelve concurrent sessions, with five options for each time slot. Our state chapter meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on June 17. Check the [NOSS website](#) for more conference details. As this newsletter goes to publication, two of the keynote presentations have been announced.

Dr. Keon M. McGuire "Beyond Rhetoric: Enacting Social Justice in Praxis and Relationships"

Dr. Keon M. McGuire is an Associate Professor of Higher and Postsecondary Education in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. Dr. McGuire received a joint PhD in Higher Education and Africana Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and in 2019, he was named a National Academy of Education (NAEd)/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow and ACPA Emerging Scholar. Currently, Dr. McGuire serves



on the editorial board for the *Journal of College Student Development* and as Associate Editor of *Educational Researcher*.

Dr. McGuire's research focuses on minoritized students' lives across postsecondary educational contexts and how race, gender and religion shape students' everyday experiences. Additionally, he investigates the ways racism, sexism, and heteronormativity undermine the experiences of minoritized college students as well as the ways students resist and respond to such marginalization.

Jessica Rector "Blaze Your Brain"

Jessica's vision is simple: Transform Lives. Because her brother died, her mission is to help others truly live. As the top burnout and mind wellness expert, she is the authority on breaking through burnout and tackling your inner game and turning it into outer success and positive action! As a former TV talk show host and award winning #1 sales performer at a Fortune 100 company, Jessica uses her company's research to help organizations, leaders, and teams to fire up their thinking and extinguish burnout. Jessica has three college degrees, including an MBA, and has written ten books. As a #1 best-selling author, she has shared the stage with Michelle Obama and worked with clients such as Fortune's #2 "Best Company to work for," NBCUniversal, and the Dallas Mavericks, and has been seen on ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX for creating change. When she's not traveling around the world for work, Jessica spends her time learning about the exciting world of Transformers, so she can carry on real conversations with her eight-year-old son, Blaise, who is a #1 best-seller author and the youngest published author in the United States.



Sharing Research

IOSS members who attended the 2020 virtual conference recall the outstanding keynote presentation by Alexandros Goudas, "How False Narrative, Not Data, Are Driving Reforms, and How to Use New Narratives to Increase Student Success." In his role as NOSS Research Network Chair, Alex recently shared current lists of sources on proposed reforms and requested the assistance of colleagues nationwide to expand these lists, which should be excellent resources for developmental education practitioners, higher education administrators, and graduate students. His March 2020 email is reprinted below with permission:

As I'm sure many of you know, for over a decade now, researchers and interest groups have been promoting and enacting developmental education reforms in state systems and institutions. The most common reforms are multiple measures for placement, corequisites and acceleration models, guided pathways, and mathematics pathways.

To be prepared for these changes and to assist in the effort to implement reforms thoughtfully, it is important to have access to and understand the data and research being cited and disseminated.

Therefore, I and the NOSS Research Network core members have been working on compiling reference lists for each reform. Here are links to (still incomplete) comprehensive lists on multiple measures and corequisites resources:

- [Multiple Measures Resources](#)
- [Corequisites Resources](#)

However, there are still sources that are missing. We are also working on a guided pathways (and math pathways) list of sources.

This is where your assistance is requested! The following open Google Docs are available for your input. If you have a paper you would like to share, please do your best to cite it using APA 7th ed., but regardless of the citation format, it would be wonderful to have any suggested citations added to these documents:

- [Multiple Measures Reference List](#)
- [Corequisite Reference List](#)
- [Guided Pathways and Math Pathways Reference List](#)

Thank you so much for your dedicated and diligent work as practitioners and scholars in the field of postsecondary education, particularly during the past year and specifically with students who are at-risk, something which has been so difficult as of late. Keep up the good work!

Take care,
Alex Goudas

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Coping with Pandemic Brain

At the Innovative Educators Virtual Summit, hosted by Hawkes Learning on March 18-19, 2021, two of the featured speakers gave complementary

presentations based on brain research to help educators address personal and student stress.

In “Addressing Faculty Anxiety, Stress, and Trauma: Recover, Renew, and Rewire,” Dr. Janet N. Zadina, President of Brain Research and Instruction and Co-founder of the Butterfly Project, acknowledged that both instructors and students are experiencing COVID-related trauma. She directed attendees to make a five-R plan to cope with Pandemic Brain—recognize, recover, renew, rewire, resilience—choosing one good thing to do in each area.

First, it's important for someone experiencing trauma-related stress to **recognize** the emotional state, the extent of the problem, and its effects on learning. Referencing brain research revealing that anxiety activates the same area of the brain as physical pain, Zadina said that periodic recovery from stress is needed; otherwise, if it is severe enough or long enough, it can lead to PTSD. During the current pandemic, 50% of students reported feeling depression or anxiety, and 83% said their emotional state had negatively affected their academic performance. Brain studies explain why. Humans are hard-wired for the sympathetic nervous system to respond to stress: fight, flight, or freeze. This stress response activates the limbic system within the brain, which is the seat of emotions, while diminishing the performance of the frontal lobe, which controls such executive functions as attention, effort, self-regulation, emotional control, memory, and initiation. Zadina said instructors should teach students what is happening to them and then make adjustments to alleviate problems. One possible adjustment related to diminished self-regulation is changing assignment deadlines: perhaps making them more flexible or moving the submission time from midnight or 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., thus reducing the likelihood of procrastinating and then pulling an all-nighter.

The second R, **Recover**, involves turning off the fight-flight-freeze response. Because the brain and body have a reciprocal top-down, bottom-up relationship, it's possible to quiet the brain by means of physical action. Zadina taught a quick 4-7-8 breathing exercise to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which initiates relaxation: inhale through the nose to a slow count of 4, hold for a slow count of 7, and exhale through the mouth for a slow count of 8.

Renew, the third R, activates the frontal lobe of the brain by using some form of meditation. Zadina suggested helping students prepare to learn by starting class with a mindfulness exercise: for 1 minute, being mindful of one's breath, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth, bringing one's mind back to the breathing process as often as needed.

Rewire, the fourth R, capitalizes on neural plasticity. Although negative neural pathways are automatically fired and wired by stress and anxiety, it takes 20 seconds of attention to the positive to have a wiring effect. One way to wire for positivity is to focus on gratitude, writing down three things each day for which one is grateful.

Finally, **Resilience**, the ability to bend, not break, under stress, can be cultivated by building three protective factors into lesson plans: choice, predictability, and self-efficacy. Providing options for students gives them a feeling of control. Creating a routine (e.g. a quiz every Wednesday) adds the predictability. Self-efficacy is the belief that one can in fact cope with the demands of a situation.

Contending that a trauma-sensitive classroom is good for all, Zadina suggested that instructors use the first 5 minutes of each class to apply the five Rs and “set the table” for optimal learning. Additional resources can be found on her [webpage](#), her [Facebook page](#), and her [Twitter feed](#).

In "Stress: The Most Powerful Emotion," Maryellen Dance, a licensed mental health counselor and psychology professor at Nazareth College, viewed stress from a counseling/therapy perspective. She defined stress as our reaction when we believe the demands of a situation endanger our power to cope effectively. Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system, triggering cortisol to release sugar into the bloodstream to provide energy for our fight-or-flight response; at the same time, the parasympathetic nervous system, which allows us to relax, is suppressed. Thus, the biological components of stress are literally hard on the heart.

Dance urged us to view stress as an inevitable part of life, which can be managed by altering the way we view and respond to it. First, she said, we need to believe we can handle stress. We should stop catastrophizing and recognize that although our attitudes are relatively enduring, these mindsets are not fixed.

She encouraged us to alter those mindsets in baby steps. For instance, she told us to identify negative generalizations we've heard or used to describe ourselves and counteract them with one small positive statement we can believe. She used her own experience as an example: after decades of telling herself, "I'm just not athletic," she decided to say, "I can go to the gym once." And she did. And then she went back. Working out became a routine, gradually quieting the negative language she'd been using. Responding to those who say, "I'm always stressed. That's how I am," she asked, "Are there *ever* times you're not stressed? If you did it before, you can do it again."

Dance concluded by urging us not only to acknowledge stress but also to change the story we tell ourselves about it: to move stress from the driver's seat to the passenger's seat of our lives. She recommended the [Psychology Today blogs](#) as

resources for addressing stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns.

Sue Wickham, MCHS
IOSS Newsletter Editor/Webmaster

IOSS Introduces Award for Outstanding Service to Students

The Iowa Organization for Student Success (IOSS) Executive Board is pleased to announce the creation of our new IOSS Award for Outstanding Service to Students! Nominees should have demonstrated outstanding educational service, directly or indirectly, to students. Qualified nominees include any individual employed by an Iowa community college, technical college, or four-year institution. They do not have to be current members of IOSS to be eligible for the award.

We encourage each of our members to nominate a deserving faculty member, staff member, or administrator for this honor. The full process and award details can be found on the nomination form recently emailed to IOSS members. Submit nominations to [Molly Struve](#) by May 28.

We are excited to have the opportunity to celebrate an educator who demonstrates outstanding service and impacts student success! The 2021 winner of the award will be recognized at our virtual conference this fall.

IOSS Board Transitions

After our online elections earlier this year, all positions on the IOSS Board are once again filled. Congratulations to Molly Struve and Abby Underberg on their new roles; thanks to Amy Moffitt for continuing to serve as Member at Large; and welcome to Mike Cagley and Laura Meyers!

Molly Struve, President-Elect



Hello, IOSS members! I am Molly Struve and have served on the IOSS board for seven years. I attended my first IDEA (now IOSS) conference in 2014 and was talked into joining the board by a colleague of mine. My time as a

board member has been a wonderful learning experience that I am very grateful for! I have met some amazing people and have developed connections all over the state. I have been the secretary for IOSS for the past six years and decided to take on the role of president-elect this year.

I currently work at Iowa Lakes Community College as a developmental faculty member and oversee the Estherville campus testing and advising center. I truly enjoy building relationships with my students and advisees. Teaching has always been my passion, and I am thankful to have a job that allows me to do that.

I am excited to continue assisting other professionals in the field and look forward to serving as IOSS president-elect this year.

Mike Cagley, Treasurer

Currently the treasurer for IOSS, I have been an instructional specialist at the Transitional Education



Department at Western Iowa Tech Community College since January of 2019 and a member of NOSS/IOSS dating to just before their changes from IDEA/NADE. However, as an educator, I have been teaching at the college level since 2011, with a focus on social science topics, statistics, and research methodology. IOSS and NOSS fit perfectly with my passions in education, which have been concentrated on the study of and engagement with access to education for marginalized and disadvantaged populations throughout my educational pathway/career.

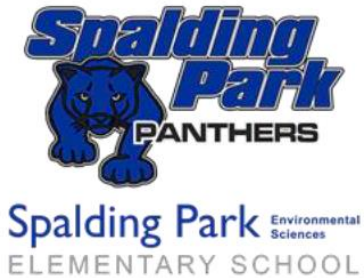
Laura Meyers, Member at Large



I am a full-time Developmental Reading teacher at Hawkeye Community College, where I've worked for 19 years. I earned 2 undergraduate degrees and a Reading Certificate from the University of Northern Iowa. After working as a Reading Specialist in the K-12 setting, I earned an MA in Literacy Education and certification in adult teaching with emphasis in curriculum and instruction at UNI. I currently try to take 2-3 graduate classes a year at Drake in various areas of education. I enjoy teaching reading and working with adult learners. I strive to be an active member of the Hawkeye faculty and am on many committees.

The interesting stuff, though, is that I'm married to my high school sweetheart, have 3 adult children who live in Minnesota, North Carolina and Hawaii and a dog who, by default, has become our child in their absence. Our first granddaughter was born in January and, of course, is perfect! My husband and I strive to be active in our community and love to volunteer as much as possible at Habitat, House of Hope, EMBARC, or wherever we see a need. We also have a time-consuming and expensive habit of renovating old houses.

2020 America Reads Partnership Continues (Last Call!)



My Mouth is a Volcano! Wilma Jean - The Worry Machine. Baditude! What To Do When Life Stinks!
Imagine the anticipatory grin on the face of a Pawsome Panther pulling one of these books off a classroom shelf. You can make more grins by participating in the IOSS book donation partnership with Spalding Park Elementary School in Sioux City, IA, which will continue through the summer of 2021. Follow the link below to Spalding Park's Amazon Wish List, choose your favorite titles, and have the books shipped directly to Spalding Elementary School, address below.

[Spalding Park Elementary Wish List](#)

Shipping address:

Mandi Bradford, Principal
Spalding Park Elementary School
4101 Stone Ave.
Sioux City, IA 51106-1860
Phone: 712.274.4043

Thank you from your IOSS Executive Board,
Principal Mandi Bradford, and all the Pawsome
Panthers who will be enjoying these books.

2021 IOSS Student Scholarship Application Deadline Nears

Applications for the \$500 IOSS Student Scholarship will be accepted until June 1, 2021 (extended). At a time when the pandemic has strained the finances of so many students, this award can be the boost one promising individual needs to continue in college.

The scholarship will be awarded to a student in an Iowa postsecondary institution who has successfully completed at least one developmental education course (either credit or non-credit), who has maintained a cumulative college grade point average of 2.5, and who plans to continue enrollment in a postsecondary educational institution during the 2021-22 academic year.

Applicants must submit a copy of their most recent college transcript, a letter of recommendation from a school official, instructor, or counselor, and a 500-word essay on the following topic: "How my involvement in a developmental education course(s) has helped me prepare for my future college courses."

The online application form, which contains more details on the application process, can be found on the [IOSS website](#) or directly accessed through Google Forms: [IOSS Student Scholarship Application](#). If students have any problems with the form, please have them email Justin Robertson directly: Robertson_J@iowacentral.edu.

Spread the word to your students about this opportunity!

Join the IOSS Conversation

- Have you recently attended a conference of another professional organization? Summarize a session relevant to our membership for the *Reader's Corner*.
- Has your institution revamped its placement policies, developmental studies offerings, or academic support program? Provide a quick update.
- Have you located a great academic resource for students or faculty to use? Share the wealth.
- Have you transitioned to a new position or received special recognition for your professional accomplishments? Let us celebrate with you!

To submit articles or information for future editions of the *Reader's Corner*, please send to:

IOSS Newsletter Editor, [Sue Wickham](#)

2020-2021 IOSS Executive Board

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Abby Underberg, ICC

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Member at Large: Kara Weyand, ICC

Member at Large: Amy Moffitt, ICC

Member at Large: Laura Meyers, HCC

Stay in Touch with IOSS and NOSS

[IOSS Website](#)

Check the IOSS website for 2021 conference updates; student scholarship information; Executive Board contact information; and member resources, including IOSS meeting minutes and materials from conference presentations.

[The NOSS Website](#)

[IOSS Facebook](#)



Like us on [Facebook](#) to receive updates on IOSS and our annual conference!



**2021 IOSS Conference: Thursday,
November 4, 2021**

