

President's Letter



Welcome to 2023! I hope you have all had a successful and impactful fall semester and a wonderful holiday break with your family and friends. The holiday season is always a great time to unwind and reflect on the past year. I know some of you, including a few of our board members, had successes

or advancements but also had struggles and losses this past year. I want to thank each of you for being a member of IOSS, and a special THANK YOU goes out to our IOSS board members. I appreciate the extra time they spend each month assisting on this board.

The year 2022 allowed most of us to “get back to normal,” where we could once again attend conferences in person and meet with students face-to-face, rather than online. Having the IOSS conference in person this past November offered a great chance to connect with others in the field and learn more about topics such as “The Flow,” multiple measures, and engaging students in the classroom with games. Most of these presentations can be found on our website, under the Member Resources tab:

<https://dmacc.edu/ioass/SitePages/memberresources.aspx>.

This edition of the *Reader's Corner* also includes a recap of some of the presenters. Please check out these articles and additional resources and share these ideas with others!

We are still in need of members to join the IOSS executive board. If you have any interest in joining,

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in any capacity, please reach out to me or another IOSS member. Being a member of the board allows you to learn more about the organization and gives you the chance to build connections and relationships with others around the state and the nation.

The National Organization for Student Success (NOSS) annual conference will be held in Nashville, Tennessee, this year on March 2-5. In my opinion, this is one of the best conferences for student success advisors, educators, and leaders. This year's conference also includes a one-day leadership summit on March 2. Also, if you are not a current NOSS member, I would encourage you to become one. The mission of NOSS is to assist education professionals in making a positive difference in the lives of students. NOSS provides many professional development opportunities, free networks related to various topics revolving around student success, and resources for those who work in developmental education, tutoring, advising, etc. Check them out at www.thenoss.org.

If you would still like to donate books for our America Reads campaign, you can do so by

purchasing a book or two at this link:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2BGP1ZXQWHWLI?ref=wl_share

Lastly, I want to remind you of two excellent ways to give back to those colleagues and students whom you work with. Submit a nomination for the Outstanding Educator Award. This is a great opportunity to show gratitude to a colleague who has positively impacted both the students they serve and the institution where they work. Also, be sure to inform students about the IOSS Student Scholarship opportunity. This is a \$750 scholarship that is sent directly to the student to be used for college expenses. A link for both forms can be found on our website or our Facebook page.

I hope you all have a wonderful spring semester. Thank you for being an IOSS member!

Molly Struve
IOSS President – 2022-2023



IOSS 2022 Conference Highlights



“The Flow of Student Success” Keynote Address from Gary Gute, PhD, & Deanne Gute, PhD.

The Keynote Address for this year’s 2022 IOSS conference was presented by Gary and Deanne Gute, from the University of Northern Iowa. The presentation focused on data and information, which is also shared on The Flow Channel. The Flow Team conducts research based on positive psychology and seeks to find ways to optimize *flow* in one’s own life.

The Gutes’ presentation began with a description of what *flow* can mean in a person’s life. According to the Flow Centre, *flow* is essentially a recycling option in the heart, mind, and motivation where wasted energy is transformed into enjoyment, meaning, and a higher purpose. Everyone’s *flow* is a different, so it is hard to pinpoint exactly what works for every person. We can often see *flow* as passion, when someone is doing a hobby or activity they love to do. However, small moments of *flow* can happen all day long, in either short or long spurts.

The Gutes also discussed the Iowa BIG Study, which involved students who were about to transition to college. Students who took part in the Iowa BIG study were able to participate in a new form of high school, where they attended traditional high school for 20% of the day and immersed

themselves in a more “real-world” work experience for the other 80% of the day. Students were able to gain skills in the workforce and assist businesses with new projects. These experiences helped the students find their *flow* while setting goals for themselves for the future.

Other key takeaways from this presentation included the difference between *complicated* and *complex* and creating practical opportunities for flow in the classroom. As the Gutes noted, complicated tasks may or may not be challenging but are often confusing, chaotic, and difficult to understand. This can lead to frustration and lack of interest or motivation. In contrast, complex tasks involve both challenge and concentration. These often allow the individual to have an optimal experience with whatever they are doing, which is known as “being in the zone” or “having flow.” These concepts can be especially useful in the classroom or in a work environment. Oftentimes people make projects, tasks, or even regular meetings complicated. This can cause those involved to lose focus on the task at hand and become unmotivated, which inhibits productivity and learning. Complex tasks and discussions allow for learning by allowing individuals to think critically, collaborate, and approach things from different perspectives. Instructors should, take the time to think about the projects, assignments, or discussions they are asking students to complete. Are these over complicated just for the sake of completing the work, or are they truly challenging the student to think critically about a topic and express what they have learned in an enjoyable way?

References and other resources:

Flow Centre on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/@flowcentre8465>

The Flow Channel website.

www.theflowchannel.com

Story from XQ – Iowa BIG [Video]. (March 9, 2017). USA Today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjFkdC8Luxs>

Molly Struve, ILCC

IOSS Treasure Chest

The IOSS Treasure Chest was intended to be a friendly competition based on knowledge of the history of both IOSS and NOSS. With the help of Sue Wickham’s knowledge of IOSS and NOSS history, I prepared the activity for the attendees. A chest created by students at Western Iowa Tech Community College was used, with multiple locks sealing the chest: one 4-digit combination lock, two 6-digit combination locks, one 5-character letter combination lock, and two keyed locks.

The activity began with a clue for each lock. Every 10 minutes, another clue was revealed until four total clues for each lock had been revealed. The first clue for each was intentionally obtuse or esoteric in nature, but each additional clue was progressively more accessible. The attendees were divided into four groups, with the winner declared once any one of the four groups successfully opened all six locks.

Overall, the activity seemed to go well, though at first a few of the participants asserted that it was too difficult. However, the groups were provided with a 9-page document titled *History of the National Association for Developmental Education: 40 Years of Service to the Field*, authored by Hunter Boylan and available online at the NOSS website. They also had access to all of the resources available to them in their group, whether human or electronic or otherwise. Despite their initial protests, I felt it would be manageable.

In the end, two of the groups succeeded in unlocking all of the locks at essentially the same time, including one of the groups that had protested about the difficulty at the start of the activity. It is worth noting that the keyed locks included the host college, Iowa Lakes Community College, as one key solution and the other key solution was active IOSS member Dan Nelson, with two of the clues based on his roles as former IDEA president and NOSS board member. Most of the rest of the solutions were years during which major changes or developments occurred in IOSS or NOSS, such as the 2004 co-hosting of the NOSS conference by IOSS, then IDEA, and the Midwest Regional Association for Developmental Education (MRADE). MRADE was also the solution to the 5-character letter combination lock.

All of the solutions help to reinforce a sense of meaning and identity for IOSS, at least as I see it. I am hopeful that some kind of activity like this one can be part of future conferences for a number of reasons, such as helping to remind people of the organization's history and encouraging interaction among attendees, to name a few. But one reason in particular is most compelling for me as to why an activity like this one could be useful: having some kind of shared sense of the identity and history of an organization can encourage more participation by its members and even result in more enthusiastic recruitment of others.

Mike Cagley, WITCC

LowTech Gamification: Low or No Tech Games

As a teacher with very tech savvy grandchildren, I enjoy all the benefits, bells and whistles of technology in the classroom. However, I am not a trouble-shooter, so relying on any lesson involving technology is like rolling the dice to make it work. Therefore, I have elaborated on the ideas presented

by Stacy Hinkley, M.ED., from Lackawanna College in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Hinkley presented at the NOSS Conference in 2022.

“Low Tech Gamification: Low or No Tech Games” was the title of my presentation at the Fall IOSS Conference in Estherville, IA. These ideas included an activity entitled “**I Have... Who Has?**” The activity can strengthen content-specific vocabulary such as advertising strategies, idioms or other figures of speech, business or workplace terminology. “**Show, But Don't Tell**” involves building more polished or professional vocabulary. It requires students to describe the situation presented on a card, but refrain from using a specific word or its synonyms. An example could be “Show me the customer was angry without using the word *angry* or its synonyms.” In order to create more student engagement and separate a student from his or her desk, “**Around the Room**” involves a treasure hunt for various scenario cards placed around the room. Each scenario describes a slightly controversial or possibly confrontational situation in any workplace. Students are to read the cards, record their response on a tally sheet, and discuss each scenario in a debriefing session to determine the recommended resolution or intervention. This activity works very well for workplace dilemmas, math word problems, or author purpose through brief paragraphs. “**Six-Word Stories**” encourages students to read beyond the lines. Students receive a six-word story and need to create a paragraph or paper which elaborates on the situation, the characters, and/or the implications. A powerful example would be “Sorry soldier, shoes sold in pairs.” “**Sentence Sense**” is an activity that requires students to match sentence beginnings and endings. This is an excellent review of OSHA regulations, (Employers must obey...all OSHA regulations.) It is also effective with terminology (vocabulary and definitions), procedural steps. Controversial issues can be dealt with in a game entitled “**Speculation/Imagination.**” The cards distributed

to each student are different scenarios that involve If—Then statements. Using only “If this happens...then this happens,” students work their way through a situation to create any number of statements. Some examples of the statements include “If an active shooter entered my workplace, then... If politicians were paid like jurors, then... If technology was globally disabled, then...” The idea is to think through a situation much further than the first reaction and consider possible consequences.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking game was a “**Triage Simulation.**” Working through a simulation or ethical dilemma is an interactive project for a multitude of disastrous situations and can provide a bit of understanding as to the efforts needed in emergencies. The example provided was a train accident. Twelve victims were identified and their symptomology was briefly stated. Students are provided a chart for coding people: green—minor or no injuries; yellow—need more treatment, but can wait a bit; red—need to be seen immediately; and black—no possibility of survival no matter what the intervention.

During the IOSS presentation, participants were provided copies of all the games, engaged with each other to complete several of these, and discussed additional content materials that could be incorporated into the templates. Hopefully, the main take-away was to create authentic, relevant activities that require more application of the content material for any academic discipline. In my workplace, these games are printed, laminated, and available for checkout to instructors (or students). The real beauty of these ideas is that they can be applied to any discipline.

Kate Sanders, WITCC

Measure for Measure

For several years, the various efforts to reform and redesign community colleges have asked institutions to examine placement, curriculum structure, and advising organization. While inspiring educators to evaluate common practices, the process also leaves institutions with little clear guidance for adapting to new expectations and meeting student needs. In my presentation, “Measure for Measure,” I reviewed the material which led to these reforms and presented the recent efforts at Des Moines Area Community College to implement changes, including Guided Pathways and placement using multiple measures. Reflecting on our experiences, including the challenges as well as successes, may contribute to a broader conversation across the state and help all of our institutions more effectively support our students.

Many of the current reforms at the community college level reflect material from the book *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* by Bailey et al. (2015), which was affiliated with the Community College Research Center at Columbia University. The book introduced multiple approaches from various institutions, including the concept of Guided Pathways, which is intended to help guide students into areas of interest and help keep them on a path to build relevant credits and more efficiently reach their goals. The book also introduced concerns over the accuracy of placement tools, which may inaccurately place students and subsequently require students to take extra courses. The text also suggested that preparatory courses were potentially unnecessary, adding to a general theme of locating and removing “barriers” in the student experience. The concept of barriers led multiple organizations and political entities to advocate multiple changes to the common community college experience.

As these reforms moved across the nation, the process created substantial disruption along with notable resistance to some of the conclusions derived from the book. Substantial research shows financial concerns consistently register as the major motivation for leaving college (Johnson et al., 2011), although the text does not consider this problem. Further, national studies (Chen, 2016) and even examples from the Bailey text show preparatory courses having positive impacts on student completion. To complicate matters, colleges confront the logistical and financial challenges as there remains little guidance on effective placement and guidance procedures. For example, one of the original programs for Guided Pathways, ASAP at City University of New York, relied on a highly intrusive and proactive advising process, utilizing resources many institutions do not possess. The CCRC added more complication by releasing a revised view of their previous positions, advocating case-worker style advising with individualized plans and focusing on community building, active learning, and academic support across the curriculum, distancing their positions from some of the basic elements of their previous conclusions (Jenkins et al., 2021, p. 1). This change represented a recognition that placement and performance in only math and English did not truly represent the overall challenges for students.

In many ways, institutions must navigate a complicated process, often confronting factors specific to individual colleges, and DMACC has actively pursued changes in several areas. While attempting to institute multiple measures, the options became somewhat fragmented. The college encountered difficulty acquiring high school grade point averages, a common measure and one which exhibits a reasonable correlation to college performance (EAB, n.d., p. 9). Seeking a reliably accessible tool, our math department utilizes ALEKS and imposes a required score or course grade before registration for a course. However, the

process is not proctored, creating potential issues of inaccurate placement due to student choices and actions. In writing, students currently take Accuplacer as a guiding tool, but it does not constrain course access. This is then paired with a writing assessment in the first weeks of the composition course. Originally, the department intended to pair these assessments with a noncognitive assessment (LASSI), although cost and logistics proved to be an obstacle. The English department created an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), in which students determined to be performing near the minimum expectations would be allowed to continue in the first-year writing course if they also participated in a connected support course. This also proved to be a challenge in terms of logistics, staffing, and scheduling, although this process more closely reflects at least a consideration of multiple measures.

The complications confronted by the English department may have actually spurred an unexpectedly useful adaptation. Instructors shortened the ALP support course to start later in the semester after the beginning of the writing course. In this time, not only does the instructor have opportunity to review the student's work to determine skill level, the process also at least considers noncognitive factors such as a student's uncertainty or preparedness at the beginning of a college semester. Instructors have expressed satisfaction with this adaptation, and the math department will be implementing similar late-start support courses for students scoring near the ALEKS cut scores for college-level math courses.

DMACC has implemented the general structure of Guided Pathways as part of its student application process. When a student first begins considering applying and registering for courses on the college website, the student may select a general area of interest, which then leads to the possible degrees and subject areas available at DMACC. This will

potentially lead students to a suitable degree or help students determine a preferred goal if they are undecided. Determining the categories and how to distribute courses proved to be a notable challenge, and with students being guided toward a set of degrees and a set of courses, many within the college expressed concern students would be unaware of the variety of options and electives available to them. Subsequently, this process may lead to lower enrollments in a variety of courses simply because those courses were not presented in a designated pathway. Further, considering a large number of students are actually pursuing an associate's degree for transfer and may not have decided on a major or are not interested in choosing a pathway, there is concern these students would not find the process accessible, supportive, or useful. While the pathway process leads students to consider their preferences and begin a program which will be relevant to their goals, institutions must be cognizant of the potential limitations or the unintended obstacles.

Although the process may be complicated and the research continues to evolve, reviewing procedures and reconsidering structures allows institutions to find unexpected problems, refresh established systems, and consider new opportunities. Since each institution confronts its own specific demands, solutions may need to be adapted or reimaged, and educators may need to be vigilant that the reforms do not lead to detrimental, unintended consequences. Unfortunately, each institution must commit time to not only implement reform, colleges must commit time to observe the benefits and consequences. If more institutions and colleagues share their experiences and results, colleges will more efficiently navigate national trends, financial constraints, and student experiences. As an organization, IOSS offers the opportunity to share our results, support our efforts, and meet our common goals, and in the future, our chapter may serve to provide relevant research and help our

institutions serve colleagues and students as we provide a rewarding educational experience. Most notably, the process reminds us that even through difficult changes instructors still have a dramatic impact through managing those changes, adapting the most effective strategies, guiding students, and building a stronger educational community.

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America Reads 2022-2023



IOSS is pleased to continue our participation in the America Reads program in 2023! We have chosen Demoney Elementary in Estherville as the recipient for our organization's donations through the summer of 2023. IOSS members can donate children's books as chosen by teachers and librarians at

Demoney from this Amazon Wishlist:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2BGP1ZXQ/WHWLI?ref=wl_share

IMPORTANT: When checking out, on the *Choose a Shipping Address* page, make sure to have the books sent to the school address:

Demoney Elementary School
Attn: Connie Humble
109 S. 17th Street
Estherville, IA 51334

Outstanding Service to Students Award

We are excited to have the opportunity to celebrate and recognize an educator who demonstrates outstanding service and impacts student success!

We encourage each of our members to review the criteria on the form available on the [Member Resources](#) page of the IOSS website at and nominate a deserving faculty member, staff member, and/or administrator for this honor. You will find the full process and award details, as well as the online application, on the [nomination form](#) at

<https://forms.gle/GaJmZAUa6JZZxPrPA>

Submit nominations by June 1, 2023.

Please note that nominees do not have to be current members of IOSS to be eligible for the award.



IOSS President Molly Struve and Sandy Garber, 2022 Outstanding Service to Students Award Winner

Student Scholarship

The Iowa Organization for Student Success (IOSS) Executive Board is accepting applications for a student who has excelled in developmental coursework. Please take time to share this scholarship opportunity with students at your school. Below is the link where students will find the information needed to apply for this \$750 scholarship. Applications are due by June 1st.

<https://forms.gle/hKrprknPxz248Fh9A>

Take time for your own professional renewal through IOSS and NOSS conferences.

Check the IOSS website for updates on the fall 2023 conference.

Reconnect with colleagues from around the state.

Share your triumphs, projects, and concerns in a breakout session or roundtable

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 student 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
smwickham@dmacc.edu

2022-2023 IOSS Executive Board

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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.

www.dmacc.edu/ioiss

The NOSS website:

<https://thenoss.org/>

IOSS Facebook:



Like us on Facebook to receive updates on IOSS and our annual conference!

https://www.facebook.com/iowaoss/?ref=py_c



IOSS Secretary Abby Underberg presents a plaque to Molly Struve in recognition of her work as IOSS President