

Take Five

February 8, 2021

The News in Academic Affairs



One of the concerns that students have expressed about the fall semester is that instructors were assigning too much work, or at least too much “busywork.” It turns out we are not the only ones who have heard this concern from students. Betsy Barre, who leads the Center for the Advancement of Teaching at Wake Forest University, has written that “students across the country are clearly overwhelmed and feeling as if their academic work has grown exponentially.” In an [online article](#), Barre offers six possible explanations for this widespread concern—that the new instructional environment creates additional “cognitive load,” for example, and/or that the burdens of the pandemic are affecting capacity and motivation. Barre’s article is worth reading, I think, not only for these explanations, but also for her recommendations, which include being explicit about how much time students should spend on assignments and comparing current with past expectations.

Student Success Corner

In my 400-level psychology capstone, I started class last week asking all students to post one word that represented how they were experiencing class so far. I told students to be candid because their honest feedback would help me improve. Words included “challenging,” “exciting,” “intimidating,” and “overwhelming” among others, and I responded to each as it came in. I could explain why the class has its particular structure and expectations and offer tips to help them gain confidence and succeed. I then opened the floor, and we had a great conversation. Students expressed appreciation that I was seeking and considering their feedback. In a world where so little is under their control, they embraced this opportunity in a positive way. I recommend you consider a similar kind of chat. Thank you!

-Christina Downey (downeyca@iuk.edu)

The Indiana State Literacy Association invites students, staff, and faculty to submit their poetry and stories for consideration at the “Tell Your Story” event, scheduled for April 19-23. The deadline to submit a spoken-word poem and/or digital story is March 31. “Tell Your Story,” which will take place online, will feature workshops and performances. Faculty may want to consider encouraging students to present work related to their classes. Christina Romero-Ivanova, who serves on the ISLA’s executive board, is coordinating work on the event. For more information, email her at civanova@iuk.edu. Use the QR code at the left to register.

Upcoming Events

- 2/8 [BLT: New to Campus?](#) (noon, online)
- 2/9: [Zoom Advanced: Engaging Your Students](#) (9 a.m., online)
- 2/10: [Canvas: Modules & Pages](#) (2:30 p.m., online)
- 2/11: [Canvas: SpeedGrader & DocViewer](#) (2 p.m., online)
- 2/12: [Qualtrics 2: Data & Analysis](#) (2 p.m., online)
- 2/15: Student Engagement Roster Listening Session (3:30 p.m., [online](#))
- 2/16: [Using VoiceThread to Engage Students](#) (1:30 p.m., online)
- 2/17: [Zoom: Basics & Office Hours](#) (9 a.m., online)
- 2/18: [Canvas Outcomes for General Education Courses](#) (11 a.m., online)
- 2/19: [Qualtrics 3: Reports](#) (2 p.m., online)
- 2/16: [Career Readiness: Communication](#) (10 a.m., online)
- 2/18: [BLT: Test Anxiety](#) (noon, online)
- 2/19: [NSF CAREER Workshop Series Part I: Early Planning Information Session](#) (10 a.m., online)
- 2/22: [LEAP Coffee Hour with Angela Coppola](#) (12:30 p.m., online)
- 2/25: [BLT: Test Anxiety](#) (noon, online)

Some events require registration. Click on links for details.

Kudos for Kokomojo

- Please join me in congratulating Beau Shine, whom Indiana Campus Compact has named an Emerging Leader in Community Engagement. ICC also recognized three students: Mackenzie Damon (Newman Civic Fellow), Caitlin Cornett (Student Community Action Leader), and Emily Taylor (Student Community Action Leader).