

# THERE'S MORE TO **BLUE.** ONLINE

 **INDIANA STATE  
ONLINE**  
Fall 2016

## Indiana State instructor combines compassion, precision online **Distance learning gets personal**

**F**elicia Stewart bases her online nursing courses on the juxtaposition of two ideas – grace and rigor.

“Give yourself the grace to not know everything,” she tells her distance students in an introductory video, “and accept the ability to learn now, because if you feel like you do need to know everything, and you can’t make a mistake, you’re going to hold yourself back.”

Stewart, an assistant professor of Advanced Practice Nursing at Indiana State University, said that during the five years she has been teaching online, her pedagogy has evolved to create a climate where students know they can fail – so they can truly learn.

She said she tells her students: “It is not the expectation that you get 100 percent, you are going to earn the grade, but if you end up with a 90 and you learned what you missed, that’s way better than I guessed the answer on this question, got it right, and I’ve just moved along – I still don’t know that content.”

She said this initial declaration of grace works wonders; Stewart wants to build rapport with her students, particularly in an online environment.

“We need a trust,” she tells them. “I need you to trust me that when I give you feedback, it’s to end the course with a better product. And I need to trust you, that you still want to end the course with a better product,” she said.

**“It’s hard for students to see the human side [online], unless you intentionally put it out there.”**

**Felicia Stewart,  
Assistant Professor of  
Advanced Practice Nursing**



This personal atmosphere in her online course doesn’t, however, negate the rigor.

“I let them know: It is part of our responsibility to prepare you for practice and prepare you to be successful on your board exam after you graduate,” Stewart said. “They’ve got a big stake in the game here, and they need to learn this.”

### **Finding Educational Equilibrium**

So, how does she balance this dichotomy of room to fail with high standards for learning? She uses a variety of online teaching techniques that work to connect her students with both the material and her as a person.

“It’s hard for students to see the human side [online], unless you in-

tionally put it out there,” she said. “And I think faculty can struggle with that too; my students are just these intangible people out there.”

In her first interaction with her online classes, Stewart uses a presentation that refers to that grace concept, but ultimately, Stewart said, her course design is measured by how inviting it is for the learner.

“Online can be as boring as the most boring class or as engaging as the most engaging class,” she said.

The difference, then, comes down to the tools, and Stewart employs every one she can.

Recorded lectures, audio slide-shows, and discussion boards are

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

all in her nursing courses. But, her learners are also reading academic journal articles and the textbook to pick up on the language of scholars in their field.

The hybrid version of this, in Stewart's classes, is a video lecture structured like the textbook; students follow along to tie into multiple learning styles, which she also teaches directly through an origami activity.

"Students will say: 'I knew I was a visual learner, but I didn't know how terrible of a learner I was just with the written word,'" Stewart said.

### Providing Space to Truly Learn

Although she doesn't always get to see the "light bulbs go off," Stewart continues to connect students with how they learn throughout the semester. Perhaps it is this focus on knowledge – much more than grades – that sets the tone.

She tells her students: "As you do this, I'm going to give you the opportunity to go back and make some edits on what you've posted. Here's your feedback on this last assignment. ... You can implement the feedback."

Some students embrace revision, while others do not, but her purpose, again, is room to grow and true learning.

"It's not about the two points," Stewart admonishes her students: "I want you to understand that content because next week, I might be your patient."

Stewart said her online teaching philosophy isn't always easier for students, just as it typically involves more work for her -- sometimes it takes hours to make one screencast.

"It is an asynchronous environment, but the plus side is, I guarantee you that my students listen to my lecture multiple times that week," she said.

In fact, some students even download the lecture as an audio file, listening to it again on their commute.

### Communication as Professionally Vital

Repeated access to instruction is a benefit of online learning, as is the chance to hone communication skills, which Stewart said are essential. This truth drives her to expect much from her online students – particularly in writing.

When she gets an email that seems questionable, Stewart said she often gives the benefit of the doubt.

She will tell students "as I'm reading this, I really feel like your intent is very different from how you are communicating, so you may want to read through your email and then resend it to me."

Usually, she ends up with a mortified phone call, as more evidence of the delicate balance between grace and high expectations.

Of course, she said, communication errors go both ways.



**"Everyone can win. And as professionals, we should be trying to help everyone win, so that means sharing resources and being open about giving feedback and receiving it, and making that safe."**

**Felicia Stewart**

PHOTO COURTESY OF INDIANA STATE COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Felicia Stewart, far at table, and Jayme Payne speak with prospective nursing graduate students at the ISU Graduate Fair in October. Building relationships with her students is key for Stewart, an Indiana State Online nursing instructor.

"I get misinterpreted all the time, and I usually just respond back to the student: 'I am so glad that you were bold enough to bring this up because that was not at all my intent. ...and usually at that point, I say, let's talk on the phone,'" she said.

### Support and Encouragement from Afar

With a busy schedule as both a professor and a working nurse practitioner, her [community and missions service work](#), and a number of accolades garnered in the process, Stewart still returns to the notion of grace. She said her endeavors to help students do mean that her feedback "may not make them feel warm and fuzzy all the time."

However, according to Stewart, when her online students pass their board certification and begin practice, they see why she was so direct and pushed so hard – even from a distance.

**“I would never have gotten as far as I am right now if I would have not had Online.”**

Katrina McLain, junior in Criminology and Criminal Justice

“In some ways it might seem easier at first glance, but you truly never know how easy or hard or class is going to be until it starts online. I had one class I had a paper due every week; *in some ways it’s a lot harder ... like time management.*”

~ Katrina McLain, Criminology and Criminal Justice junior

**~~It’s Easier~~**

“We are only the conduit for educational opportunities. We deliver the *same programs as on-campus with the same faculty and staff.*”

~ Ken Brauchle, dean of Indiana State Extended Learning

**~~It’s Lower Quality~~**

“*Online credits transfer the same as campus sections.* They contain the same content; it is simply delivered in a different mode.”

~ Kara Harris, associate dean for the College of Technology

**~~It Won’t Transfer~~**

“Indiana State University is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and various degree programs offer additional accreditation.”

~ Cynthia Stong, Online Enrollment Manager

**~~It Isn’t Accredited~~**

“Last night, I sent a chat message to the librarian, and *in seconds, they replied.* Then in minutes, they gave me an answer to my question.”

~ Amanda Eyre, Adult and Career Education senior

**~~I Can’t Get Help~~**

“*Online education is becoming more available.* Degrees and classes earned from Indiana State Online are from Indiana State University; diplomas and transcripts do not indicate how they were achieved.”

~ Cynthia Stong, Online Enrollment Manager

**~~I Won’t Get a Job~~**

**THESE MYTHS ARE BUSTED:** Online students, staff, instructors confront common misconceptions



## new lecture capture system provides more

**Y**uja, as both a technology and a platform name, is still being assimilated into the lexicon of Indiana State Online faculty. Yet for those who are already using it, the program has many benefits.

Although it's known as a lecture-capture system, [YuJa is a learning platform](#) that works to blend various instructional delivery tools, including “live broadcasting, social learning, video classrooms, and media management,” according to YuJa's website.

Jamie Edwards, Indiana State Online Instructional Design Specialist, notes that the former system – Tegrity – wasn't as strong of a platform as YuJa, particularly when it comes to meeting the needs of diverse students.

“A stand-out feature that would benefit instructors, and help meet ISU's university policies on meeting ADA Section 508 compliance, is YuJa's auto-captioning and transcription feature,” Edwards said.

He also said the new platform, to which Indiana State Online courses should be fully migrated by December, provides other enhanced features – particularly after the video recording is complete.

“Simple editing tools, adding metatags in video, opportunities to embed polls and quiz questions, and detailed analytics so instructors have the ability to visually track student metrics both individually and as a class” are all available.

One faculty member who has been able to envision the benefits is Assistant Professor of Advanced Practice Nursing Felicia Stewart.

“Going to YuJa, I think there's some capabilities there to be able to edit midstream,” Stewart said.

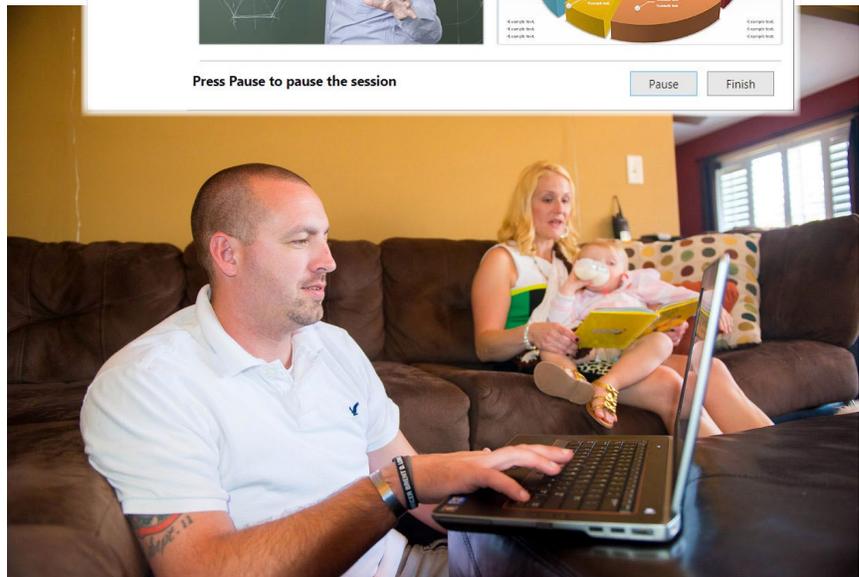


PHOTO COURTESY OF INDIANA STATE COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

However, it is as an adviser that Stewart has experimented with the technology.

This year, for the first time, Stewart used YuJa for group advising appointments for first-year students in her program.

“I was energized during both sessions ... that was a game-changer,” she said.

Training sessions for learning YuJa are available through the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence, and sign-up is available at <https://indstate.edu/oitworkshop>

As faculty and staff continue to adjust to the new platform, they should take note that, according to Edwards, the transition isn't nearly as daunting as they may believe it to be.

**“The speech recognition feature in the YuJa Software Station transcribes speech to text at around 85 percent accuracy.”**

**Jamie Edwards,  
Instructional Design Specialist**

“The learning curve for novice users is low for those who simply want to record a lecture or a desktop presentation,” Edwards said, “but the extra features available in YuJa allow more innovative users to develop creative methods in incorporating this educational tool with course content.”



# Online enrollment up 17 percent

The numbers of students and programs at Indiana State University are up, especially for Indiana State Online, where a total of 2,311 online students means an [increase of 17 percent from 2015](#).

For Ken Brauchle, Indiana State's Dean of Extended Learning, the significant increase was not unexpected.

"While we were very pleased by the growth, we were not surprised," Brauchle said. "The University has very deliberately focused on growing our online degree programs to better serve Hoosiers. Over the last six years, we have doubled the number of online bachelor's degrees offered and significantly improved support to both online students and

online faculty."

Brauchle noted that since 2013, the number of online undergraduates has nearly doubled, which forecasted the latest jump in numbers.

This distance learning momentum at Indiana State is in step with a nationwide trend; online education is becoming more attractive to students.

"Online programs bring educational opportunities to those who would otherwise not be able to attend because of the barriers of place or time," Brauchle said.

This emphasis on the flexibility of distance and extended learning at Indiana State is mirrored in the philosophy of Indiana State University President Dan Bradley.

During his annual fall

**"Online programs bring educational opportunities to those who would otherwise not be able to attend because of the barriers of place or time."**

**Ken Brauchle,  
Dean of Extended Learning at Indiana State University**

address where the five-year strategic plan "There's More to Blue" was detailed, Bradley noted that adding online course and degree offerings will be a priority in the coming years, as a driving force in Indiana State's growth.

Following this lead, Brauchle said Indiana State will be looking to "transition additional existing degree programs to online delivery and develop additional programs based on student demand and university expertise."

In fact, including undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and licensure programs, Indiana State Online now boasts more than 75 opportunities for students.

"The programs we help deliver are those of Indiana State University ... the same programs as on-campus with the same faculty and staff," the dean of Extended Learning said.

"Our online students are seen as true Sycamores in every way."