



# CIDLink:

Center for Instructional Development Notes  
from an AAHE/CASTL Cluster Institution

Clayton College  
& State University

Volume 1, Issue 3

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## Conquests in Collaboration: Second-Tier Grant Recipients Share their Methods

### Do Collaborative Learning Strategies Enhance Students' Performance on Group Presentations in Nutrition?

Melanie Poudevigne  
School of Health Sciences

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not collaborative learning strategies enhance students' performance on group presentations in nutrition. Two groups will be formed: 42 students divided into 8 groups in the experimental group and 8 students in the control group. Most of the students in both groups are Health & Science majors such as pre-nursing and dental hygiene students with a high motivation to learn. The approach will prompt students to take responsibility for their own and peers'

learning with the help of ten different group activities delivered during one semester.

Each student should have an initial understanding of the content through his/her own efforts. During the final presentation, the experimental group will be asked to be creative and artistic, in addition to scientifically and theoretically accurate. Each group will present for 30 minutes and will be evaluated by a peer instructor knowledgeable in nutrition to reduce scoring bias. The presentations will be based on the materials studied in class and the group activities.

It is expected that team-based learning will truly change and transform the quality of the classroom experience for both the teacher and the students as well as improve performance on group presentations.

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### James Fries Joins CID as the New Instructional Support Specialist By Susan Copeland Henry



James Fries

James Fries, an alumnus of Clayton State, is the new Instructional Support Specialist in the Center for Instructional Development. "James was a good choice because of his technology expertise, his prior HUB experience on our campus, and his customer service attitude," CID Director Martha Wicker says. Fries administers WebCT Vista and assists faculty members with new and existing technologies. He teaches faculty members to use MS Office products as well as other software licensed to Clayton State.

Fries graduated from Clayton State in Spring 2004 with a Bachelor's Degree in Information Technology. While a student, Fries worked as an analyst at the HUB, and

for his internship he worked for American Telecommunication Services (ATS), a small firm based in Monroe, GA. After graduation he was hired by ATS to install network segments at Emory University. He took the Clayton State position on March 3, 2005, and has enjoyed the challenge of learning new software and becoming more familiar with the administrative side of WebCT Vista.

"I am glad to be back here. I always enjoyed Clayton State, and I look forward to meeting and working with the faculty and staff," Fries says. If you have an opportunity, please stop by the Center to welcome James back to Clayton State.

## Remaining Spring Workshops

### Retention Strategies

4/5/2005 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM  
4/6/2005 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

### Vista III/IV

4/8/2005 9 AM – 12 PM

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**CID Director**  
*Martha Wicker*

**Instructional Support Specialist**  
*James Fries*

**Multimedia Developer**  
*Christopher White*

**Administrative Assistant**  
*Alisa Kirk*

**CIDLink Editor**  
*Susan Copeland Henry*

**Student Technology Assistants**  
*Ken Cowart*  
*Andy Daniels*  
*Dan Slemons*

**Remaining Spring Workshops**

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**eInstruction**

4/12/2005 9 AM – 11 AM  
4/13/2005 9 AM – 11 AM

**Teaching Short Sessions**

4/12/2005 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM  
4/13/2005 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**Learning Communities for Student Success**

4/15/2005 9 AM – 3 PM

**Turnitin.com Plagiarism Detection**

4/20/2005 1:30 – 3:30 PM  
4/21/2005 1:30 – 3:30 PM

**Vista V/VI**

4/22/2005 9 AM – 12 PM

**Writing Successful Grants**

4/29/2005 9 AM – 12 PM

**Vista I – III**

5/11/2005 9 AM – 3 PM

**Vista IV–VI**

5/12/2005 9 AM – 3 PM

**The Effect of Rater Training on Reducing Rater Bias in Intra-Group Peer Evaluation**

**Gary May**  
**School of Business**

Many professors use peer evaluation as part of their grading system in team projects to control “social loafing” and evaluate student contributions to both process and task. As typically defined, peer evaluation is the process of having team members rate each other on a given set of performance or personal characteristics against a set of rating scales. Unfortunately, according to the research literature, such a process often exhibits virtually every form of rater bias, including race and gender. This raises questions about the validity and fairness of the peer-evaluation process, particularly when grade points are involved.

The goal of this research project is to evaluate the effect of rater training on reducing rater bias in intra-group peer evaluations. The rating bias factors will include gender, race, and personality styles (social style). Bias with regard to subgroups is evident when: (a) raters of one subgroup give

higher evaluations to ratees of their own subgroup; and (b) the differences are not accounted for by concomitant differences in relevant ability or experience factors.

The rater training content and design will be drawn from best practices as reported in the research literature. The training module will be developed using SoftTV and delivered as a streaming audio/PowerPoint lecture via WebCT Vista. The control group will receive a “placebo” module of the same length related to other course subject matter. Students will also complete a short quiz to check understanding. Using a test-group / control-group design and accounting for ability using GPA, the rater training should reduce the differences in scores between subgroups rating their own subgroups and subgroups rating different subgroups for students in the test condition (when compared to the control condition).

**Collaborative Learning in Undergraduate Non-majors Biology Classrooms**

**Jere A. Boudell**  
**School of Arts & Sciences**

University science instructors are often content driven as upper-division courses require students to have mastered important foundational concepts. Because many topics need to be covered in a semester, instructors often do not use research-based teaching techniques for fear that too much time will be sacrificed and students will be ill-equipped for their upper-division courses. However, research-based teaching techniques, such as collaborative learning, have been shown to increase student success and should be implemented in science classrooms. The purpose of this investigation is to determine the efficacy of collaborative learning methods in undergraduate non-majors biology classrooms.

Students, in assigned groups, will create a CD-ROM containing 13 mini-PowerPoint

presentations on various Phyla and Classes of Kingdom Animalia. Groups will be randomly selected to present one of the Phyla/Classes to the class. From each group, one student will be randomly selected to present the Phylum/Class to the class. Student projects (CD-ROM) and presentations will be graded by the instructor. Students will also conduct peer evaluations, the outcome of which will become part of their final project grade. Test scores will be compared between treatment and control groups.

It is imperative to determine if collaborative learning projects, such as the one described above, lead to improved comprehension of important foundational concepts. As any scientist knows, only through subjecting a hypothesis to the scientific method can the truth of the matter be known.



## Using Team Mentoring in Introductory Computing

Jean Jacques Medastin  
School of Technology

The concept of collaborative learning, the grouping and pairing of students for the purpose of achieving an academic goal, has been widely researched and advocated throughout the professional literature. I require collaborative learning because I believe that students tend to learn a lot more from working in groups than on their own. The purpose of this project is to investigate the impact of using group mentors on student performance in an introductory computing course. I plan to divide one of my Spring 2005 CPTG1111-Intro to Computing classes into groups of four or five students who have no prior knowledge of the topic and assign them a mentor. The mentor can be either an instructional assistant (IA) or another student who has had some experience with the subject being taught. Students will meet with their men-

tors once a week to become more comfortable asking questions in class and to benefit from their peers' experience. Student progress will be documented by the group mentors and discussed with me at a scheduled time. The mentors will also observe how students complete their assignments and discuss with me whether students show enthusiasm or frustration in the process. At the end of the semester, I will compare the scores of the students in this section on the group projects and peer & self assessment with a control group (the fall 2004 class that I also taught). Anecdotal evidence and student surveys will also be used to gather comparative data. The expected outcomes of this study are increases in appreciation for team-based environment, knowledge of course content, and student engagement.



Collaborative Grant Recipients from left: Jean Medastin, Jere Boudell, Martha Wicker, Aprylla Lanz, Gary May, and Melanie Poudevigne

## Implementing Collaborative Learning in Introductory Statistics

Aprillya Lanz  
College of Information & Mathematical Sciences

Research shows that collaborative learning methods improve students' learning. The purpose of this study is to determine whether such methods can improve students' learning in the introductory statistics classes. In two sections of MATH 1231, students are divided into base groups to work on take-home assignments during the semester. They are required to actively communicate with their group members and give an update to me, the instructor, on a weekly basis. For each assignment, students complete peer and self evaluations. At the end of the semes-

ter, students will answer a survey that includes their opinion on working in groups, how they felt their experience compared to a traditional class, and whether they thought these methods were effective in their learning. These students will then be compared to another section of introductory statistics, in which students did not work in groups on their take-home assignments. I expect to see an increase in students' productivity and teamwork skills as a result of active in-class participation and students' interaction in their group.

## CID Resource Center Book Recommendations By Martha Wicker

*Sustaining & Improving Learning Communities* by Jodi Lavigne Laufgraben, Nancy S. Shapiro and Associates presents a framework for developing and sustaining an effective learning community program designed to meet the needs of today's freshmen in undergraduate education.



*Creating Significant Learning Experiences* by Dee Fink presents a compelling new taxonomy for significant kinds of learning, describes the impact of four aspects of teaching on student learning, and presents an integrated method for designing courses.



## Student Success Teaching Strategies

Looking for a way to engage your students in active or collaborative learning? Explore the online searchable database ([http://ctl.clayton.edu/active\\_learning](http://ctl.clayton.edu/active_learning)) containing 75+ strategies collected by CCSU faculty.

**Featured Strategy:** Jigsaw  
**Function:** Review or learning new content  
**Audience:** All disciplines  
**Procedure:** Divide content (problem) into sections, one for each group member, regroup students so that all students assigned to the same portion of the content are grouped together, provide resources for the groups to become experts on their portion of the content, ask groups to prepare a strategy for teaching the content to students in their original groups, have students return to their original groups and rotate teaching the portions of their assigned content.



Faculty Resource Center



## David Hanson from Stony Brook University to Facilitate Learning Communities Workshop



The Center for Instructional Development and the Center for Academic Assistance will co-sponsor a workshop entitled *Learning Communities for Student Success* on Friday, April 15th

from 9 AM-3 PM. The workshop, to be facilitated by the Director of the Learning Communities Program at Stony Brook University, will provide a planning opportunity for faculty and academic support and campus life staff to expand the Clayton State learning community model to include integrated advisement, peer mentoring, and campus services. During the workshop, participants will select interdisciplinary themes that connect the curricula taught in the learning community courses.

## Upcoming Conferences

Spring Foundations and Advanced Cooperative Learning Seminars in Jacksonville, FL, sponsored by Florida Community College, May 16 – 19, 2005, <http://www.fccj.edu/sccl/>

The Teaching Professor Conference in Schaumburg, IL, May 20 – 22, 2005, <http://www.teachingprofessor.com>

“Spotlight on Innovation, Integration & Collaboration,” 12th Annual Syllabus Education Technology Conference in Los Angeles, CA, presented by *Campus Technology*, July 24 – 28, 2005, <http://www.syllabus.com/summer2005/cfp.asp>

2005 International College Teaching Methods & Styles Conference in Reno, NV, September 19 – 21, 2005, <http://www.ctmsconference.com/>

Southeastern Scholarship Conference on E-Learning in Macon, GA, hosted by Macon State University, September 30 – October 01, 2005, <http://sscel.maconstate.edu/>

Thirty-Fifth Annual Conference of the International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning in Cocoa Beach, FL, hosted by University of Central Florida, October 13 – 15, 2005, <http://www.isetl.org/conference/index.cfm>

Educause 2005 in Orlando, FL, October 18 – 21, 2005, <http://www.educause.edu/>

## Clayton State Targets Historically Difficult Courses with Supplemental Instruction™

By Susan Copeland Henry

This fall students in some of the most difficult courses on campus will receive unprecedented assistance through Supplemental Instruction™. “Supplemental Instruction is a program in which we identify historically difficult courses and provide assistance,” says Kelly Taylor, the Tutoring Coordinator for the Clayton State’s Center for Academic Assistance.

An SI task force from the QEP Implementation Committee identified the most historically difficult courses at Clayton State and then selected the three according to two criteria: number of students impacted and failure rates which historically have been above 50%. SI pairs those courses with an SI peer leader who attends the course and then conducts small group study sessions three times a week at various times for all students enrolled in the identified sections. Students are not required to attend the SI sessions, but participation is highly recommended.

The peer leaders are students who have

taken that course before and passed with an A or a B. They were also recommended by a professor in that discipline. Peer leaders will have an office and will maintain office hours on campus, but they will also have virtual office hours via e-mail and a potential listserv.

The expected outcomes are an increase in student retention by individual courses, improvement of grades, and improvement in graduation rates. Since these courses are also gatekeeper courses for various majors, another expected result is an increase in the number of students who are able to persist in those majors.

“Unlike other retention-increasing strategies and academic support services that target at-risk students, SI targets at-risk courses, which is unusual,” says Taylor. Institutions using SI have observed a 10% higher persistence to graduation rate among students participating in the program. For more information about SI, visit this site: <http://www.umkc.edu/cad/SI/>.



Maureen Hurley, Associate Director of the Center for Academic Development at the University of Missouri — Kansas City, facilitated SI training for Clayton State faculty and student leaders on March 17-18, 2005.



From left: Jim Braun, Patricia Todebush, and Jonathan Lindzey with SI student leaders