



CTL *notes*

the Center for Teaching and Learning

The CTL logo is a mature tree symbolizing the developed roots and continued growth of Miami University Middletown's excellence in teaching and learning under the canopy of its Center for Teaching and Learning.

The Symphony of Learning



September/October

Volume 6, Issue 1

Compiled, designed, and
edited by Jackie Couch and
Maira Casey.

For 2009-2010, the CTL is sponsoring a series of monthly conversations about teaching under the theme of "The Symphony of Learning." The phrase is derived from Daniel Pink's inclusion of "symphony" as one of his six essential skills for students to learn in his book *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule in the Future*. Pink defines symphony as "the ability to put together the pieces"; synthesizing information, forming relationships between seemingly disparate fields, noticing broad patterns, and creating something new and unexpected.

We hope that the conversa-

tions we hold this year will stimulate your sense of symphony and help you connect the topics discussed with your teaching to form unforeseen and successful teaching experiences. Our series will carry the metaphor of symphony a bit further by designating our conversations with the movements found in the modern musical symphony. Here are our first three offerings for the year:

1). **First Movement: Allegro** (quick, lively, brisk, cheerful): "Have You Thiagi'ed Lately?"—Tuesday, October 6, 2009



2). **Second Movement: Slow** (pause to reflect): "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Learning Community"—Wednesday, November 4, 2009.

3). **Third Movement: Scherzo** (playful in triple time): "Using Clickers"—Wednesday, December 2,

Fall Conversations

TUESDAY, OCT. 6, 2009

"Have You Thiagi'ed Lately?"

12-1 pm in JHN 136/137.
Lunch served to the first
twenty attendees.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4, 2009

"Scholarship of Teaching and
Learning (SoTL) Learning
Community"

12-1 pm in JHN 136/137.
Lunch served to the first
twenty attendees.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2, 2009

"Using Clickers"

12-1 pm in JHN 136/137.
Lunch served to the first
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“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” –William Ward

Back to School with Fun and Games by Donna Evans



The 2009 Opening Workshop for regional faculty featured a session by Sivasailam (Thiagi) Thiagarajan, Ph. D., a Bloomington, Indiana-based consultant. Thiagi shared his research which indicated that increased interactivity in the learning experience leads to increased retention of subject matter. To demonstrate his point Thiagi led faculty in a variety of exercises to demonstrate how games and interactive participation increased the transfer of knowledge and ideas in a relaxed setting.

As the first day of class approached, I was determined to put what I had learned into practice! I used a modified version of the game “35.” The game required that each student

create a statement and compare it to another student’s statement. Jointly, the student pair apportioned 7 points between the two statements based upon whatever relative merit they perceived the statements to have. This process was repeated several times as students move randomly about the room. Students moved with trepidation at first, after all it was the first day of class and the room was filled with strangers. After a few rounds, students were relaxed and engaged in the process. I then asked students to stop where they were and asked which card had been awarded the highest number of total points. As a result, we were able to quickly rank statements by points. We further

extended the lesson to discuss the parallels between the flow of information in the game and how data is transferred across a network.

During the activity, students learned to break down “first day” barriers as they moved around the room, to engage with each other to evaluate information, to learn a method whereby they could quickly rank relative statements, and to make a tangible demonstration of data transmission. I intend to use more of Thiagi’s techniques and encourage others to accept his invitation to view his website <http://www.thiagi.com/> and be sure to check out the “Free Training Games” he has so graciously offered for viewers.



Conversation: “Have You ‘Thiagi-ed’ Lately?” 12:00-1:00 p.m. JHN 136/137. What better way to kick off this year’s CTL Conversations than to reflect on interactive learning techniques? In this Conversation, you can share your experiences of using the interactive learning exercises that Thiagi introduced to us at our opening workshop. You will also have the opportunity to experience a few more of Thiagi’s exercises. As always with our Conversations, lunch will be served to the first twenty attendees. All interested faculty, staff, and students are welcome to attend!

“...increased interactivity in the learning experience leads to increased retention of subject matter...”



Coming Soon!
In October, the CTL will sponsor a special featuring Professor Mel Cohen and the team of faculty and students who have been engaging in Faculty-Student Dialogues. These faculty have been meeting with students on a regular basis to discuss teaching and learning from both sides of the experience; they have been doing so with the goals of sharing and improving the learning experiences of students here at Miami Middletown. More details will be forthcoming...

New Members of the CTL Leadership Collaborative: Sue Marine, Ph.D.

Susan Marine, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry. I came to Miami Middletown in 1998 to develop the new Chemical Technology Program. I had previously worked in industry 21 years and taught chemistry at the college level six years. At MUM, I have designed several new chemistry

courses, revamped old ones, and redesigned laboratory experiments. I am currently involved in the Top 25 Initiative.

In spring 2008 I taught my Chemistry and Art course on Miami's Luxembourg campus. I am continuously looking for ways to facilitate learning, in class and out, and have been involved in SMET,

CAC, SGID's, SAW, triads, reading groups, Continuing Ed, Lifelong Learning, and Craft Summers.

This is my first year on the CTL LC; John Burke and I are organizing the CTL Conversations and Specials as we help orchestrate the symphony of learning.

"If the learning is going to get done, it is the students who are going to do it."
— John Tagg, in his foreword to Terry Doyle's *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment*.

Angela Yesh

As a graduate student in philosophy at the University of Louisville, I was mainly interested in writing and research. My second year, I was awarded a Teaching Assistantship in which I had full teaching responsibilities.

After my first week of teaching I was hooked. My teaching mentor, Professor Schuyler, gave me this piece of advice before I began preparing for my first class: "Don't try to teach as I do. Find your own way to engage the student. Keep them listening and they will do the learning." I

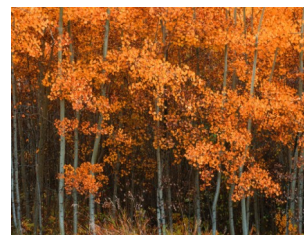
learned much about teaching that year, first and foremost, that I really didn't know that much about teaching.

It's been twelve years since I taught that first class and I am still learning much about teaching; including that I have a lot more to learn about teaching.

My concern about teaching is a natural extension of my concern for my students. The diverse backgrounds from which our students come create a very interesting classroom but can have some

drawbacks as well. How can an instructor be effective in a classroom where some of the students do not have adequate preparation or adequate skills? How can I be more inclusive in the classroom?

These questions and an overall interest in becoming a better teacher have led me to the Center for Teaching and Learning. I hope to make a real contribution to our educational community through the Leadership Collaborative.



"We simply need to give students more time to dig beneath the surface, to grapple with the subject matter, and to make their own sense out of things." — Chet Meyers and Thomas B. Jones, *Promoting Active Learning: Strategies for the College Classroom*

Jackie Couch

Hello MUM faculty! I am the new student assistant at the CTL. I recently transferred to MUM from Ohio University-Athens. I love the atmosphere of MUM, everyone is so friendly and the small class size really allows me to gain that one-on-one experience with my professors. I am a Pre-Early Childhood Educa-

tion Major, and I hope to teach Kindergarten. I am very excited to be a part of the LC—I am looking forward to learning about teaching and learning techniques. I hope to apply these concepts to my classroom one day! Throughout the course of this newsletter I will have "Jackie's Corner" where I will write about

education and learning. Feel free to stop on by Johnston 11 and say hello, I am almost always here!

Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)

Do you want to find out how your students are experiencing your class? The CTL's Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) program can help.

Any MUM instructor can request a SGID to be scheduled during a class meeting. Last year facilitators conducted more than 50 SGIDs at MUM. Faculty find they can use SGID feedback to fine-tune their teaching and better address their students' learning needs.

SGIDs take 20 - 30 minutes of a class period. During this time a SGID facilitator comes into your class to meet with your students without your being present. Students respond to

the following questions: *In what ways has the instruction/instructor helped you learn in this course? Can you suggest some changes in the instruction/course that would better help you learn?* The facilitator captures students' responses in a written report sent to the instructor and is also available to discuss the results.

You may opt for a "clicker"-mediated SGID. In this option, students provide feedback through using a remote response system. Student use clickers to confidentially indicate degrees of agreement or disagreement with each suggestion and comment.

Please note: The clicker-mediated op-

tion is available for classes of no more than 30 students and that meet in a mediated classroom or have a computer cart brought in.

To request a SGID, please go to our website, download a SGID request form, and submit it:

www.mid.muohio.edu/ctl/SGID.cfm

CTL Office Schedule for Fall Semester 2009

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-9	Jackie	Jackie			Jackie
9-10			Sue		
10-11	Jackie/Brad			Ellenmarie	
11-12	Brad				
12-1	LC Meeting		Jackie		
1-2		Jackie/John			
2-3					
3-4		John/Angela		Lizz	
4-5	Moira	Angela	Eric		Jackie
5-6					
6-7					

For more information call: 513-727-3464 or visit us online at www.mumnt.mid.muohio.edu/ctl