



A Compilation of  
2013/14  
Innovation Grant  
Evaluations

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300  
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

**Title of Innovation:** World Music Drumming

**Submitted by:** Elizabeth Bumpus

**School:** Meadowdale

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:**

**Brief Description of the project:** These drums were used by most students in our school grades one through four last year and are continuing to be used this year in a similar manner. The drums and percussion purchased for this project were African drums and percussion. They were used in the classroom as well as a performance.

**How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

I gauged my students' reaction to the instruments and playing abilities once given proper instruction. I also measured whether or not their ability to read and repeat rhythm patterns increased while using these instruments. These were auditory and observational measurements.

**What were the results of that measurement?**

The results turned out well. Not only did the excitement level go up, but the music reading abilities went up as well! The first grade students learned the basics of playing these drums and it was added to their post-concert studies about holidays from different cultures. Many of our second graders performed on these instruments during our Music Around the World concert and our fourth graders also used these during class.

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

I would like to explore the possibilities of our third and fourth grades using them more in the future.

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

Yes. The second grade performance connected with their social studies unit about different countries. It could possibly be connected with fourth grade social studies and their regions unit as they study the south eastern U.S. states.

**Additional comments?**

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**Title of Innovation:** CDC Project

**Submitted by:** Chris Caramela

**School:** Dundee-Crown High School

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Brief Description of the project:**

The CDC project is a theme based project that drives the learning of living characteristics, cellular processes, DNA/RNA/protein synthesis and genetics. The hemacytometer purchased with the grant was used specifically in the living characteristics segment of the course. The hemacytometer was used to determine population sizes of an “alien” substance over time to see if they are capable of reproduction. Reproduction is an essential living characteristic used to determine if the alien sample is a living organism. The hemacytometer allows for quantitative data needed to determine if reproduction is occurring by using an industry tool from the field of microbiology.

**How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

The objective of the grant purchase was to obtain quantitative data in terms of microorganism populations rather than qualitative data. Each student group did a day one and day two population count. The hemacytometer makes it possible to count the number of microorganisms in a nano-liter of water. Previous years, the reproduction tests consisted of a qualitative test; does the test tube look cloudier than the control test tube, yes or no? Based on the answer reproduction was inferred.

**What were the results of that measurement?**

Every student lab group was capable of determining microorganism counts in the two-day lab sample. In this regard, the results indicate the innovation was effective because we never had cell counts before. The ranges of student cell counts were between 25-45 for day one and 80-110 for day two, indicating population growth and reproduction.

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

Last year only reproduction was checked and quantified. Calculating the rate of reproduction would reinforce math skills across the curriculum. The next time this is done, the lab will be modified to measure the rate of reproduction. This added data would fit in the CDC project rather well and could be used to discuss how fast the infection could spread in a population.

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

An extension of this type of experiment would be to determine carrying capacity of an aquatic habit for a micro-organism. This would be most appropriate for an ecology unit. Cell counts can be done daily and the data recorded and graphed over time. Given finite resources, students should see population increases begin to slow as the limited resources cannot support additional numbers of the microorganism. This would be applicable for higher level biology courses. One may even be able to change conditions of the growing chambers and see what factors impact population growth most significantly.

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**Additional comments?**

For the first run, this was relatively successful. Implementing the changes mentioned previously will add curricular value to the equipment purchased with the grant. The second run, this year, will make this scientific project more lab intense and increase the amount of data we can collect and analyze.

## **Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300 Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

**Title of Innovation:** Day of the Children/Day of the Books: Book Fiesta

**Submitted by:** Deb Kaczar

**School:** Golfview Elementary

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** PreK-4

**Brief Description of the project:** This project/event was held over several weeks and included events and activities which promoted reading and celebrated children. The culminating week included activities which included dress like your favorite book character, stop everything and read, student illustrations which celebrated reading and creativity, read alouds, a bookfair and the big event, an illustrator visit. We were also treated to a musical performance by third grade which was music by Tito Puente. Students were read the book, *Tito Puente*, which was illustrated by Rafael Lopez, who was our presenter.

### **How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

The effectiveness of the event was measured by participation, informal surveys of student and staff, and feedback offered by many. Initially I planned to do a formal written survey, but time constraints limited this. The feedback was so overwhelmingly positive, that there was no doubt this event was a tremendous success. Please see attached comments from various teachers. Student comments were priceless. All teachers and staff embraced the program, and we had 100% participation. There were several parents present at our daytime program and they praised our selection of illustrator, Rafael Lopez, and his performance and interaction with students, and his message to them, and to all of us.

Each teacher in the building participated with their classes on projects which promoted reading.

Circulation of books which were recommended for this program topped our books circulated for the month, and after, as teachers wanted to share with their students as many books as possible. Books included both fiction and nonfiction books which celebrated various cultures, especially the Latino culture. The book, *Book Fiesta*, written by Pat Mora and illustrated by Rafael Lopez, was a focus for our celebration.

### **What were the results of that measurement?**

See above and attached comments.

### **Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

The grant provided \$500 for an illustrator or author visit. Many authors and illustrators charge from \$1000 to \$2500 per school, plus expenses, for a daytime and evening family event. We were lucky and blessed to have found Rafael Lopez, who only charged us \$500 per day plus expenses. We had to do additional fundraising to support the event.

I shared with other media specialist in the district of the event we were doing, and Mary Miller from Meadowdale wanted to have the event at her school as well. This worked well to share the travel and hotel expenses between the schools. Meadowdale also raved about the program and the events that they had during the week. Meadowdale did have a family event, and Mary shared

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that male parents came up to her, who were normally indifferent and thanked her for having Rafael come because he spoke to them about being better parents and helping to foster their children's interests and passions, and to get involved in their educations.

The grant was written, and approved by my principal, to include an evening family literacy event. The administrator changed this, and we were unable to have the family event at GVES. This was heart breaking, because a huge focus was planned to celebrate children, family, and literacy. We did not find out until March, that we were not going to be allowed to have the evening event we had been planning since the summer before. The event was still a tremendous success, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I can say, without hesitation, that this was one of the most meaningful and engaging presentations I have ever seen.

### **Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

I would highly recommend bringing back Rafael Lopez for a visit to all elementary schools in D300. I have seen many authors and illustrators, and his presentation and interaction with students is superior. Rafael's program is engaging and sends important messages to students including persevering, using their imaginations, and finding their passions.

Rafael would also be excellent with art classes at middle school and high school. He also does community murals, which would be a wonderful district wide project. I have been trying to think of where a place for a huge mural that students and stakeholders from all over the district could come together to create an artwork that celebrates children, reading/education, and all cultures. One place I thought of would be Springhill Mall, or on a huge wall at our new district office.

I have researched, and now have a recommended list of engaging authors and illustrators. Again, most charge \$1000-2000 per day, plus expenses. Since writing is so important to student success, I feel authors can give engaging presentations on the writing and creative process, which could benefit our students.

### **Additional comments?**

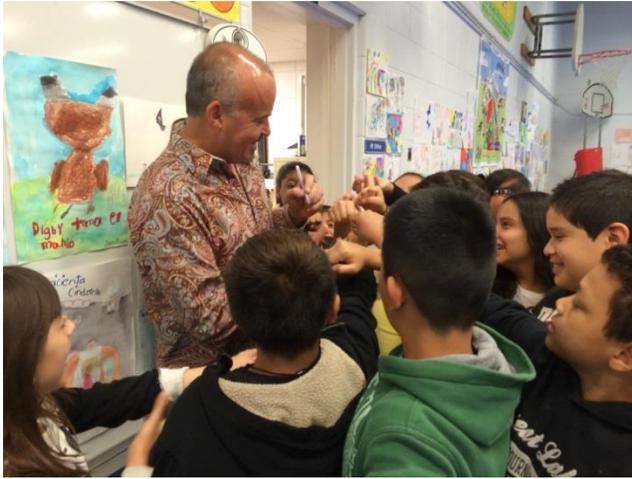
Some schools in our district have PTOs which give monies for Cultural Arts Assemblies. The students at those schools are exposed to authors, illustrators, musicals, etc. Other schools in our district may not have the financial means to offer these opportunities. I would like to see these opportunities for all of our students on a yearly basis. This was my third year at Golfview, and this was our first Cultural Arts Assembly. This was only made possible by the generosity of the D300 Foundation Grant.

The Golfview students and staff would like to thank the Foundation for this engaging educational opportunity. Through the hard work, fundraising, and dedication of our D300 Foundation volunteers, our students were able to truly experience something special. Gracias, thanks!

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Link to Animoto Video

<http://animoto.com/play/pv1FDhddpoa7kYQaRxN0cQ>



Deb,

I really enjoyed the assembly yesterday. I can honestly say that it was probably the best assembly our students have experienced in the last ten years. I cannot think of any that rival it. Congratulations! It was a really wonderful day.

*Denise Stilwell*  
*Music Teacher*

Dear Ms. Kaczar:

No – thank YOU and your committee members!!!! I've seen many “visiting author” days, but this one takes first place. I was so impressed with the committee's choice for guest and I want to thank you sincerely from the bottom of my heart. He was not only articulate and interesting, I could see his joy and passion through and through. I know my students picked up on that right away and just fell in love with him. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Our children deserved this high quality presentation and I know they will remember it for years to come. □

Cheers (and celebration),

-Emily Pahlavan

### **Feedback on The Day of the Children/Day of the books**

The Day of the Children/Day of the Books was a great celebration for the Students in our school. They were not just exposed to a variety of books from an author that they learned a lot about and the Illustrator of some of the books. The students had the great opportunity to meet, mingle, hear and watch his demonstration of how he comes up with the illustrations for the books. This was an experience that they will never forget. The decorations in the library and thought the school gave the students the motivation to read more and dream to become writers and illustrators.

I feel that this celebration would have been even more impacting if the students' families had participated in the event. The population of our school would never have the opportunity to

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experience a celebration of reading and meeting an illustrator unless we at the school give them that opportunity. This would be something that I would like to see in the future if we have the opportunity to have the celebration again.

I also feel that the students would have been even more impressed if they had meet the author in person along with the illustrator. Our students need to experience more cultural events like this.

Thank you Debbie for the extraordinary work you did.

Deb,

Book Fiesta was exactly that...a celebration of literature! I loved how the author was brought into our school for our students to see how writing can come alive and be an avenue to which they may strive to achieve. The author selected was very interactive. The presentation of his books provided a visual for our ELLs to see how illustrations are part of the writing process, insomuch, that the entire student body felt proud, inspired, and invigorated to write as a means to reflect on their lives. Overall, it was a great event I hope my students moving forward have a chance to experience.

Michael O'Connor

Debbie,

My Perry bi-lingual teachers are jumping up and down wanting Rafael here next year....so you can count on Perry and I'm sure Meadowdale will be in again because he was so great with the parents.

Mrs. Mary Miller  
Library Media Specialist

Debbie,

We had an entire school assembly in the afternoon and a family night presentation that evening at 6 p.m. We had over 60 people (adults and children) attend the evening presentation. Only 2 of the families attending the evening presentation were English only families, so the presentation was bilingual. All of the parents interacted with Mr. Rafael Lopez, whether it was a quick "thank you" or "it was very enjoyable" to more lengthy conversations. The PTO board that was present said it was very well put together and would love to offer more bilingual presenters to the families. Overall, the presentations were very well done and everyone attending left with a rejuvenated love of books! I would love to help grow Dia de los ninos/Dia de los libros events in our District.

Thank you,  
Mary  
Mrs. Mary Miller  
Library Media Specialist

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Thank you so much to all the staff that embraced our Children's Day/Book Day Book Fiesta Week, and helped to bring this program to fruition. Rafael was extremely impressed with our students and staff. The children's art work was just amazing. The gym was transformed into an art museum and Latino jazz club today, to welcome our students and our world renowned illustrator, Rafael Lopez. To highlight our students in art and music, and with Bookjoy, was an incredible experience for all involved. All that read to their students, had them create their art, shared the passion of Bookjoy, helped decorate, move things, bake, translate newsletters, copy things, etc., etc., etc., I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I know the students thank you. What an incredible experience for us all!

The entire staff and the Book Fiesta committee that made this happen are truly dedicated to our students, the celebration of their learning, our multiculturalism, and Book Joy! Gracias, Thanks!!!

*Debbie Kaczar*  
Library/Media Specialist

## Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300 Innovation Grant Project Evaluation

**Submitted by:** Kristen Lewarchick  
**School:** Algonquin Lakes Elementary School  
**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELL students

### **Brief Description of the project:**

I used a scientifically research based reading software program to help my struggling ELL readers. Previously, several of my ELL students had trouble learning and retaining automatic sight words. By using the PCI reading program for 3-5 days per week with some of my struggling readers I have found that my students have learned to automatically recognize high-frequency words.

The PCI reading software helps struggling readers through visual discrimination. Students are asked to choose the correct word in a list, read the word alone and read the word in a sentence or multiple sentences. The program is used in conjunction with printed materials that the student can take home to practice. The program uses both repetition and review to ensure both short and long term retention of the words taught. It is also presented in a multimedia format on the computer. Illustrations appear throughout the program to support learning.

### **How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

The PCI reading program provides assessments after each 5 new words that are learned by the student. This assessment data determines if the student has mastered the previous words and is ready to continue in the program. Students also get to take home a new book after each assessment. Each book comes with a short comprehension quiz to determine if students are also gaining meaning.

I also used the Dolch sight word list as an additional piece of data to determine if the students are gaining automatic sight words. I have tested my students five times this school year to check on their progress. I gave them a benchmark assessment in August and then tested prior to the end of each quarter.

A third measurement of student growth was to check their guided reading levels quarterly to determine if they were using the sight words they had mastered correctly in a text.

### **What were the results of that measurement?**

**Student #1** - Fall Sight Words: 35      Spring Sight Words: 174      = gain of 139 words  
(2<sup>nd</sup> grade)      Fall Guided Reading: D      Spring Guided Reading: G      = gain of 3 levels

**Student #2** - Fall Sight Words: 133      Spring Sight Words: 205      = gain of 72 words  
(2<sup>nd</sup> grade)      Fall Guided Reading: F      Spring Guided Reading: J      = gain of 4 levels

**Student #3** - Fall Sight Words: 135      Spring Sight Words: 216      = gain of 81 words  
(2<sup>nd</sup> grade)      Fall Guided Reading: E      Spring Guided Reading: J      = gain of 5 levels

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**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

I would like to use the program over a two year span, beginning in first grade and continuing into 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to see maximum growth and consistency in student performance.

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

The PCI level 1 reading program is ideal for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade struggling readers. I would like to investigate other levels of the program for use with other grade levels.

**Additional comments?**

I would like to thank the foundation for this grant which gave me an opportunity to use this software with my ELL students. Otherwise my students would not have benefited from the extra one-on-one support that this program offered them. I was truly amazed at the student growth that occurred with the use of this program.

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## Innovation Grant Project Evaluation

**Title of Innovation:** Nonfiction Videos for the Common Core

**Submitted by:** Dr. Luc Miron

**School:** Neubert

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Brief Description of the project:** The increased use of nonfiction content to teach Common Core related student objectives.

### **How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

My initial thoughts were to count the number of words that struggling students were writing to compare the amount that students were writing while responding to nonfiction text in comparison to nonfiction videos. As I began the implementation of this research, it became apparent that there were too many variables in play to conclude that one nonfiction source was providing students with an advantage over another and resulting in students writing more. For example, struggling students often times worked with partners to complete writing planners or worked with resource personnel to help them elaborate on their ideas.

Eventually, I determined that the most interesting and beneficial grant findings would be found by looking at whether or not students gravitated towards responding to nonfiction information that stemmed from videos or if students would prefer reviewing text-based documents. As a whole, the innovation grant was effective.

### **What were the results of that measurement?**

The classroom that I am working with this year is compromised of 21 students in all. The classroom has 11 girls and 10 boys. Four of these students qualify for additional classroom help (IEPs) and about 8 students qualify for math or language-based interventions (AIMSweb). As a whole, I consider this classroom above average in terms of social skills and slightly below district average in terms of academic ability. I project that 2 of my students may move into a fourth grade classroom due to gifted-like abilities.

I have inserted Table 1 to share what students selected to complete during 3 different and separate writing tasks. Students were to critique either a video or text that was read aloud to them in class. The video viewings and text readings were done on the same day or done one day apart. Students then completed a persuasive writing planner and finished their writing tasks by writing a draft that critiqued the video (persuasive writing). Writing tasks 1 and 3 had perfect student attendance, while task 2 did have 4 absences. For that reason, I provided percentages within the table to make comparing the results easier.

**Table 1.**

Writing Task	% of Students picking text	% of Students picking video
1	57	43

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2	53	47
3	43	57

From this data, students selected nearly equally the video and the text during the selection process.

**Conclusion:**

*It appears as though there are some benefits in having students read and respond to both text and nonfiction videos as a way to elicit student thinking and writing.*

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

Looking back, I wished I would have tracked what each student had selected for each of the 3 writing trials. It would be interesting to see how many (if any) student exclusively responded to text and how many (if any) responded only to videos.

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

The implication of this grant likely has similar possibilities for other grade levels. It may have a greater impact on students of upper grades as they have more writing to do that directly impacts our district's ability to provide evidence of student proficient (ISAT testing results as an example).

**Additional comments?**

I was very pleased to see a significant price drop to what I planned on purchasing just before I bought the VHS videos. I was able to purchase some additional math videos that were not directly linked to Common Core goals (CCSS), but as a good-number of subs were in charge of my math time, I found it reassuring to know that subs were not exposing my groups of students to math tricks or math strategies that were contrary to CCSS philosophies. The series of videos allowed students to review math content and make a productive use of their math time during my classroom absences.

Finally, that is an area that hopefully will be addressed: How do we as a district help not only reform teachers' views of teaching within the frameworks of Common Core, but also help substitute teachers and parents also understand the shift in teaching and learning as well. My nonfiction videos to address Common Core were just one small step that I took to try to start my own shift, but subs and parents must also become a part of that shift, at some point, as well so that their viewpoints do not contradict those of classroom teachers.

Thanks again for another wonderful opportunity to get my hands on some additional classroom resources.

I am very grateful,  
Dr. Luc Miron  
3<sup>rd</sup> grade Neubert

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**Title of Innovation:** Protein Synthesis Manipulatives

**Submitted by:** Shawn O'Donnell

**School:** DCHS

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 9-10

**Brief description of the project:** The student kit is designed to provide students the opportunity to practice the concepts surrounding protein synthesis. The colorful, large DNA, mRNA (messenger), ribosome, tRNA (transfer), and amino acid models attach to your blackboard/dry erase board. You simulate the process for your students allowing students to ask questions as you proceed. Students work at their tables using smaller size models to work through the process and internalize key concepts.

**How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

**Assessment:** Each student is given a unique DNA sequence and is asked to identify the resulting amino acid sequence. Each student works to complete each sequence and develop a protein.

**What were the results of that measurement?**

We compared last year's grades with this year. We had a 60% increase in student grades when we took the final assessment.

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

I would increase the amount of sets for students. I would lower the group size.

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

No, this innovation only holds possibilities for science. But you can use this for 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade as well, but modify the project for age appropriateness.

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**Title of Innovation:** Building Unity in the Classroom to Foster Academic Success

**Submitted by:** Megan Pankau

**School:** HMS

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 6-8

**Brief Description of the project:**

Team building activities, games, books purchased by the grant for use in the educational setting. The goal of this project is to provide **both** students and teachers with the tools necessary to develop and sustain a collaborative environment within the classroom. Collaboration is more easily defined than successfully implemented. Collaboration means to partner, to come together to perform a task or resolve an issue. A specific environment must exist for collaboration to take place. When the environment is emotionally safe and people feel confident, supported and they are listened to by the group, this will foster an opportunity for collaboration.

**How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured? What were the results of that measurement?**

Qualitative data from staff and students was collected to assess program effectiveness. Quantitative data was not collected due to the inability to control variables for accurate measurement and conclusion. Due to problems in ordering and obtaining the materials, (I spoke with Mary Gross about this), we didn't obtain the items until winter. The qualitative data showed a significant increase for the students and a sizable increase in collaboration skills with the staff that used the resources.

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

I would probably order more resources for small group use (4-6)

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

Absolutely!

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**Title of Innovation:** Uke Kids of lakewood

**Submitted by:** Bob Roseberry

**School:** Lakewood

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>

**Brief Description of the project:** A after-school program to teach kids basic ukulele playing.

**How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

Student participation / successful performances

**What were the results of that measurement?**

Students seemed to enjoy the experiences and camaraderie

**Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

More ukuleles to allow more students to participate

**Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

After-school \_\_\_\_\_ groups (guitar, drumming, recorder, etc.)  
(fill in the blank)

**Additional comments?**

Can't wait to do it again this year! :O)

## **Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300 Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

**Title of Innovation:** Everyday Physics

**Submitted by:** Terry Stroh

**School:** Jacobs High School

**Grade level(s) served by this innovation:** High School Juniors

### **Brief Description of the project:**

We purchased sensors that were designed to measure acceleration and motion of objects. We looked to use the sensors to study the motion and acceleration of roller coasters and other carnival rides as a way to get students more involved in the study of Physics as it applied to their everyday lives.

### **How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?**

The effectiveness of the innovation was to be measured by the number of lessons that were developed for use within the classroom and during field trips. The sensors were to be used to gather data for the students to analyze within the classroom and compare to what they were feeling while on the roller coaster or ride itself.

### **What were the results of that measurement?**

Our innovation was stopped short from our original goals as we had to work against competing for time with AP Testing, Final Exams and end of the year activities. These were obstacles that we did not foresee in our original plan to use the equipment. With not being able to use the sensors as originally planned, our group of physics teachers worked to develop new ideas and lesson in which we could use the sensors. To supplement their use, the science department purchased additional pieces of equipment that could be used within the confines of the classroom.

### **Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?**

We continue to look at dates and additional possibilities for using the sensors at a place like Great America, Santa's Village or a local carnival. We have also looked at developing in class activities that could simulate some of the same sensations or motions that we would see within a roller coaster or carnival ride.

### **Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?**

We are starting to work with the Math department to possibly share real world application and data from experiments for students to analyze from both a math and science aspect.

### **Additional comments?**