

# Collaborative Testing: Increasing Rigor, Combating Anxiety, & Facilitating Prompt Feedback

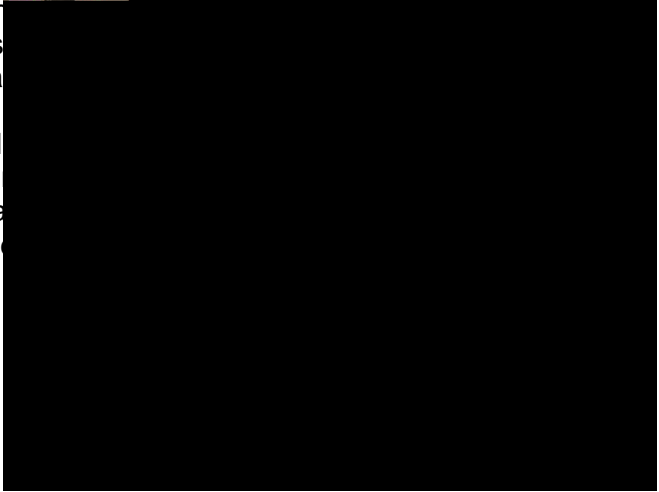
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## Author Biography

Marina Smitherman is Department Chair of Life Sciences and Professor of Biology at Dalton State College. With two decades of college teaching experience, Dr. Smitherman has specialized in Educational and Organizational Development; serving as director of the Center for Academic Excellence leading faculty development in Teaching and Learning, leading High Impact Practice curriculum innovations, chairing the Georgia Consortium of Teaching and Learning Directors. She received the University System of Georgia Felton Jenkins Jr. Faculty Hall of Fame Teaching Excellence Award in 2020. She co-edited "Taking Flight: Making your Teaching and Learning Center Soar" published with Stylus in 2020.

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expectations but students have to rise to meet them. For many students, including generations or fixed mindset groups, support and encouragement may need to come from within a course from peers or an instructor. Students may lack the belief that they can succeed due to negative past test experiences or from a lack of family support and understanding (Markman, Balik, Braunstein, Bercovitz, & Ehrenfeld, 2010). If students feel pressured to perform in a course critical to their career progression, testing can feel high-stakes leading to significant anxiety and less performance or achievement (Hoachlander, 1998; Markman, Balik, Braunstein, Bercovitz, & Ehrenfeld, 2010)



Collaborative testing is a natural extension of collaborative learning: a high-impact, student-centered, active learning approach (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008). Engaging students collaboratively during testing allows for raising expectations whilst giving them the opportunity to work with peer support and feedback. This has been shown to lower the incidence of test anxiety (Leighty, Saunders, Calkins, & Withers, 2012). Students also perceive that they learn better collaboratively and can feel positively interdependent and accountable to their peer group, leading to additional benefits including higher individual testing scores and development of transferable working skills (Leighty, Saunders, Calkins, & Withers, 2012). Collaborative testing also increases student understanding of content as peer-to-peer instruction provides prompt feedback on performance, corrects misconceptions, and maximizes opportunities for critical reflection on learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008). If summative assessment determines whether learners have acquired knowledge, mastered concepts, and achieved objectives and formative assessment helps them reflect on whether the learning objectives were met, why not employ both at once?

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Activity Description

