

PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING THE EXPERIENCE OF LEADING

RE: MY DAUGHTER, CHEMISTRY PEER LEADER

OSCAR G. GABALDÓN, JR.

Ever since she was a child, Cynthia has been curious about the world around her. She has always been determined to understand her surroundings and learn how those surroundings interface and connect to her everyday experiences. Though she has always been a patient, yet avid and proactive, student of life in general, she was in many ways reserved and cautious throughout her primary and secondary school years.

When she embarked on her collegiate education, she continued to exhibit a keen interest in a wide array of subject matters, with a special attraction to scientific arenas, particularly chemistry, biology, and mathematics. Her unwavering attention to detail and her passion for science have served her exceedingly well in her understanding and mastering of many of the academic challenges the sciences involve. However, when she was afforded the opportunity to become a peer leader in the Chemistry Department at the University of Texas at El Paso, a whole new dimension of growth blossomed for Cynthia.

Her family, and others who know her, observed the wonderful positive changes that Cynthia demonstrated once she began peer leading. Adding to her already successful handling of chemistry and scientific successes and abilities, it was quite evident that Cynthia's self-esteem and self-confidence reached new levels, particularly as she undertook this facilitator of learning role. She quickly engaged in a new level of excitement for science, and especially a passionate and genuine concern for wanting others to learn chemistry as best as possible. Her long-established ability to articulate her ideas in a clear and concise manner noticeably became more enhanced. We noticed her leadership style becoming more defined and established as one whereby she has gained the respect of her students by her impressive knowledge of the subject matter, as well as her observable sincere care and empathy for her students. Her desire for the students to successfully learn became a strong driving force that has continued to propel her towards more creative and innovative ways of teaching and encouraging her students to succeed. Her Socratic approach to teaching has allowed her students to better capture the essence of the concepts, skills, and lessons she teaches. Her didactic assignments to her students have been quite effective in refining her students' ability to apply her teachings. Her mentoring and coaching skills have become more pronounced the more she utilizes them in the classroom setting or outside the classroom when helping students better grasp and apply the lessons she provides them in class.

Undoubtedly, both Cynthia and the university have mutually benefited by what each has to offer the other. From this experience, Cynthia has grown to new levels of leadership, maturity, understanding, self-confidence, and overall a better well-rounded human being. Though she consistently has striven for excellent outcomes in whatever she undertakes to do, becoming a peer leader has helped her to pursue and achieve even more admirable levels of excellence in all she does and all she pursues. The university, on the other

hand, has benefited from the high caliber of peer leading quality Cynthia has brought to its students and the institution in general.

Cordially,
Oscar G. Gabaldón, Jr.

Editor's Note: The Honorable Judge Oscar Gabaldón serves as the Associate Judge for the 65th Judicial District Family Court, and presides over the Child Protection Court, which handles all the cases of child abuse and neglect (CPS), and related cases, such as CPS adoptions, filed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in El Paso County, Texas.

Judge Gabaldón was educated in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, in México, in El Paso and Houston, Texas, and in Denver, Colorado, where he studied philosophy, mathematics, and Greek language studies. Judge Gabaldón holds a Bachelor of Arts degree (1979), with honors, in Philosophy, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree (1982).

Cite This Article as: Gabaldon, O.G. (2012). Re: My daughter, Chemistry Peer Leader. Peer-Led Team Learning: The experience of leading. Online at <http://www.pltlis.org>. Originally published in *Progressions: The Peer-Led Team Learning Project Newsletter*, Volume 10, Number 1, Fall 2008.