

PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

LEADING WORKSHOPS AT BROOKLYN INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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New York City College of Technology (NYCCT) students who took the Peer Leader Training course at the City College of New York (CCNY) via videoconferencing have had an opportunity to tutor students in mathematics at the Brooklyn International High School. Once a week during the Spring 2002 semester, these students helped prepare 9th and 10th grade students for the Mathematics Regents A* examination. This experience gave students the opportunity to apply the Workshop model at a local high school.

These NYCCT students are also enrolled in the Teacher Preparation Program at CCNY (Ellen Goldstein, Co-PI). As part of the program, they are required to take the Peer Leader Training course as an introductory course to teaching. These students are mostly associate-degree computer science majors interested in teaching mathematics. They then are encouraged to transfer to CCNY and complete their Bachelor's degree.

The Brooklyn International High School, located at the foot of the Manhattan Bridge in Brooklyn, New York, is a small public high school for recent immigrant students who are beginning to learn English. The mission of the school is "to assist new learners of English in developing their linguistic, intellectual, cultural, and collaborative abilities so that they become active participants in today's interdependent worlds." One of the special features of the school is that there are small classes that have thematically-linked instruction in a collaborative environment.

The Workshop leaders felt that the Peer Leader Training course had provided them with the knowledge and techniques needed to work with these high school students. The Workshop leaders were prepared to deal with diverse learning styles and encouraged collaborative problem-solving among the students. They were equipped with the teaching and learning techniques necessary to create a supportive environment that helped each student build understanding in mathematics.

Yong Chen found the session on cultural diversity especially helpful because of the student population at the International High School. Yong is one of the first Mathematics Workshop leaders who took the Peer Leader Training course in Spring 2001. He says, "It helped me understand that as an educator one should understand one's students' cultural backgrounds, because it will be useful when one teaches students of different races in the same classroom. Then based on this awareness, I was able to choose what kind of curriculum and activity they comprehended and needed."

Beili Wang, another Mathematics Workshop leader, changed her method in tutoring after she took the training course. She states, “The communication skills that I had learned in the Peer Leader Training course have changed my approach in tutoring students. As a tutor, I have learned that listening requires more energy than speaking. By listening to a student’s explanations, tutors can identify a student’s thinking process. And by asking the right questions, tutors can motivate students to be more active in learning. It is very hard for tutors to achieve this goal. For example, most of time, I feel I have the intentions to speak and to give hints quickly. At the Brooklyn International High School, if more students want to go to the board to solve the math problems collaboratively, I feel the more successful my tutoring session is.”

The opportunity to work in a high school provided several Mathematics Workshop leaders a rich experience in applying what they have learned, which will serve them well in their future teaching careers.

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**Passing Regents’ exams is required in New York State to obtain a high school diploma.*

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