The Peer Leader



Issue No. 6

April 2020

- Message from the President
- Publications Regarding Workshops Online
- In the past month: Peer Leaders' Experiences Online
- Bringing Workshop Sessions Online An Example

Message from the President

Dear PLTLIS community,

I am writing this message on day twelve (April 2, 2020) of the official stay-at-home order in Illinois. Like most of you, I've adapted my routines and shifted all my work remotely. I'm missing the daily face to face interactions, but I'm grateful for the ability to communicate with people in multiple ways.

The PLTLIS Board of Directors decided to postpone the Annual Conference at El Paso for one year. We realized in mid-March that the uncertainty regarding travel bans in most colleges and universities and different situations by state regarding containment measures for COVID-19 made it unrealistic for people to plan for the event.

The Ninth Annual Conference will take place June 3-5, 2021, with Pre-Conference sessions to be held on Wednesday, June 2, 2021. If you were in the process of preparing/submitting an abstract for the annual conference, the deadline is now February 28, 2021.

Recognizing that for many of our programs the transition to online/remote PLTL can present many challenges we offer a case study of the transition steps to online workshops at San Jose City College (San Jose, California). Also below is a list of publications regarding online workshops (also known as Cyber PLTL, or cPLTL), starting with the original efforts of Pratibha Varma-Nelson and colleagues in this area, and sharing the experiences of Florida International University and others. And most importantly, Peer Leaders at four campuses share their experiences over the past month with online workshops, adapt ing quickly to a new way of supporting their students.

The first forum topic encourages you to share what you have learned about the online practice of PLTL.

We are announcing the next step for PLTLIS: Forums! Join the discussions HERE!

Don't have an account? Register HERE.

The first forum topic encourages you to share what you have learned about the online practice of PLTL. This is the first of many topics that the Forum will address with the expectations that peer-led team learning will continually evolve with your input and suggestions.

As we wait for this pandemic to slow down, let's support each other by staying connected and helping our students and Peer Leaders continue with their educational paths in a successful way.

Warm regards,

Marcelo

Marcelo Sztainberg

Northeastern Illinois University

President, Board of Directors

WWW.PLTLIS.ORG

Publications regarding Workshops Online (Cyber PLTL) - Listed on www.pltlis.org

Available From Conference Proceedings

PLTL in Pajamas: Lessons Learned

Jose Luis Alberte, Alberto Cruz, Nataly Rodriguez, Thomas Pitzer

https://pltlis.org/wp-content/uploads/2012%20Proceedings/PDFs/Alberte-2012.pdf

Developing Hybrid PLTL Workshops for an Intermediate Programming Course

Steve Leon, Alice Turchaninova, Eloy Perez, Israel Cervantes, Fernando Rodarte

https://pltlis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2015-Leon.pdf

Listed in Publications

Skagen, D., McCollum, B., Morsch, L., & Shokoples, B. (2018). Developing communication confidence and professional identity in chemistry through international online collaborative learning. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, 19, 567-582. DOI: 10.1039/C7RP00220C

Feder, E., Khan, I., Mazur G., Vernon, T., Janke, T., Newbrough, J., Shuck, L., Zhu, L., & Varma-Nelson, P. V. (2016). Accessing Collaborative Online Learning with Mobile Technology in Cyber Peer-Led Team Learning. *EDUCAUSE Review Online*, *51*, 2.

Smith, J., Wilson, S.B., Banks, J., Zhu, L., & Varma-Nelson, P. (2014). Replicating Peer-led Team Learning in Cyberspace: Research, Opportunities, and Challenges. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 51(6), 714-740.

Pittenger (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Pittenger

AL[Author]&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=24052653), A.L., and LimBybliw

(http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=LimBybliw

AL[Author]&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=24052653), A.L. (2013). Peer-Led Team Learning in an Online

Course on Controversial Medication Issues and the US Healthcare System. American Journal

of Pharmaceutical Education, 77, 7, 150. doi: 10.5688/ajpe777150.

Varma-Nelson, P., & Banks, J. V. (2013). <u>PLTL: Tracking the trajectory from face-to-face to on-line environments</u>. In T. Holme, M. Cooper, and P. Varma-Nelson (Eds.), *Trajectories of chemistry education innovation and reform* (pp. 95-110). Washington, DC: American Chemical Society.

Mauser, K., Sours, J. Banks, J., Newbrough, R., Janke, T., Shuck, L., Zhu, L., Ammerman, G., Varma-Nelson, P. (2011). Cyber Peer-Led Team Learning (cPLTL): Development and Implementation. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, *34*, 4.

 $\frac{http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolum/CyberPeerLedTeamLearningcPLTLD/242669$

In the past month: Peer Leaders' Experiences Online

San Jose City College, San Jose, California



1 - Ha Pham (SJCC Peer Leader, Chemistry)

Ha Pham (SJCC Peer Leader, Chemistry)

This is my second year of leading Chemistry workshops, so I could really compare the face -to-face and the virtual meetings experience. A good point for leading Zoom virtual workshops is that it is more convenient in the fact that I do not have to travel to get to the workshops. I commute to SJCC by bus so I normally have to plan my workshops accordingly to the bus schedule in addition to my class schedule. Therefore, the time options for the workshops are very limited which is sometimes inconvenient for my students.

However, since this is a sudden switch from doing workshops in person to doing it online, there are some problems that I have encountered. Maintaining a good atmosphere during the workshop has been a challenge. I understand that some students prefer not to be seen on camera, but that makes it really hard to read their body language to make sure that they are following with the materials. Additionally, there are limitations to converse on Zoom such as poor sound quality which reduces drastically the interactions between students as well as students to me. Overall, although leading online workshops is quite a difficult task since it is very different from a normal face-to-face meeting, it is also an opportunity to learn, adapt, and grow as a Peer Leader.





David Arroyo (NEIU Peer Leader, Computer Science)

The switch to remote peer leading went relatively smooth for me. We had a meeting regarding zoom and how to use it, then we continued as normal. I personally enjoy the remote workshops. I feel that more students are more willing to communicate via online rather than in person, which makes our workshops more interactive. We also encouraged students to share their screens so we could go

through their code to help debug, and other little things involving technology found online. So, it has been very funutilizing technology online that makes things run just as easy as in person meetings.

The main downside to online workshops would be trouble shooting problems. Sometimes technology does not like to work and troubleshooting on a small-time frame is stressful. Being in person is more reliable than online by a long shot.

I think the key things to making this remote switch are communication and flexibility. Communication to ensure everyone is on the same page and students do not feel confused regarding this switch. Flexibility because there will be problems, but we need to be able to address and fix those problems to keep things running smooth.



Patrick Torkhan (NEIU Peer Leader, Computer Science)

This was my first semester as a peer leader for Programming I, which was a little nerve racking. I thought this would be a great idea because I got to mentor and coach other students to become more comfortable and confident in programming. Before Spring break started, the class met on Thursday afternoons for an hour of face to face interaction. But this all came to a stop due to the horrible pandemic known as Covid-19. Thanks to Professor Porps, we were able to get things under control and fast. The switch from face to face to being completely remote was a little difficult at first, but as Peer Leaders we knew that we would have to readjust and overcome these obstacles.

We met every week with Professor Porps and the other peer leaders to talk about issues and how we could make the learning experience better. As Peer Leaders we are learning a lot too. For example, in the last week of peer leading we were asked if we wanted to write practice questions for the students to study before finals. Not only did the class benefit but so did we as peer leaders.

As Peer Leaders we are learning a lot too.

Even though I enjoy peer leading in a class room, there are a lot of tools provided working remotely to benefit the students' learning. For example, we are able to screen share directly, use a white board to brainstorm, use video camera and mic for face to face, and if not there is a chat box to make sure everyone is following along. These advantages of teaching online helped a lot and made it even better in some areas. For example, when we use the screen share and white board we can make sure everyone is

on the right page and following at the same pace. We are also available for questions and help after the workshop has ended which benefits the students' learning experience. Everything considered, we as Peer Leaders with the guidance of Professor Porps were able to handle and overcome the obstacles of peer leading from home.



Joanna Vaklin (NEIU Peer Leader, Computer Science)

When I first heard that peer leading was to continue online, I was excited and nervous about the change. The new structure was such that my PLTL partner and I each individually hosted two Zoom meetings with six peers from the workshop. The challenging part was adapting to a new type of learning environment. Since the beginning of the semester, our classroom at Northeastern became a familiar place where my peers and I could come together and problem solve. Sitting down next to them and looking at their writing allowed me to get a glimpse into their process of writing code. This form of face to-face interaction is important to me.

When remote learning began, I had trouble navigating my way towards the usual dynamic we had in the classroom, and after some of the workshops I felt disconnected from my peers, especially since I couldn't see them if they didn't have a webcam.

We each shared how our workshops were structured and helpful tips for keeping our peers engaged.

Although the participation of some of my peers decreased, I noticed a lot of them becoming leaders during our remote workshops. They would share their ideas willingly and speak much more than they used to in our workshop setting. The sessions became more collaborative with the screen sharing feature. I would pull up the problem worksheet and we would mark it together during our brainstorming of the code.

Our PLTL team started having Friday morning meetings to share our experiences of our remote workshops that week. We each shared how our workshops were structured and helpful tips for keeping our peers engaged. These meetings with my team had a hand in building my confidence in leading the workshop.

The switch from in person to remote learning has been an important challenge for me in peer leading. I learned that although there are aspects of interaction that are lost, there are other skills that arise in these situations.

University of Texas of Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas



Juliana Kikumoto Dias (UTPB Peer Leader, Chemistry)

I believe that having online workshop has challenged us Peer Leaders to broaden our communications skills even more. Since we don't have the face-to-face contact anymore it shows the need to reach out to individuals and offer our support. The online workshop calls for the need of an even more engaging and dynamic set of activities since online it is a lot easier to lose the focus or interest in what is going on on the other side of the screen. Overall, this change has helped us to be more creative with activities and helped us create closer relationships with the students because of the need for more one -on-one interactions.



Chao Dong, Ph.D. (UTPB Assistant Professor, Chemistry)

It is challenging for PLTL workshops to transfer from face -to-face style to online. However, if we prepare well, for example, design of video and questions of exploration, students' participation and learning outcomes can be improved further.



Fernando Montalvillo (UTPB Peer Leader, General Chemistry)

- 1. If they participate and are engaged, they learn as much or even more than in a face-to-face workshop.
- 2. However, when they do not participate, it is even worse than when they don't participate in a face-to-face workshop.
- 3. The students told me they like it because they understand the concepts better because they can practice with the Peer Leader in online workshops.



HaoChe Peng (UTPB Peer Leader, Chemistry)

The transition to online for Peer Led workshops was tough at the beginning, but as Peer Leaders get used to the online techniques, it is getting better and better. The benefits of having online workshops are that students do not need to come to school and students are able to get familiar to online meetings for future uses. The difficulties are that it is hard for Peer Leaders to see if students are participating in workshop and if students are confused in answering questions, it is hard for us to know imme diately.



Meinar Sheila (UTPB Peer Leader, Chemistry)

What I like about Online Workshop is how students are more comfortable in participating in the activities because they are behind a screen, so it is easier for them to open up and participate. However, I find it difficult to reach them during the session, mostly because of technical difficulties, so it tends to take up much of our time. Also, students aren't able to get the hands-on experience of learning through Explorations (laboratory sessions) and activities done in workshop that require our presence. Thank you



Nicky Vu (UTPB Peer Leader, Chemistry)

Workshop is a wonderful learning tool for many students. Students who are just coming into University can have an easier transition by going to workshop, by making friends or learning about the environment by talking with peers. The environment that workshop takes place in usually has a more relaxed feel than the traditional [lecture] classroom, so it could be a wonderful place for high stress/anxiety students to have a chance to relax and let the material settle in better. With the workshop model, it can hit most, if not all, of the styles of learning. This would also help students figure out which style is best for them, whether it be kinesthetic, visual, auditory, or some mix of these. That's pretty much what I have to say about the workshop model in-person.

Online is not the best way to approach workshop. The model is mainly for face -to-face and requires a lot of interaction between the peer leader and the peers. Participation is harder to achieve when the students have to mute themselves and must unmute when talking. It creates gaps and makes for jagged communication. The jagged communication can also frustrate some people which can make some participants irritated. There can also be a mindset among people where, if you're at home you should have more time for things. That may not be the case for a lot of students, and some may not realize that for others. There's also the concern that some students may not be technologically inclined and may be having a hard time figuring out the new online system and learning styles. In the case of this quarantine event, like the one we are currently in, there's also a lot of psychological issues to address that some people may not be aware they may have or may have developed. This can cause tension in the workshop meeting online, especially when not addressed. In summary, I personally am not for the online model. Workshop is mainly focused around in-person face-to-face learning with active participation from all students. Online hinders that model. I am for online learning though; it is a wonderful tool where one can learn at a pace that is comfortable for oneself. I just do not believe that online is the best tool for workshop, but online is a great tool for those who know how to work it or if it suits their learning style best.

University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, Texas



Shawnan Chen (UTEP Peer Leader, Chemistry)

Online workshops have been both really fun and difficult. Having immediate access to the internet makes showing content a lot easier than in the physical workshop. I can easily pull up something from the internet and draw directly on it for my visual learner students. A downside is that my students are not very talkative, but I overcome that issue using the polling option on Blackboard Ultra. I can put up a question and I can get anonymous responses.



Kevin Gonzalez (UTEP Peer Leader, Chemistry)

Preparation Before Workshop:

I made a quick Powerpoint with examples of the Direct and Indirect method to solve for the enthalpy change during chemical reaction, and I sent the students a video from Youtube (Professor Dave, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q2u5sj4V00) to watch before workshop. I picked some questions from the videos assigned to watch every week to use for my weekly quizzes. I also use quizizz.com as a reinforcing activity after completing a module so the students know which concepts they haven't quite understood, and they can ask questions after the quiz game.

During Workshop:

I worked out a couple of examples on my own whiteboard showing them the process and asking them the next step. Then they either used their microphones or the chat to share their ideas. Once we were done with the examples, I divided the workshop into two groups of six students; I placed the less participative students into one group along with me, and the rest of the students with my co-Peer Leader (shadow). I would still go back and forth between the groups, and I had to almost force my group to participate, because some of them had different excuses for not using the microphone; they ended up using the shared board, and some talked while others wrote on the chat. After they completed a problem, two students were chosen from each group to explain and solve their problem. Some of the problems were solved individually. I asked the students to send their answer directly to me, so I could check who was contributing to their groups and paying attention to the examples.

Having the students participate in quiz games helped them discover what they didn't know about the material covered in previous or current sessions, because many times it is hard to know what to study if you don't know what you don't know.



Chelsea Moreno (UTEP Assistant Head Peer Leader, Chemistry)

Online workshops have pushed the Peer Leaders to encourage more participation in the workshops. We are not capable of performing our normal activities, so group work and workshop students leading discussion are much of what we rely on. Getting students to understand the information is far more important now than before, because they no longer have the opportunity to sit side by side with their Peer Leader and ask questions.



Danielle Narimissaei (UTEP Peer Leader, Chemistry)

The move to introduce online chemistry workshops has definitely been a challenge not only for the students, but for the peer leaders as well. Having to deliver information to students virtually has its pros and cons. Benefits include allowing the students to be able to ask questions and think about what they do/don't understand fully. I have personally experienced my students asking me questions during workshop by speaking through their microphone and reaching out to me via text message more than in the physical classroom. I have also noticed a higher rate of attendance and engaging participation in the online forum. This is most likely due to students being in the comfort of their own home, rather than being distracted by friends on campus. The method of content delivery I utilize is via a PowerPoint presentation, reflecting information from the workbook used on this campus (written by the Peer Leaders themselves). I work out examples by hand on GoodNotes, a virtual notebook. Students seem to follow along very well with this method and feedback has thus far been positive. However, like any online forum, there are some who experience technical difficulties. Students may not be able to join on time due to poor Wi-Fi, computer issues, etc. To try and combat this, I always provide my students with an audio recording of that day's workshop by posting it on the Blackboard shell created for my workshop section. I believe that the overall online workshop has improved PLTL and allows all peer leaders to express new and creative methods of information delivery.

Bringing Workshop Sessions Online - An Example

Thanks to the team at San Jose City College for the following information. These instructions were sent to faculty and to Peer Leaders mid-March. The team includes Claudia Amador and the SJCC Metas Program, as well as Madeline Adamczeski, (Professor and PLTL Program Coordinator), and Lucas Randall, Claudia Barajas, Peiman Gheibi, and Evelyn Rojas.

Resources for PLTL Workshops still running but now online!

SJCC has been directed to do its best to transition PLTL workshops (as well as SI and tutoring) from F2F to the virtual online format. You can find detailed info in Claudia's attachment and email below, on how PLs were trained and more.

As indicated in the email disseminated to PLTL faculty below, we are all in this together and so if these resources can assist faculty and PLs in other PLTL programs, please share and include members of SJCC when possible.

Stay safe, Madeline

Message to Faculty

Dear SJCC Faculty,

As we transition to provide ONLINE Peer-Led-Team-Learning (PLTL) and Supplemental Instruction workshops to SJCC students due to our current situation, I wanted to send you the following information and I would like to ask for your support to send this to your students or posting it on CANVAS [educational platform].

Information for students:

ALL PLTL/SI Workshops are still running on REGULAR schedule through ZOOM. Each peer leader created a ZOOM Meeting ID for each of their session. The zoom meeting ID is composed of a 9-digit number that can be found under the Updates column on the PLTL or SI web page.

If you have a cell phone or iPad, you can download the zoom application and it is only a two-step process to join your workshop at the scheduled time. If you do not have a cell phone or iPad, you are still able to access the session through a computer. Review the attached PDF document that gives you step-by-step instructions on how to join your workshop.

I recommend you find a quiet place at home when you are attending the workshop online.

I appreciate your patience as we transition into this modality for the next couple of days and I would love to hear any feedback you have about the model. Feel free to email me at claudia.amador@sjcc.edu.

If I missed anyone, feel free to forward them this email.

Have a nice day!

Claudia Amador

Subject: Update! Virtual PLTL Workshops will begin tomorrow and will be facilitated by our outstanding PLs who were recently trained to both open a cccconfer Zoom account and use Zoom white board

Greetings PLTL faculty,

While we are pulling together, supporting one another, and doing our best to transition instruction from F2F to an online mode in order to hit the ground running starting tomorrow, so are our hard-working Peer Leaders. Please help us inform students in our PLTL-designated courses that PLTL workshops will resume in an online mode beginning tomorrow with a nearly identical schedule as prior to the Covid-19 disruption.

It is my distinct honor to inform you that this past Thursday and Friday, Claudia Amador (Metas Program coordinator) provided in-person training in Zoom for our Peer Leaders (PLs). Claudia's 3/14 email below, which contains the link to her video instructing PLs (who were unable to attend the in-person training) how to set up a Zoom account and use whiteboard, is impressive and I highly recommend that you view it as well. Her detailed instructions, found in both the attachment and link to the video will also inform you how PLs and their/our students, in their virtual PLTL workshops, will be held accountable while maintaining the integrity of this highly intensive student support service.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to view these materials and please**continue to both provide weekly support and mentor your DS-98 PLs** during this especially difficult time. Again, please help us share the info herein with your students and faculty.

I take comfort in knowing that I have the privilege of working with you all and that we are all in this together. As we move forward, I welcome your questions, suggestions or comments.

Lastly, a SHOUT OUT and BIG THANKS to especially Claudia, as well as key veteran PLs and Metas professional staff who supported this effort.

With much gratitude,

Madeline

Madeline Adamczeski, Ph.D.

PLTL Program Coordinator

San Jose City College

Instructions to the Peer Leaders on how to create a zoom account, share screen, use whiteboard, etc.

Hello PLTL/SI Leaders,

UPDATE: As of yesterday, the SJECCD announced the following:

"San José City College, Evergreen Valley College, the Milpitas College Extension, and the SJECCD District Office will suspend all in-person operations and services starting at 5pm, Monday, March 16, through Friday, April 3. All employees are asked to work remotely during this period, with the exception of some employees who provide essential services that cannot be delivered remotely or who may be called to report in person to assist with other duties as required. Students will also receive information this evening regarding the operating status of the district. All employees, including student workers, will maintain their respective schedule and will not experience any loss or reduction of pay due to the closure. We know this is not ideal, but our priority has to be safety and we will get through this together."

What does this means for you? It means that all workshops and prep-time have to be done remotely. I appreciate you all working very hard the last couple of days to transition into zoom. If you have not created your Zoom Meeting IDs for your workshops, please create those soon and send them to me. I am finalizing the schedules on the web and I am working to send emails to all faculty we work with.

ZOOM Meeting IDs: I need those soon, please send them to me. Thanks

PLTL/SI Timesheet Hours: Also, please continue to log your hours as regular, pre-time, workshops, class time for SI, and anything related to your leader role. There will not be "any loss or reduction of pay due to the closure." You are still required to enter all your hours on MyWeb by the 25th of this month. I will need all of you to send me your paper timesheet to review and approve hours. If you were not on myweb last pay period, log in to your myweb and see if you have access to submitting hours. If you do not have access, let me know ASAP.

Review: as we transition to the new modality, I highly encourage you to review the following resource to get ideas on how to make your Zoom workshop better

https://magnapublications.emlnk1.com/lt.php?s=588c901d67cc716da49af99b4922245d&i=1434A1602 A15A46200

Resource Folder on Google Drive: I created a folder on our Metas google drive where you can directly post support material for all. Feel free to add resources that you feel will benefit everyone in this folder.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1|EyTFWABUNO|PH40WnkrFyKm31QLm4zh?usp=sharing

Small whiteboards and markers: I still have not received the small whiteboards. Because campus is closed, I will see a way to get them sent home and I will be coordinating with you, individually, to give it

to you. I either drop it off at your house, coordinate a central location, to be honest, I have not thought out a plan yet. But I will.

If I missed anything, let me know.

Again, THANK YOU!!!!! you have been wonderful to work with and I appreciate your collaboration during these times. Please email me any questions.

Stay home, stay safe,

Claudia Amador

Note: Virtual PLTL Workshops are facilitated by our outstanding Peer Leaders who were trained to both open a cccconfer Zoom account and use Zoom white board

Hello PLTL/SI Leaders,

Thank you for your patience. It has taken me a little longer than expected to get this done. This email contains two things. ONE - a pdf document that you can share with your students on how to access your workshops and TWO - a video of the training we did yesterday.

Zoom Video Training for PLTL/SI/SJCC Tutors

(https://cccconfer.zoom.us/rec/share/yNVMFJPuzztlGZGU1GLUUKAjQt3bT6a8g3BNq6IMxRrW7sB373vI 7 Yl1-NSTeQ3)

Also, for those who, after reviewing this video will create their meeting IDs, send them to me so I can update them on the website. I say this on the video but I thought to add it here.

In the email you send to your students, please copy me. You can send them this message if you like:

He	llo	,

Thank you for your patience as we transition to a new modality during this time of COVID-19. The expected timeline to provide PLTL/SI tutoring online is from Monday, March 16 to Monday, April 6. This information may change, always refer to the <u>SJCC page</u> for up to date information.

If you do not have access to high speed internet at home, Comcast has low-price internet services for students. Check this link for more info https://www.xfinity.com/student.

There are a lot of online tutoring services available to you but in this email I am attaching a step by step instructions on how to access my workshop.

Again, thank you for your patience and if you have any questions, feel free to contact the METAS Center at metas.staff.sjcc@gmail.com.

Sincerely,	
Have a nice	weekend, stay safe.

Claudia A.