PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING

Announcing PLTLIS Workbooks and Shop Online

2021 Annual Conference Online

Peer Leaders' Experiences

Message from the President

Dear PLTLIS community,

The origin of the word "crisis" comes from the Greek word Krisis, meaning "turning point in a disease." Probably very appropriate to the current times. As we put 2020 in the rearview mirror here is to the hope that we move past the turning point into healing, recovering and continuing to grow. PLTL programs did a superb job last year, adapting to dire circumstances. We all learned that we are capable of more when it comes to helping our peers do better.

Our best wishes on behalf of the PLTLIS Board for a successful 2021!

Warm regards,

Marcelo

Marcelo Sztainberg

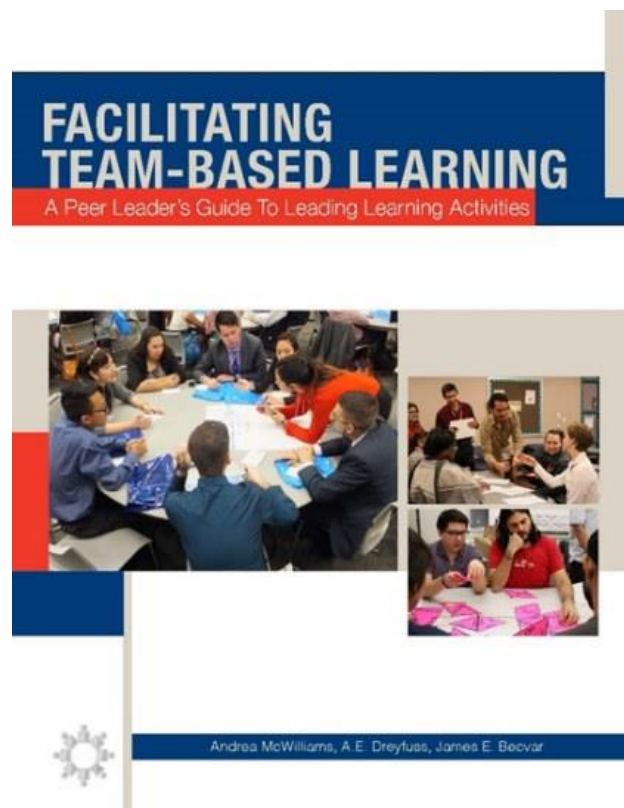Northeastern Illinois University

President, Board of Directors

WWW.PLTLIS.ORG

PLTLIS PRESS OPENS ONLINE SHOPPING

Eight workbooks are available through the Society's online store:

https://shop.pltlis.org

FACILITATING TEAM-BASED LEARNING
A Peer Leader's Guide To Leading Learning Activities

Andrea McWilliams, A.E. Dreyfuss, James E. Becvar

FACILITANDO EL APRENDIZAJE EN EQUIPOS

Una Guía de ayuda al Líder de Grupo para Facilitar Actividades de Aprendizaje

Andrea McWilliams, A.E. Dreyfuss, James E. Becvar

Traducido por
Daniel I. Carbajal Ida, Ana Fraiman, Marianne S. Mann,
Chelsea J. Moreno, Edna Tepezano, Paulina R. Torres

GENERAL CHEMISTRY I

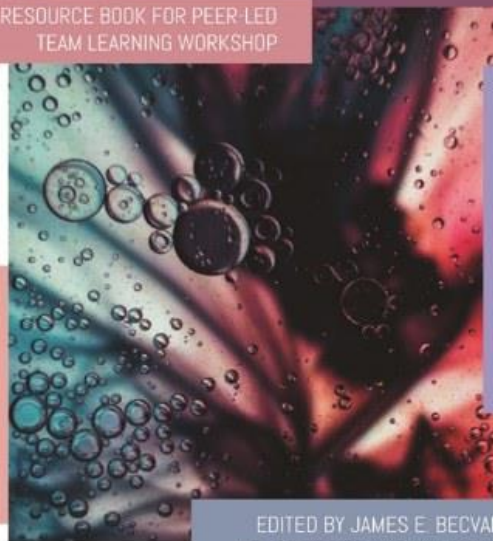RESOURCE BOOK FOR PEER LED TEAM LEARNING WORKSHOP

EDITED BY JAMES E. BECVAR,
A.E. DREYFUSS AND ANA FRAIMAN
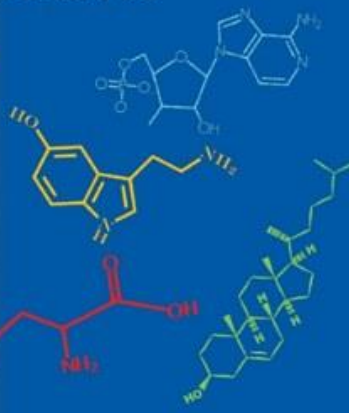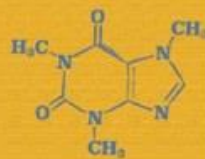
GENERAL CHEMISTRY II

RESOURCE BOOK FOR PEER-LED
TEAM LEARNING WORKSHOP

EDITED BY JAMES E. BECVAR,
A.E. DREYFUSS AND ANA FRAIMAN

Organic Chemistry I

Peer-Led Team Learning
Workbook

Emily Fioramonte, Paras Mehta, Alexandra Gokee, Brenna Dooley
Northeastern Illinois University
Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Ana Fraiman

Introduction to General, Organic, and Biological Chemistry

With Focus on Organic and Biological Chemistry

Bergamide-producing sponge. Jaspis cf. coriacea
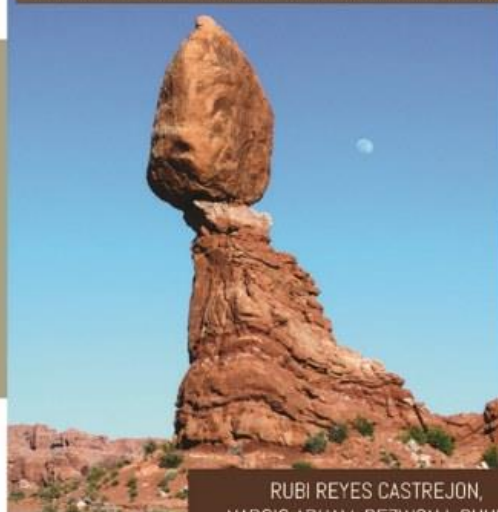
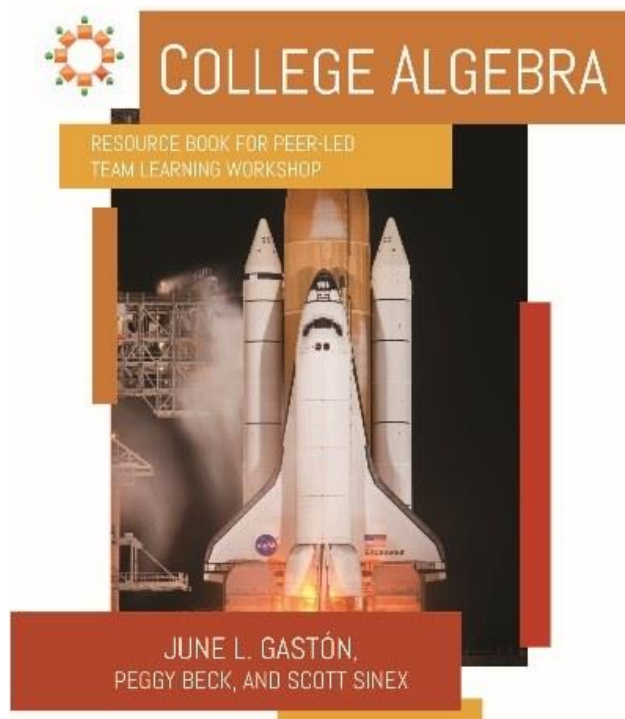Jessica Snyder | Rupa Luitel | Jourdan Aguirre | Madeline Adamczeski

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PHYSICS I
ALGEBRA-BASED

RESOURCE BOOK FOR PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING WORKSHOP

RUBI REYES CASTREJON,
NARGIS ADHAM, REZWON I. BHUIYAN

The Peer-Led Team Learning International Society now publishes learning materials to support student-facilitated learning. These materials develop the means to financially support PLTL programs and support the PLTLIS mission, to foster student learning through peer-led teams by supporting practitioners and institutions. Workbooks contain intellectual property donated by practitioners to support student-facilitated learning. Workbooks organize the content of PLTL workshops, provide sequence direction for instructors, and promote discussion and collaboration.

For more information on developing workbooks, contact us at info@pltlis.org.

Crossing Boundaries, Building Networks

9th Annual Conference to be Hosted Online June 2-5, 2021

The concept of training undergraduates as effective facilitators of learning is becoming a popular transformative pedagogical strategy and a driving force in educational research. In an ever-changing global landscape, it is crucial for educators to build a network of practitioners and communicate with educators from different cultural backgrounds. Building international connections, especially for the Peer Leader, will help disseminate exciting new practices and opportunities for learning and enriching the quality of the student and instructor experience.

COME ONE AND ALL!

FROM ANYWHERE TOGETHER!

The Peer-Led Team Learning International Society's Ninth Annual Conference provides a forum for practitioners and researchers, including faculty, learning specialists/developers, administrators, Peer Leaders, teachers, and others, using various forms of peer-led learning.

Abstracts from all areas of practice of peer-led learning are welcomed. Submissions for oral presentations and workshops are encouraged to be interactive. All submissions will be peer-reviewed. Submissions must be original contributions on topics covered under broad areas but not limited to:

- Sustainability of PLTL campus programs

- Critical thinking, meta-cognition, and PLTL

- Discourse analysis including cyberPLTL

- PLTL and the sense of belonging

- Workplace skills development and PLTL

- Implementations in non-STEM disciplines

- Other topics

Submit your abstract by April 19th for the 9th Annual Conference!

https://pltlis.org/call-for-papers/

Pre-Conference Workshop: Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021

Peer Leaders' Experiences

Peer Leaders from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) presented four asynchronous videos at the INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR PEER LEARNING held online 27-28 January 2021, sponsored by SI-PASS (Supplemental Instruction – Peer Assisted Study Sections), Lund University, Sweden. One of the presentations, *Workbooks Support Professional Development of Undergraduates,* is on the homepage at www.pltlis.org!

Florida International University, Miami, Florida

1 - Amanda Cantor-Sanchez

I started peer leading in the Fall of 2017, and it has been just about the best decision I've made in my college career. PLTL gave me so many opportunities to come out of my shell, and not only have I learned how to talk to people, but also how to listen. Talking with my peers and helping them understand the topic of the week has given me the skill to be able to know exactly where they're going to get stumped, and it has developed my skill at helping them think through that confusion. I'm so grateful for that, as it's made it easier for me to recognize when I'm confused learning a new topic. Sometimes, when studying, I catch myself leading myself through a complicated problem by reviewing the simple material, building up to the complicated, just like I would in a session with my peers.

Before becoming a Peer Leader, I was extremely quiet, and I did not have the confidence to speak in a group presentation, nor a small group of peers who were relying on me to help them understand the topic of the week. Over the past three years, I have become increasingly confident in front of crowds, to the point where, when I was asked if I could go recruit new peer leaders in 200-person lecture halls I was not only confident I could do it, but excited for the opportunity to share my experience with so many students.

I'm so grateful for that, as it's made it easier for me to recognize when I'm confused learning a new topic.

My favorite part about leading is when my peers are thinking about what they don't understand. You can see it in their eyes that they know the answer, that they're so close, but they just don't have that one puzzle piece that makes the whole picture clear. So they sit in silence for a moment and I ask them a simple question. Finally, a stadium light goes off in the back of their heads where they finally understand

the concept we've been talking about for the past half hour. Watching them have that eureka! moment is the most precious moment I've experienced with my classmates, and I love helping them achieve it.

- Chair of Recruitment, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) Program

- General Biology I Group Discussion Peer Leader, PLTL Program

- BA Physics, Florida International University

- Adjunct Laboratory Instructor - General Biology I

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois

2 - Obsmara Ulloa

Computer Science Major *Obsmara Ulloa* named Lincoln Academy Student Laureate

The Impact of Peer Leading

Peer leadership is taking peer influence and using it to lead peers to educational resources, helping others form their own paths in academia, as well as develop interests and confidence in their program of study. In the case of computer science, learning programming entirely on your own can be daunting. This obstacle has become even more challenging due to the stay-at-home measures and isolation periods that followed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, transitioning from peer leading in a classroom to peer leading virtually during semesters affected by the pandemic has not deterred me from providing programming workshops for other students and building relationships and community with my professors and fellow peer leaders. I believe this is due to the multifaceted benefits of being a Computer Science Peer Leader at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). Peer leading has led me to discover an interest in teaching, for it is one way in which I can have a positive impact on my university community by guiding my peers to achieve greater computational literacy while cultivating my own independent learning skills.

When Professor Akkady Tchaba initially spoke to me about peer leading with NEIU's Computer Science department, I was excited at the thought of learning how to transfer the concepts from the Programming I course I had just completed to other new programmers. My first semester as a peer leader consisted of learning how to share responsibilities with my fellow co-peer leader for the course and understanding my peers' needs in order to communicate concepts in a manner that made my knowledge of the topic useful to them. In realizing the importance of fostering a learning environment that upholds a clear flow of ideas, I was able to share my familiarity with basic Java programming and become more familiar with the distinct learning styles of other students.

For example, as visuals helped me when originally learning fundamentals like loops and arrays, I was able to present information in formats that made it easier for my peers to see and conceptualize concepts clearly by drawing tables to iterate over rows using loops, as well as describing the structure of an array. This naturally led to a healthy discourse around these topics with students of varying programming backgrounds. During these interactions, the students and I also created connections between the lectures provided by the instructor and the importance of applying learned material to designing algorithms for our weekly workshop activities, which ultimately helped them with their homework assignments. In becoming a peer leader, I have found value in sharing knowledge and learning from the people I get to work within and outside of my university.

Serving as a peer leader has also given me the opportunity to hone other key skills such as setting goals for myself, self-assessing my knowledge gaps, and applying time management to balance my responsibilities as a peer leader with a full-time semester course load, extracurricular activities, and personal goals. Becoming a more active participant in my education developed while I learned to prepare educational resources and refine my delivery of information for my workshops. For instance, when studying new material in other courses I would find myself wondering how I would teach the content to another student, which is one of the ways in which I realized that peer leading meant being part of something much bigger than myself and my own experience as a computer science student at NEIU. My time management skills also saw an improvement, as I made an effort to work on my workshop materials early in the week in order to set aside enough time to develop well-designed facilitation strategies and focus on my other academic responsibilities. My role as a peer leader has reinforced the importance of previously learned topics and transformed my curiosity as a student into an appreciation for facilitating knowledge within any group of enthusiastic individuals I get to work with.

As graduation approaches, my goal is to build on what I have learned as part of my undergraduate studies, which includes my experience as a computer science peer leader, in preparation for the next

stage of my career. Being able to build on what I learned each semester via peer leading gave me the opportunity to apply that knowledge to subsequent semesters, reinforce concepts and share them with other programmers. After receiving my bachelor's degree, I plan to continue learning alongside others and finding value in open collaboration, which I believe is the core purpose of my peer leading experience.

To read more about Obsmara Ulloa, the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate award winner ([read more here](#))