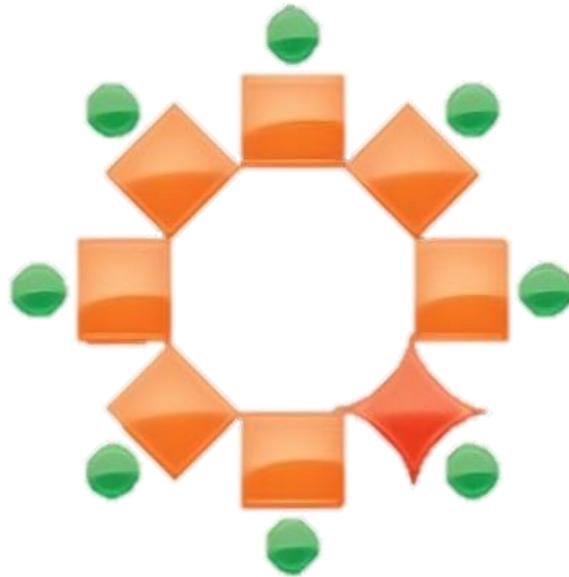


The Peer Leader October 2025



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Issue No. 43 Contact: info@pltlis.org

- 🏆 QMUL Receives UK National Award
- 👤 Profiles: What's Happening with PLTL Programs?
- 📄 Recent Research Papers About PLTL
- 💬 Reflections from a Peer Leader
- 🍏 Inspired by PLTL! Working at Apple
- ✨ Short Takes

Message from the PLTLIS President

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

As we approach All Saints Eve/All Hallows Eve/Halloween, I'm reminded of the lyrics of California Dreamin' (The Mamas and Papas)... "*All the leaves are brown, and the sky is grey.*" Those words certainly apply here in London town at the moment, so I hope that you

have clearer skies and more color wherever in the world you find yourself practicing PLTL. An upside of the fall / autumn season is that it inspires us to reflect on our fantastic annual meeting hosted under the clear blue skies of Los Angeles, at California State University – Dominguez Hills. We left the event meeting more practitioners of PLTL than we had known previously, and everyone agreed that PLTLIS continues to provide a great platform for developing and maintaining our connected community of practice around the world.

Thanks to the PLTLIS Directors (current and past) for all that they do to help the Society adapt and thrive in an increasingly challenging climate. Everyone involved in PLTL in educational institutions around the world benefits from all that the PLTLIS Board and committees do to support PLTL programs and practitioners. To circle back to the major message at this year's annual conference, our strength lies in the networks and connections that we forge to better support our community of practice and deliver toward the vision, mission and strategic goals of the Society (<https://pltlis.org/vision-mission-goals/>).

And for those members of the PLTL community celebrating Diwali, I wish you a Diwali filled with happiness, health and success. May the lights of Diwali illuminate your path to that success and happiness.

Sending every best wish to all readers of this newsletter, as always,

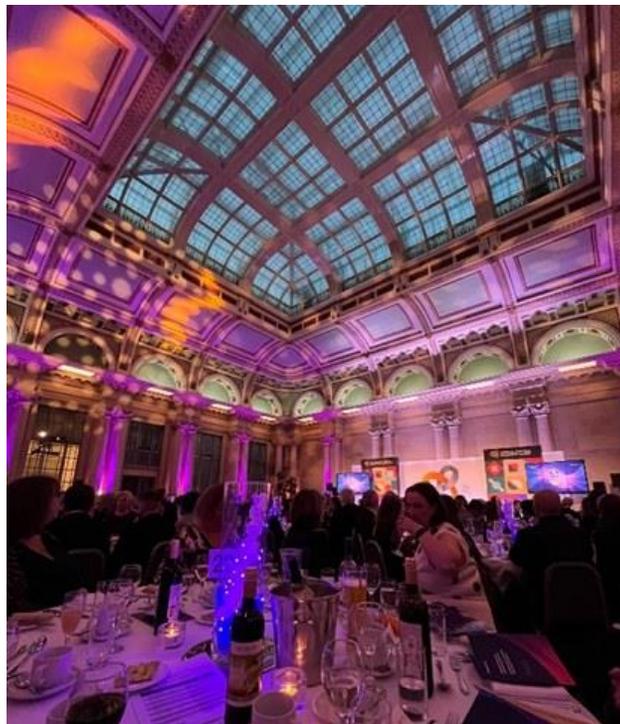
Tony

Prof. Tony Michael

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

www.pltlis.org

 Queen Mary Peer-Led Team Learning (QM-PLTL) Group Receives UK National Teaching Award



On Thursday, September 25, Sally Faulkner and Tony Michael from Queen Mary University of London attended the Advance HE Teaching Excellence Awards where they accepted a national award on behalf of the [Queen Mary Peer-Led Team Learning \(PLTL\) Group](#): Valentina Aparicio, George Borrie, Roussel de Carvalho, Graham Easton, Sally Faulkner, Lesley Howell, Tony Michael, Catherine Mills, Ruth Rose, Redwan Shahid, Hannah Wilton, and Xue Zhou.

[Advance HE](#) is a UK-based, member-led charity, composed of Higher Education (HE) experts, that works with partners around the world to improve higher education for staff, students and society. Advance HE oversees the qualification of all UK staff involved in higher education through the award of

- National Teaching Fellowships (NTF) – recognising individual excellence in higher education
- Collaborative Awards for Teaching Excellence (CATE) – recognising teams of between three and fifteen individuals who have collaborated to achieve teaching excellence.

In September, the QM-PLTL team were only one of 17 teams selected nationally (from over 120 nominees) to be recognized with a CATE. This award reflected the work of the PLTL team not just in embedding PLTL at QMUL but more importantly the work that the team has undertaken nationally to raise the profile of PLTL across the UK and, pertinent to this newsletter, the international contributions that several members of the team have made to work of our Society, PLTLIS.



Sally and Tony were joined for this red-carpet gala evening by Stephanie Marshall, Vice-Principal for Education at QMUL and by Michael Page from the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at QMUL, who received a NTF.

Profiles: What's Happening With PLTL Programs?

Queen Mary University of London

Peer-Led Team Learning continues to grow at Queen Mary University of London, where the approach has become a cornerstone of inclusive, student-led education. This semester, PLTL is running successfully in two core modules [US:courses] within the School of Biological and

Behavioural Sciences and in a programme-level module in the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences. Across all contexts, student engagement has been excellent, and sessions are running smoothly.



During the peer leader training session, participants reflected on what they were most looking forward to and what aspects of the role made them most apprehensive.

This semester we trained 57 new peer leaders. A key feature of our implementation is the comprehensive peer leader training programme, co-designed by staff and students to emphasise inclusive facilitation, leadership development, and reflective practice. The training equips leaders with the confidence and skills to create neurodiversity-affirming, collaborative learning environments that empower all participants to contribute meaningfully. Peer leaders have reported enhanced confidence, communication skills, and a deep sense of community belonging.



Peer Leaders learning about neurodiversity and how to make PLTL sessions welcoming and inclusive for all participants.

Our PLTL initiative recently contributed to our team receiving the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) from Advance HE, recognising the collective impact of our inclusive and values-driven teaching innovations. Building on this success, we are now working with the Queen Mary Academy to explore AFHEA recognition for trained peer leaders, ensuring their pedagogical development and contribution are formally acknowledged.

As the semester progresses, we look forward to capturing further reflections from students and peer leaders to inform ongoing evaluation and to share our learning with the wider PLTLIS community.

Peer-Led Team Learning at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)

The self-funded, fully sustained, PLTL Program at the University of Texas at El Paso links the mandatory, required PLTL workshop to lecture in both semesters of first-year general chemistry. Enrollment surpassed 1000 students in the first semester course for the first time ever in fall 2025. Complete financial support of the almost 70 Peer Leaders (PLs) in the Program is made possible by the Workbook Project where the PLs themselves co-create content workbooks, which are changed every semester for both courses. Workbooks used by the enrolled students enable active learning by processing and practicing content understanding in this difficult subject. The UTEP PLTL Program is financially supported through the Workbook Project by Lead for America Corporation.

Peer-Led Team Learning at the University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB)

The Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) program at UTPB continues to thrive, providing critical academic support for students enrolled in General Chemistry I for the Fall 2025. This semester, the PLTL team has eight peer leaders, including four new members who bring fresh enthusiasm and dedication to the program. Together, they serve 143 students in the workshops that emphasize problem-solving, communication, and conceptual understanding. Peer leaders meet regularly with the Chemistry PLTL coordinator, Dr. Nin Dingra, and UTPB Success Center Assistant Director, Sandra Barrera, to align strategies and ensure student engagement. The

program receives strong institutional support through the Success Center, which also oversees peer leaders serving in the Developmental Math program, further extending the impact of peer-assisted learning across STEM disciplines. The UTPB PLTL Program is also financially supported through the Workbook Project by Lead for America Corporation.

Peer-Led Team Learning at the University of Texas at Arlington

Fall 2025 is off to an exciting start for Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), housed within the Academic Success Center in the Division of Student Success. What began during the pandemic in 2020 with just two STEM courses has since evolved into a centralized peer-learning model that now supports 16 courses, with 75 PLTL Leaders and 7 Mentors. This growth reflects the strong collaboration among faculty, administration, and students, and underscores PLTL's reputation as a high-impact practice that supports student learning outcomes.

The foundation of UTA's PLTL program can be credited to Dr. Kimshi Hickman, a former PLTLIS President, who brought her expertise from the successful University of Texas at Dallas PLTL program. Her past leadership, coupled with ongoing support from PLTLIS, continues to shape UTA's peer-learning ecosystem into a model of success and innovation.

This semester marks a new milestone with the appointment of a second PLTL Coordinator - a former PLTL attendee, Leader, and Mentor whose journey exemplifies the program's transformative power. Many of our leaders discover their passion for teaching and reshape their career paths through PLTL. One of our recent graduates transitioned directly from an Engineering internship into a full-time professional role - an inspiring success story that highlights the career readiness benefits of the program.

Career readiness forms part of the University's 2030 strategic plan, and this fall brings an exciting new partnership with UTA's Career Development Center through the pilot of Mavs GROW (Guided Reflection on Work). PLTL Mentors were selected to participate in this inaugural initiative, which helps student employees reflect on how their campus work connects to academic and professional goals. The pilot serves as a foundational step toward expanding Mavs GROW into a campus-wide initiative by Spring 2026 - further strengthening PLTL's role as an experiential learning opportunity.

Programmatically, PLTL continues to expand its academic reach. Building on the success of Accounting I and II, we launched PLTL for Financial Accounting III this fall, extending peer learning into the business disciplines. Another exciting innovation is our embedded PLTL model for Developmental Math courses. In this approach, PLTL Leaders support instructors directly in

the classroom to promote active learning, while also facilitating lab-based PLTL sessions. Early indicators show that students in these co-requisite math classes are gaining confidence and persistence, while PLTL Leaders are further developing their facilitation skills to support unprepared students facing learning gaps.

Equally encouraging is the growing support among faculty. Some of our early skeptics have become our strongest advocates, after witnessing firsthand the power of PLTL to improve engagement and achievement. Faculty liaisons are increasingly adopting facilitative strategies in their classrooms moving away from the traditional didactic approach. Faculty Liaisons are beginning to transform their meetings with PLTL Leaders into dynamic, discussion-based sessions that mirror the collaborative pedagogy of PLTL itself. As one Chemistry Liaison meeting recently demonstrated, the boundaries between classroom and PLTL session are beginning to blur - in the best possible way. It felt as though one was walking into a PLTL session!

Even amid budget challenges, PLTL at UTA continues to develop - driven by innovation, collaboration, and a shared belief in the power of peer learning to transform both students and educators alike.



UTA ASC CRLA Peer Educator Training Fall 2024

Recent Research Papers About PLTL

Veterans Assisting Veterans Using Peer-led Team Learning (2024)

Abstract: This work is an Evidenced-Based Practice Paper. Peer Led Team Learning (PLTL) involves a peer leader who facilitates active learning sessions with a small group of students. The intent of the PLTL is to assist in the learning of various topics and concepts introduced in a course. PLTL has been a successful peer support intervention in traditional classroom environments in science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) education. This

National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsored work under the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) program seeks to investigate the effectiveness of PLTL in an online campus environment at a unique, private university recognized for offerings in aerospace and aviation-related degrees. Peer leaders are recruited from, and have achieved success in, various undergraduate courses that have historically proven difficult for students in completing their engineering degree. Those courses include statics, dynamics, digital circuit design, and aerodynamics. Selected peer leaders then receive a 10-hour self-paced training program which includes providing effective feedback, online communication techniques, leadership strategies, and active learning techniques. A large student population of this online campus are either military veterans or currently serving military personnel. This demographic characteristic results in a larger percentage of military and veteran students both serving as peer leaders and as students participating in the program. This work examines how military service influences student willingness to serve as a peer leader, how military and veteran peer leaders perform, and how military and veteran students respond to peer leadership. The intent is to leverage military and veteran leadership experience to better improve the training of peer leaders to facilitate learning for all students. It also provides a great opportunity to witness veteran students assisting other veteran students to succeed in their education.

Harvie, D.P. Luthi, K.A., Surrency, M., & Wilson, J.K. (2024). Veterans Assisting Veterans Using Peer-led Team Learning. *2024 ASEE Future of Engineering Education Conference*, Paper ID #41623; Presented at [Military and Veterans Division \(MVD\) Technical Session 1](#)

<https://peer.asee.org/veterans-assisting-veterans-using-peer-led-team-learning.pdf>

A 24-year longitudinal study on a STEM gateway general chemistry course and the reduction of achievement disparities (2025)

Abstract: The “First Year Experience” is a critical component of retention of STEM majors. Often, general chemistry has been labeled as a “gatekeeper” course for STEM careers due to a high attrition rate and a course that leads to increased time for graduation when students are inadequately prepared. We demonstrate that the active learning strategy *Peer-Led Team Learning* (PLTL) model increases student retention (%DFW calculated from earned grades A through F plus withdrawals, W) and success (%ABC calculated from earned grades A through F). We have analyzed approximately 24 years of data in general chemistry I (~20,000 students), using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), which showed progressive, significant improvement in both student success and completion metrics. A Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), using a combination of course and student-level variables, demonstrated the impact of PLTL on internal exam metrics and overall course grades. Further, HLM modeling assessed the impact of PLTL

controlling for various student demographics. PLTL strongly impacted URM student completion rates to a greater degree than well-represented students, reducing the URM/non-URM achievement gap.

Note: Since the Fall 1998 term, the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Indiana University Indianapolis (previously known as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, IUPUI) has implemented PLTL.

Basu, P., Malik, D. J., & Graunke, S. (2025). A 24-year longitudinal study on a STEM gateway general chemistry course and the reduction of achievement disparities. *PLOS ONE*, *20*(2), e0318882. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0318882>

Peer-led and teacher-led guided inquiry teaching approaches on students' academic performance in chemistry (2024)

Abstract: The study was carried out to examine the effect of peer-led and teacher-led guided inquiry teaching approaches on students' academic performance in Chemistry in Uyo Local Government Area (Nigeria). Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design for the study was a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. The population for the study consisted of all the 2625 senior secondary two chemistry students in fifteen (15) public co-educational secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. A sample size of 97 SS 2 Chemistry students was used for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting two public co-educational secondary schools in the study area. In each selected school, one intact class of SS 2 Chemistry students was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the Chemistry Performance Test on Stoichiometry (CPTS).

Two measurement and evaluation experts and a chemistry education lecturer subjected the instrument to face and content validation. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using Kuder-Richardson formula-20 (KR-20). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that students taught the concept of stoichiometry using a peer-led guided inquiry teaching approach performed better than students taught using a teacher-led guided inquiry teaching approach. The finding also showed no significant difference in the mean performance scores between male and female students taught the concept of stoichiometry using peer-led and teacher-led guided inquiry approaches. Based on the study's findings, it was concluded that the peer-led guided inquiry approach enhanced students' academic performance in Chemistry than the teacher-led guided inquiry approach in Uyo Local

Government Area. It is recommended among others that a peer-led guided inquiry approach should be adopted by Chemistry teachers in the teaching and learning of stoichiometry and other Chemistry concepts.

Umanah, F. I., & Babayemi, J. O. (2024). Peer-led and teacher-led guided inquiry teaching approaches on students' academic performance in chemistry. *UNIZIK Journal of STM Education*, 7(1), 151–162. <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jstme/article/view/4256>

Reflections from a Peer Leader



1 - Nazli Bellikli

Medical Genetics, Queen Mary University London

When I first participated in PLTL as a first-year student, I was hesitant to speak freely about scientific concepts, afraid of being wrong or sounding silly. However, the awkward silence of that first session quickly became unbearable, and I figured that speaking up couldn't be any worse! I soon realised that many of the questions I had were shared by my peers. Our sessions became a safe space to double-check definitions, clarify understanding, share revision techniques, and even exchange opportunities beyond lectures. I began to feel part of a community, even recognising familiar faces in lectures!

Fast forward to the beginning of my second year, I was excited to return, this time as a peer leader. I was now confident in vocalising my ideas and questions, and I wanted to help create that same supportive environment for others. As a peer leader, I found myself honing a different subset of leadership skills: not ruling but guiding the sessions and allowing them to flourish. I also realised that conversations beyond the worksheet (which I did quite often, and thought was wrong) weren't unwelcome distractions, they were valuable moments for connection and reflection. Sharing academic challenges helped others open up too, and together we became stronger, more engaged learners. At the end of the year, I was rewarded with a SEED (Student Enhanced Engagement and Development) award, recognising my personal growth and contributions to student education through the PLTL sessions. It aims to encourage the development of new opportunities and for students to engage with educational development across Queen Mary.

Once more, I returned to PLTL as a final-year student. The experience has made me more engaged with both my school and my studies, giving me a strong sense of belonging during what is an overwhelming and challenging academic period. Looking back, PLTL has not only strengthened my understanding of science but also helped me grow into a more confident communicator, collaborator, and leader.

Inspired by PLTL! Working at Apple



2 - Luis P. Romo Magallanes

Former Peer Leader, UTEP

Running a photography workshop

Since graduating in Organizational & Corporate Communication from UTEP, I have spent my time working at Apple. I have held various roles, including two leadership positions. However, I spent the majority of my time as a Creative Pro. In this role, I led daily workshops on Apple products for diverse levels of knowledge and age groups, ages 6-90. The PLTL program enhanced my presentation skills and instilled many of my skills in peer leading that I use through my workshops at Apple. As a Peer Leader, I often had to adapt to different learning styles to create an inclusive learning environment. I thoroughly enjoyed being a resource and facilitator for students while hosting my chemistry workshops, which enabled me to apply these skills to my roles at Apple.

I often reflect fondly on my time as a General Chemistry Peer Leader under the guidance of Dr. Becvar during my undergraduate studies from 2018 to 2020. It was an invaluable experience that greatly influenced my academic growth. Recently, I've been pursuing further studies and expanding my knowledge in interdisciplinary disciplines, which has led me to apply for the MS in Integrated Engineering program.

Plan Now to Come to New York City!

The 2026 PLTLIS Annual Conference is coming to the Big Apple!

When: Wednesday–Saturday, May 27-30, 2026

Where: City Tech (New York City College of Technology, CUNY)

Format: Hybrid (In-Person and Virtual)



More details to follow in the November newsletter!

Read the PLTLIS Impact Report



Available on the [PLTLIS website](https://www.pltlis.org)

The Report summarizes the positive impacts that the Society has had for peer leaders and practitioners of PLTLIS since the incorporation of the Society in 2012. Illustrating the role of the Society in growing and supporting the PLTL community of practice through facts and charts, five perspectives are presented: a student participant, a senior peer leader, a faculty member, a learning center director, and a senior administrator. Share your thoughts by sending your comments to info@ptlis.org or to a.michael@qmul.ac.uk.

Short Takes

- SHARE NEWS FROM YOUR CAMPUS! Send news items, story suggestions, and updates from your campus Peer-Led Team Learning program to info@ptlis.org

- Love social media? Already on LinkedIn? The PLTL International Society is looking for people who would post updates, announcements, campus activities. Is that you? Contact info@ptlis.org to share your enthusiasm and spread the word about PLTL!
- TIP: Making a presentation? Include a final slide that mentions the PLTLIS Annual Conference and the Society's website: www.ptlis.org
- TIP: During Peer Leader Orientation at the beginning of every semester, each new Peer Leader signs up for "The Peer Leader" newsletter on the homepage of PLTLIS with their personal email (to keep in touch after graduation): Go to www.ptlis.org and sign up!
- SHARE this Quick Link to the PLTLIS Website:



*Learning Today,
Leading Tomorrow!*