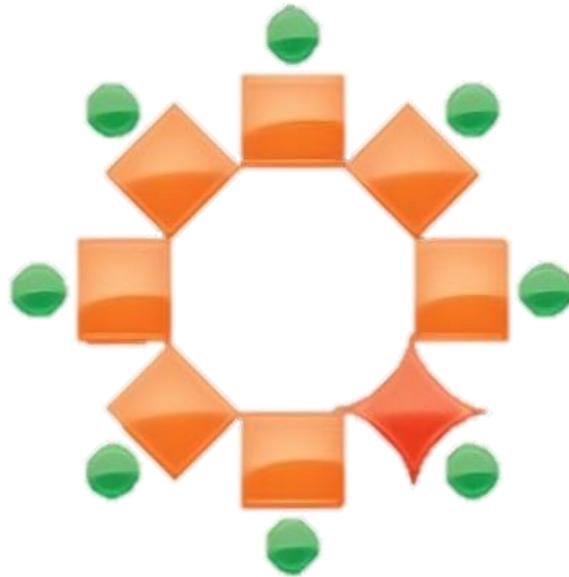


The Peer Leader January 2026



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Issue No. 45 Contact: info@pltlis.org

- Call for Presentations: Deadline: March 3, 2026
- Conference Information: Registration Open
- ★ APL: Upcoming webinars: **January 26, 27, 2026**
- Survey Coming Your Way
- Profiles: What's Happening with PLTL Programs?
- Dissertations Researching PLTL
- Talking about AI
- Peer-Led Team Learning's Influence
- Short Takes – Reviewers Needed! And more...

✉ A Message from the President

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

Whatever festival you celebrated in December and for the New Year with family and friends, I hope that you had a restful break and a chance to recharge. I likewise hope that 2026 is off to a great start for you!

We're already expecting the highlight of 2026 to be our 14th annual conference. We are very much hoping that we'll see you and colleagues at City Tech in New York City from Wednesday May 27 through Saturday May 30. We are looking forward to what we expect will be our largest annual event, with a program that brings together practitioners not only of PLTL but many other forms of active learning.



Over the next few weeks, we'll be reaching out to practitioners of PLTL to better understand what the Society could do to help strengthen and support our international community of practice. Please help us understand what PLTLIS might do to support our professional network more effectively. As President, my personal ambition for 2026 is that the Society can continue to build on recent successes, securing a sustainable future for the benefits of PLTL programs across the USA and around the world.

Tony

Prof. Tony Michael

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

www.pltlis.org

The Big Apple is Hosting!

Call for Presentations

14th Annual Conference

DEADLINE: TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026

Celebrating Active Learning: Shared Missions and Practices in Models of Student Engagement

Calling practitioners of active learning curricular models to come to The Big Apple and share stories, pillars of practice, challenges, successes, wisdom.

These models include Cooperative Learning (CL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Supplemental Instruction (SI/PASS/PALS), Team-Based Learning (TBL), Emerging Scholars (ES, Workshop Mathematics, Math Excel), Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL), and Learning Assistants (LA), among others.

We invite you to submit proposals to explore practices, successes and limitations of any of these models through the following focus questions:

- How is the model's framework used and adapted at your campus?*
- What is the training or preparation of facilitators and instructors?*
- How is the model(s) assessed at your institution?*
- How does your institution support the model(s)?*
- How is AI incorporated in the model?*
- What are long-term benefits of the model(s) as viewed by alumni?*
- What are other highlights of the model(s) currently in use at your institution?*

Submitting a proposal

The Peer-Led Team Learning International Society's Fourteenth Annual Conference will provide a forum for practitioners and researchers, including instructors, learning specialists/developers, administrators, peer leaders and student facilitators, teachers, and others, to share practices in active learning curricular models.

- Talks and workshop presentations can take place in-person or virtually. However, all talks and workshops should be planned to engage both in person participants and virtual participants.
- All submissions will be peer-reviewed. The presentation abstract should clearly articulate how the presentation will address the focus questions(s) above for the benefit of the conference audience

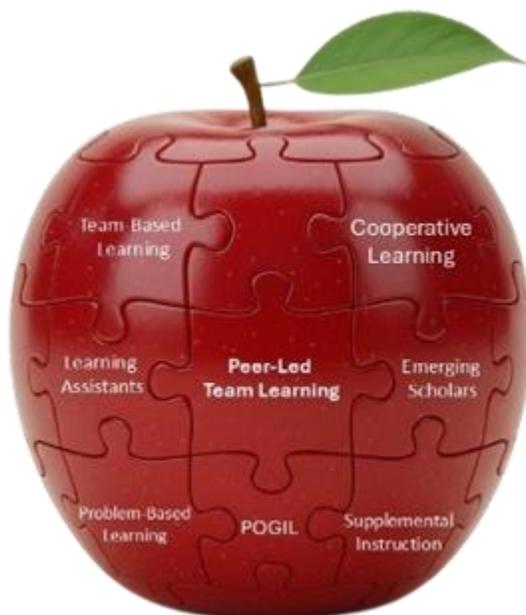
Presentations will be in one of the following formats:

- Short talks: 20 minutes presentation, 10 minutes Q&A. These can be in-person or virtual.
- Workshops: intended for interactive presentations, 60 minutes. These can be in-person or virtual.
- Posters (for in-person presenters) or “lightening talks” (5 minutes presentations for virtual presenters)

Deadline for Submissions: Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Questions? Contact AE Dreyfuss, Chair, Conference Committee ADreyfuss@citytech.cuny.edu

The Big Apple is Hosting the 14th Annual PTLIS Conference



Wednesday – Saturday, May 27-30, 2026

Hybrid format!

For more information: <https://pltlis.org/annual-pltlis-conference/>

Hosted by City Tech (New York City College of Technology, City University of New York), Brooklyn, New York

For information on Agenda, Registration, and Lodging, go to: <https://pltlis.org/annual-pltlis-conference/>

Spread the Information! Download the Flyer!

Post and Share on Your Campus

 **International Forum (APLS)**

January 26 & 27: Webinars on Peer Learning and Support

Hosted by the Association for Peer Learning & Support (APLS)

The Association for Peer Learning and Support (APLS) invites all practitioners of Peer Learning to attend the APLS International Forum on Peer Learning and Support. This forum will kindly be hosted by the Queen Margaret University Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) team in Edinburgh, Scotland, on Thursday May 21 and Friday May 22, the week immediately prior to the PLTLIS Annual Conference in NYC.



You can find further details of this international forum at: <https://www.gmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/events-listing/2026-international-forum-for-peer-learning-and-support>. There will be a pre-conference webinar held on MS Teams on **Monday January 26** commencing at 2pm GMT (6am Pacific, 7am Mountain, 8am Central and 9am Eastern). And on the afternoon of **Tuesday January 27th**, three members of the APLS Steering Group, Carly Jones (Cardiff), Catherine McConnell (Brighton) and Lucy Chilvers (Brighton) will be delivering an MS Teams webinar on “The Peer-to-Peer Framework: Embedding Peer Learning and Support in Higher Education.” This one-hour webinar will start at 2pm GMT (6am Pacific, 7am Mountain, 8am Central and 9am Eastern) and you can find the event link at: <https://www.linkedin.com/events/thepeer-to-peerframework-embedd7414305842285416448/>

SURVEY COMING YOUR WAY

PLTLIS is partnering with Innovatek to survey practitioners about their PLTL program. Expect to hear from them in the next month.

The survey will allow PLTLIS to create case studies of each program and will help develop the “community of practice” to enhance the network of practitioners.

If you do not receive a request, let us know! Contact: info@pltlis.org

San Jose City College, San Jose, California

—Madeline Adamczeski

A culmination of events in recent times, at local, state, and national levels, has diminished what was once a flourishing PLTL program at a California Community College, located in the heart of Silicon Valley. Prior to Fall 2025, San Jose City College's (SJCC) PLTL program celebrated its 27th consecutive year anniversary. SJCC's PLTL program was most robust between the years following the Inaugural PLTLIS Conference in 2012 and up to the COVID shutdown in March of 2020.

During that period, it was proven to not only be cost-effective and improve student success, retention and transfer rates to four-year academic institutions in a variety of disciplines, but also significantly decreased the number of students withdrawing, especially those withdrawing in STEM courses. It is important to note that this program proved to yield a surplus of funding in the form of increased full-time equivalents (FTEs). That is, the increased retention was correlated to a common California Community College funding model that accounted for a surplus of FTEs.

Thus, most of the expenses associated with SJCC's PLTL program were institutionalized and inserted into the College Budget, including:

- employment funding for the peer leaders
- a faculty PLTL coordinator position
- Directed Study 98 (DS-98, 0.5 unit) courses, as part of lead faculty PLTL practitioners' (LFPPs) course loads and designated for each different course with PLTL workshops, to meet 45 minutes weekly with corresponding Peer Leaders (PLs) for said course. Note: LFPPs were compensated according to the number of PLs enrolled in their DS-98 course.
- Three 0.5-unit courses each semester were offered to PLs. Note: The three courses focused on Leadership, Pedagogy and Best Practices, and Student Success Strategies. Upon completion of these three courses, PLs earned a Certificate of Specialization in Peer Leader Training (as part of PL professional development).

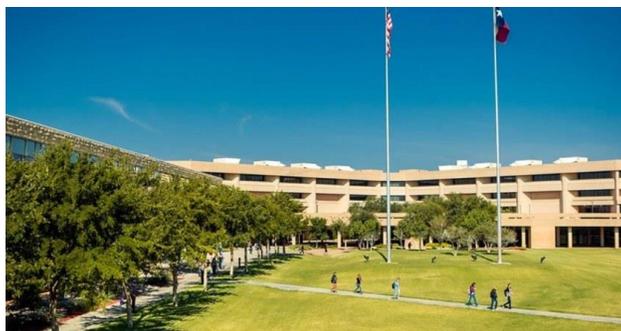
During 27 years of implementation at SJCC, PLTL weekly workshops were offered outside of classroom instruction. In courses where PLTL workshops were offered, extra credit was awarded at the discretion of each instructor. Whether or not extra credit was offered by the instructor, at the end of the penultimate week of every semester, each instructor of a PLTL-designated course

was provided with a rubric where extra credit was calculated for each student who participated and up to 5% extra credit could be awarded for actively participating in PLTL weekly workshops. Over the years the PLTL program, which began at SJCC in a Fundamentals of Chemistry Course in the summer of 1999, spread to other courses in chemistry, as well as into other disciplines, including biology, physics, math, English, Ethnic Studies and Early Childhood Education.

Over the years, peer leaders and faculty from SJCC participated in annual PLTLIS Conferences as well as developing PLTL-related publications. It should be mentioned that in 2015, SJCC was the first community college to host the annual PLTLIS conference. During, prior and after the 2015 conference, focus groups - including administrators, faculty and students - participated which were conducted by PLTLIS Board Members. A PLTL Workbook, *Introduction to General, Organic and Biochemistry*, was published for the second semester course and another workbook, *Fundamentals of Chemistry*, has been submitted for publication to the PLTLIS Press (to be published in 2026).

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

—Milka Montes



The University of Texas Permian Basin (UTPB) is proud to share exciting momentum in Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), a student-centered support model that continues to strengthen academic success across campus. This Spring 2026, the PLTL program is thriving in Chemistry and expanding its impact through continued implementation in Developmental Mathematics.

In Spring 2026, the Chemistry Peer Leader Program welcomed seven peer leaders and is supporting students through an expanded workshop schedule, including:

- Ten workshop sections of General Chemistry I
- Four workshop sections of General Chemistry II

This growth allows more students to participate, and provides structured, peer-supported learning that helps students build confidence, improve problem-solving skills, and succeed in foundational chemistry coursework.

Celebrating Faculty Promotions: UTPB is also proud to recognize outstanding faculty achievements that strengthen the program and the department's future. Congratulations to:

- Dr. Milka Montes, promoted to Full Professor
- Dr. Chao Dong, promoted to Tenured Associate Professor
- Dr. Nin Dingra, promoted to Tenured Associate Professor
- Dr. Theppawut Ayudhya, promoted to Tenured Associate Professor

These accomplishments reflect the strength of UTPB's faculty leadership and reinforce a robust academic foundation that supports student learning and program growth.

Department Growth and New Opportunities

The university has recently undergone reorganization, merging the Chemistry and Geology departments into the new Department of Chemistry and Geosciences under the newly formed College of Engineering and Sciences. This development brings new faculty expertise in geochemistry and geosciences, opening doors for expanded collaboration, interdisciplinary opportunities, and future growth across STEM programs at UTPB.

PLTL Expansion: Continued Implementation in Developmental Math

In addition to Chemistry, UTPB is continuing the implementation of PLTL in Developmental Mathematics, a key step in supporting students early in their college journey. This work is supported by the Student Success Center, which also plays an essential role in supporting the Chemistry PLTL program.



Influence of Peer-Led Team Learning in Students' Chemistry Self-Efficacy, and Academic Achievement in General Chemistry Courses (2025)

—Hector Leal

Abstract: This mixed-methods study examined the impact of Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) on chemistry self-efficacy and academic achievement among undergraduate students enrolled in General Chemistry I at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-semester surveys measuring initial interest, maintained interest, self-efficacy, and effort beliefs (n = 201). Qualitative data were gathered through three rounds of interviews with a subset of students (n = 3). A paired-sample t-test revealed a statistically significant increase in self-efficacy scores from pre- to post-assessment ($t(200) = 12.49, p < .001$), and Pearson correlation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and PLTL participation. Academic achievement was also positively associated with PLTL attendance; students with fewer absences demonstrated higher pass rates and GPAs. Interview data supported these findings, highlighting themes of increased confidence, improved comprehension, and appreciation for collaborative learning. The results affirm PLTL's effectiveness in enhancing student motivation, engagement, and performance in gateway STEM courses, particularly for underrepresented populations. Implications for instructional practice and future research are discussed.

Leal, H. (2025). *Influence of peer-led team learning in students' chemistry self-efficacy, and academic achievement in general chemistry courses* (Order No. 30689384). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (3290617104). Retrieved from <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/utrgv.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/influence-peer-led-team-learning-students/docview/3290617104/se-2>

The Nature of Undergraduate Calculus I Students' Participation in the Parallel Spaces of Coursework and Peer-Led, Cooperative, Inquiry-Oriented Complementary Instruction (2024)

—Karmen T. Yu

Abstract: Calculus has long been known as a “gateway course” to STEM fields in postsecondary education. To moderate this gatekeeping effect, Montclair State University researchers

developed a peer-led, inquiry-based instructional support (IBIS) to run parallel to Calculus classes. The design of the IBIS model was informed by an instructional approach called Complex Instruction (CI) and two other peer-led, cooperative learning models, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) and Supplemental Instruction (SI). While the literature on peer-led models of cooperative learning confirms their effectiveness on undergraduate students' academic outcomes in mathematics, this multiple-case study set out to address the following: What is the nature of undergraduate Calculus I students' participation in the parallel spaces of coursework and complementary instruction? The analysis of the seven students in this study revealed 17 forms of agentic participation. These forms of participation were further categorized as either nominal, moderate, or highly interactive participatory interactions with tasks, material resources, and other people. Furthermore, some students experienced an expansion period in both instructional spaces as they took on more roles and enacted a growing variation of participation actions. Conversely, withdrawal periods also occurred when students were unable to enact agency because their willingness to act was not sanctioned by the instructor, which would lead to a decline in their participation over time. The findings of this study complement the findings of prior research employing quantitative methods to yield a more holistic understanding of the phenomena that yield the documented achievement outcomes.

Yu, K. T. (2024). *The nature of undergraduate Calculus I students' participation in the parallel spaces of coursework and peer-led, cooperative, inquiry-oriented complementary instruction*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Montclair State University, Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/docview/3062374868> Available from ProQuest (3062374868)

The Effects of Peer-Led Team Learning on Pass Rates, Academic Performance, and Retention of Under-Represented Minority Students in STEM Courses (2016)

—Kimshi Hickman

Abstract: Underrepresented minority students (URM) are lagging behind White and Asian students in graduating with STEM degrees. Peer education has been used throughout higher education institutions as pedagogy and a learning strategy to improve retention and graduation rates. In addition to improving persistence rates, the use of peer education has served to prevent the loss of revenues in higher education.

The involvement of peers in providing academic support outside of the classroom has proven to be beneficial to the success of URM college students. Although many studies have examined the impact of academic peer education on the participants, few have evaluated the impact peer-led team learning (PLTL) as a model with URM students in STEM. As colleges and universities seek

to impact the educational experience of all students, it is important to understand the academic benefits for URM students. It is hoped that this study will inform practitioners about the persistence and academic performance of URM students in STEM to develop best practices in using institution resources to impact persistence rates.

Post positivism framed this quantitative study examining the performance of underrepresented minority students in PLTL leader for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses at a research institution in Texas. Of specific interest was the course grade rates and retention rates in subsequent STEM courses. Data analyses were conducted through the use of the quantitative methods, including inferential and descriptive statistics. Findings from the study contribute to the ability of practitioners to increase student success for academic peer educators, therefore preventing the loss of tuition dollars.

Hickman, K. (2016). *The Effects of Peer-Led Team Learning on Pass Rates, Academic Performance, and Retention of Under-Represented Minority Students in STEM Courses*. Doctoral Dissertation, Texas Tech University Libraries: <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/items/282da360-4492-4629-a1ef-6fb3e2635aae>

Talking about AI

With the current surge of AI services, it is inevitable to encounter some version of it in our daily lives. While some believe this is nothing but a shortcut that undermines the purpose of education, I believe and have experienced the opposite. AI is a powerful tool when it is used as that, a tool.

During a couple of my Computer Science classes, towards the end of my studies, people had divided opinions when it came to AI. Some professors disapproved and even banned its use, while others encouraged it. Many, as did I, took advantage of it and used it as a tool to better understand the topics discussed in our classes. The problem arose when students used it as an answer to everything rather than a tool to understand the answer.

The negative views of AI are comparable to when other technologies were being popularized, and much backlash they got. Socrates strongly advised against writing, because it would “destroy memory and weaken the mind” (LeBlanc, 2013), yet it is a constant in our lives nowadays. The rise of cellphones brought about a worry that our communication skills would diminish (GCU, 2022), yet we are more connected than ever before thanks to the easy access to things like Messages and Social Media. This is to say that it is not rare when new technologies come out to have an opposing view of them. However, just because some may not like it does not mean it is not useful.

The question then is not whether AI belongs in our classrooms and workplaces, but how we teach ourselves and future generations to use it thoughtfully and responsibly

References

AuCoin LeBlanc, J. (2013). Socrates: Writing vs. Memory | ETEC540: Text Technologies. Retrieved from Blogs.ubc.ca website: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/etec540sept13/2013/09/29/socrates-writing-vs-memory/>

Grand Canyon University. (2022). How Cellphones Affect Communication Skills | GCU Blog. Retrieved from Gcu.edu website: <https://www.gcu.edu/blog/gcu-experience/how-cellphones-affect-communication-skills#GainingSomeHistoricalPerspective>



Emanuel Sanchez received his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from the University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley in 2025. He will pursue his studies toward a Ph.D. in Human Genetics, starting in Fall 2026. He is also the Web Manager for our website, PLTLIS.org.

The Impact of Peer Leading

I spent four semesters as a Peer Leader in the Peer Led Team Learning (PLTL) program at University of Texas at El Paso, and the skills and lessons learned from that experience have been some of the most beneficial of my life. The act of peer leading and learning to interact with different personalities in a workshop setting is a recipe to bring out the best in young professionals. Being a General Chemistry peer leader prepared me for my career and made me a well-rounded individual.

One of the most difficult parts of entering a profession is dealing with personalities you do not get along with. In a workshop setting you may have 10-12 people who you struggle with.

Finding solutions and techniques to strengthen interpersonal skills is a cornerstone of PLTL, and it is a skill that is essential when entering the workforce. My time as a Peer Leader was spent with the occasional combative, entitled, or just generally difficult student, and I was forced to find solutions in how to patiently deal with these students.

The organizational structure of PLTL is made to create future leaders. In a workshop setting you are forced to be a leader for your students, and in the program itself you will have opportunities to become an officer/council member/head peer leader that teach you the hands-on skills of leadership. My officer position was Head of Workbook Revisions, and there I learned how to responsibly and efficiently manage teams to finish tasks. Problem solving, team delegation, and conflict resolution were daily challenges that I learned to handle. The support I received from my fellow peer leaders and professors created an environment that pushed me to succeed.

PLTL taught me patience, leadership, empathy, public speaking, comradery, chemistry skills, and much more in just the two years that I spent as part of the program. It has been a foundation for my endeavors while working in healthcare and applying to graduate programs. I was blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of something so rewarding and beneficial for me. The best of the best tend to be Peer Leaders, and I'm proud that I played a role in something so special.



1 - Benjamin Diaz

After graduating with a degree in Biological Sciences from UT El Paso in 2023, I started working as an EMT in my hometown of El Paso, Texas. I have since applied to Physician Assistant (PA) school and have been accepted to the UT Rio Grande Valley PA program. I am currently awaiting

responses from other PA programs before I decide which program I will attend later this year. I plan to return to El Paso after PA school and work in a primary care setting.

Short Takes & Tips

- Become an ABSTRACT REVIEWER for Conference Abstracts for Presentations, Workshops and Posters for the 14th Annual Conference. Contact info@ptlis.org with your name, institution, role and contact information, by March 3rd! We welcome your participation in this important task.
- Minding Your Q's and T's (Quick Tips!) Contribute a strategy to spark collaboration and increase participation. If you are a Peer Leader and have a strategy useful for learning (for example, in PLTL Workshop), please submit it as a QT to journal@ptlis.org
- Thought for the Day: Instead of decrying the "Achievement Gap" what if we focused on the "Opportunity Gap"? Thanks to Dr. Dorell Thomas, Brooklyn College for this reframing.
- Read the PLTLIS Impact Report: Available on the PLTLIS website, <https://ptlis.org/>
- SHARE NEWS FROM YOUR CAMPUS! Send news items, story suggestions, and updates from your campus Peer-Led Team Learning program to info@ptlis.org
- Already on LinkedIn? The PLTL International Society is looking for people who will post updates, announcements, campus activities. Is that you? Contact a.michael@qmul.ac.uk 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!*