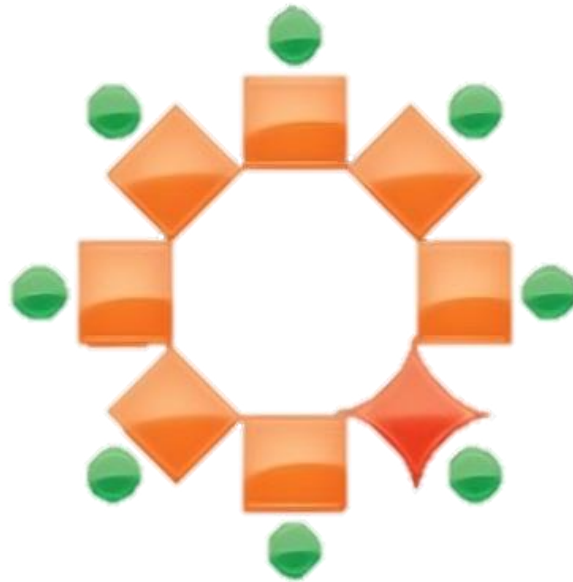


The Peer Leader February 2026



PEER-LED TEAM LEARNING
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Issue No. 46 Contact: info@pltlis.org

- 📖 *Advances in Peer-Led Learning*: Issue 5 Published
- 📖 Workbooks Now Available Through Amazon &....
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✉️ **A Message from the President**

Dear members of the PLTLIS community,

As February draws to a close, this year's annual conference, the 14th, grows even closer. We are very much looking forward to seeing a record number of attendees this year, if not in person, then online for this hybrid event. We are excited to take this opportunity to compare notes

across a whole range of different models for active peer learning, and you can find more details later in this newsletter, as well as on the PLTLIS website.



For those members of our international community celebrating Ramadan this month, Ramadan Mubarak! May this holy month bring you peace, blessings and an abundance of joy.

And for those members of the community who are celebrating this month's lunar new year, *Xīnnián kuàilè gōngxǐ fācái*. As we enter the year of the horse, I wish you all a year filled with energy, resilience and speed. And as this is the year of a fire horse (the first since 1966), I hope that your passion, intense energy and ambition bring you every success and happiness throughout the coming year.

Sending every best wish, as always,

Tony

Prof. Tony Michael

PLTLIS President, Board of Directors

www.pltlis.org

Advances in Peer-Led Learning: Issue 5 Published!

The 2025 issue of APLL is now online and is a demonstration of the several directions that collaboration between instructor/administrator and student/leader engenders. Among practitioners of peer-led learning – and Peer-Led Team Learning – there are many experiences that lead to a multitude of themes. These include neurodiversity (Rose, Almushatat, Kiwanian, Fulton, & Faulkner) and experiences of leading (Lazarski); moving PLTL into a new discipline – pharmacy - and institution (Howell); flying over eight active learning models for the bird's eye view (Dreyfuss, Fraiman, & Yu); revisiting foundational aspects of PLTL through the lens of

practice (Daschbach and Ku); modeling organizational structures for longevity (Unite, Saenz, Kelly, Daschbach, & Hammond); promoting the student's learning through voice – “transmission”- in the remembering and learning process (Becvar and Saupe); and examining online peer tutoring practices through critical incidents (Dreyfuss, Sanchez Diaz, Adigun, Baraki, & Thompson).

This issue presents two new features: our first “Letter to the Editor” in which Fraiman promotes the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence into teaching, and “Quick Tips for Peer Leaders,” two of which are provided by Dow, a current Peer Leader. This issue shows the continuing and growing importance of, and advances in, peer-led learning in demonstrating the value of collaboration in a multitude of ways.

Read the issue: journal.pltlis.org

And consider submitting to APLL's Issue 6! **Deadline: July 17, 2026**

Workbooks Now Available Through Amazon &...

We are pleased to announce the release of ***Organic Chemistry 1: Learning With AI Tools***.

This updated edition of the *Organic Chemistry 1* workbook, originally published in 2018 by PLTLIS Press, reflects the evolving landscape of science education by integrating artificial intelligence tools into the study of organic chemistry. Designed to support Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) workshops, as well as use by students studying in groups, the resource provides structured activities, guided inquiry problems, and AI-assisted questioning that promote critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving.

This Workbook is now available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and 39,000 other retailers. Go to your preferred vendor and query: Peer-Led Team Learning. If you are not able to access PLTL titles, let us know!

Two other titles, two guides for Peer Leaders and other facilitators, are also available: *Facilitating Team-Based Learning* and *Facilitando El Aprendizaje En Equipos*. More titles will be announced in the March issue of *The Peer Leader*!

Survey on PLTL Programs Coming!

PLTLIS needs your help in creating Institutional Profiles for institutions that have Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) programs. We want to understand how different institutions implement PLTL. The results will help identify best practices and variations in PLTL programs across institutions.

With your help, the survey will gather information about your PLTL program structure, training methods, and assessment strategies.

The survey is being administered by **Innovatek12** and communications will come from joey@innovatek12.org. Please look for it after **March 3** and check your junk mail folder.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be valuable in developing a comprehensive understanding of PLTL implementation in higher education. These profiles will be published on the PLTLIS website (pltlis.org) and aggregated information will be included in the Society's next Impact Report.

Announcing Conference Panelists from Models: MathExcel, TBL, SI, & POGIL

Practitioners and developers of active learning curricular models are coming to The Big Apple to share stories, pillars of practice, challenges, successes, wisdom on themes of Implementation, Facilitation, Assessment, Sustainability and finding common ground for the promotion of active learning. Four of the panelists share their motivations below.

MathExcel/Emerging Scholars Program/Workshop Mathematics

Thomas Dick is Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Department of Mathematics at Oregon State University (Corvallis, Oregon). For over twenty years he served as the faculty director of OSU's Mathematics Learning Center. He also founded OSU's Math Excel Program, based on Uri Treisman's Emerging Scholars Workshop Program and the original Math Excel program of University of Kentucky. One of his main interests in mathematics education throughout his career has been the use technology to enhance mathematics teaching and learning. He co-authored the technology chapter of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics *Handbook of Research in Mathematics Teaching and Learning*, and he was a co-editor of the book *Focus on High School Mathematics: Technology to Support Reasoning and Sense-Making*. He remains active in mathematics education through a leadership role in the grading of the College Board' Advanced Placement Calculus Examination each year and as a senior mathematics advisor to Texas Instruments Educational Technology Division.



1 - Thomas Dick

Why I chose to work with the Math Excel (Emerging Scholars, Workshop Mathematics) model

I had heard of Treisman's outstanding results with his Emerging Scholars Workshop program for some time, but I feared that successful implementation required some extraordinary talent that I sorely lacked. However, after extended discussions with, and encouragement from Professor Mike Freeman about his experience creating the University of Kentucky's Math Excel program, I became convinced that it was worth a try. The idea of students working together on challenging mathematics problems in a social setting, with discussions facilitated by peer leaders, is both incredibly appealing and powerfully effective. Without a doubt, the experience forever changed my views on teaching mathematics.

Team-Based Learning

Graham Easton is Honorary Professor of Clinical Communication Skills at Queen Mary University of London (England, UK), and until recently Professor of Medical Education and Lead for Team-Based Learning. For 25 years he has combined a career in medical education with working as a General Practitioner (GP). His experience as a medical journalist for the BBC and the British Medical Journal (BMJ) inspired his interest in the power of stories as a teaching and communication tool, and his doctoral research looked at how medical teachers use stories in their lectures. He has written several books—including *The Appointment*, selected for the BBC Radio 2 Book Club, and is now channeling his love of storytelling into writing his first novel. Graham is part of the Peer-led Team Learning group at QMUL which won a national Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) in 2025. He was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2024.



2 - Graham Easton

Why I chose to work with the Team-Based Learning model

I was first drawn to Team-Based Learning (TBL) because of the buzz in the room. Learners are engaged in tackling real-life problems together as a team. They get instant feedback. It's active learning, it keeps didactic teaching and theory to a minimum. It also develops many of the key skills that future doctors will need; communication, teamwork, public speaking, peer evaluation, and critical thinking. I wish they did TBL when I was a student.

Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental Instruction (SI), created at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (Missouri), is a non-remedial approach to learning that supports students toward academic success by integrating “what to learn” with “how to learn.” SI consists of regularly scheduled, voluntary, out-of-class group study sessions driven by students’ needs. Sessions are facilitated by trained peer leaders who utilize collaborative activities to ensure peer-to-peer interaction in small groups. SI is implemented in high-risk courses in consultation with academic staff and is supported and evaluated by a trained supervisor.

Jessica Pearson, M.Ed., serves as the Executive Director of the International Center for Supplemental Instruction (ICSI), where she leads SI training initiatives worldwide, supports Certified SI Trainers, and collaborates with regional SI centers across multiple continents. She also oversees the planning and delivery of ICSI’s biannual international conference, advancing the global reach and impact of Supplemental Instruction.

In addition, Jess serves as Director of Academic and Mentoring (ASM) at the University of Missouri–Kansas City. In this role, she leads a team of 13 professional staff who employ and supervise more than 100 student employees dedicated to supporting student success. As a first-generation college graduate, she is particularly committed to working with and advocating for first-generation students.



3 - Jess Pearson

Why I chose to work with the SI model

My journey began in 2007 at Florida Atlantic University as a Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leader. As a first-generation college student, serving as an SI Leader for much of my undergraduate career gave me a deep sense of belonging and a strong community through my SI team. That experience continues to motivate me to help create the same connection and sense of community for others through a program intentionally designed to improve academic performance while also building transferable skills. SI uniquely integrates academic support with community-building in a way that genuinely helps students succeed. In short, SI changed my life, and I wanted to be part of creating that same impact for others.

Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL)

Rick Moog is the Executive Director of The POGIL Project and Professor Emeritus, Chemistry, at Franklin & Marshall College (Pennsylvania). He has been using a guided inquiry approach to teaching since 1994 and is the co-author of POGIL materials for general chemistry and physical chemistry and of several journal articles and book chapters concerning POGIL pedagogy and its implementation. Rick received an A.B. in chemistry from Williams College and a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Stanford University. He is the 2016 recipient of the George C. Pimentel Award in Chemical Education from the American Chemical Society and, along with his late colleagues Jim Spencer and Frank Creegan, was also the co-recipient of the 2015 James Flack Norris Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Teaching of Chemistry from the Northeast Section of the American Chemical Society.



4 - Rick Moog

Why I chose to develop the POGIL model

Early in my career (early 1990s), I was frustrated that so many of my bright and earnest students were not experiencing success in my courses despite the clear, engaging, and well-planned lectures that I was delivering. I recognized that something was wrong ... and didn't simply blame the students. At that time, evidence was accumulating that more active approaches to instruction could lead to better outcomes for all students. Combining the constructivist philosophy of Dewey and others, the collaborative learning ideas of Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, and the emerging research on how people learn, the Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning approach was born.

More Panelists profiled in the March newsletter!

Next installment will feature panelists from Cooperative Learning (CL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), and Learning Assistants (LA).

If you haven't yet submitted a proposal for a presentation, workshop, or poster...

- **Deadline for Submissions: Tuesday, March 3, 2026**
- 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?*
- Details on submissions can be found at <https://pltlis.org/call-for-presentations/>
 - For more information: info@pltlis.org

Wondering about the active learning models to be featured at the Conference? Learn about the models with a bird’s eye view by reading: *Active Learning: Eight Models That Shape Instructional Practice in Advances in Peer-Led Learning*, written by AE Dreyfuss, Ana Fraiman, & Karmen Yu.

—Online at <https://doi.org/10.54935/apll2025-01-03-07>

 **Plan Now: Come to New York City Or Attend Online**

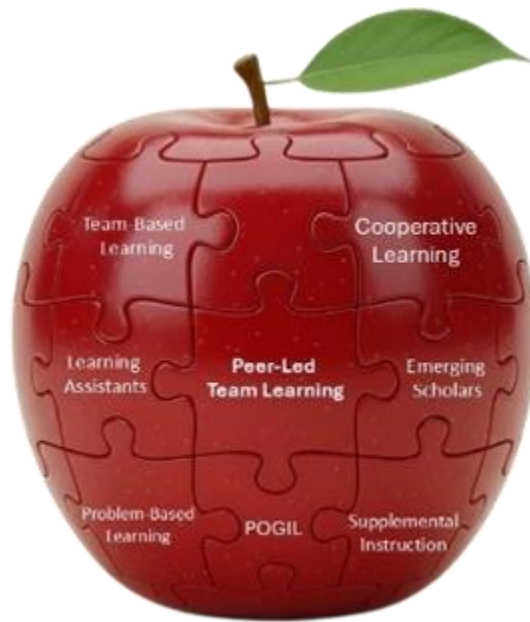
The Big Apple is Hosting the 2026 PLTLIS Conference

Wednesday – Saturday, May 27-30

City Tech (New York City College of Technology, City University of New York)

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

More Info: <https://pltlis.org/annual-pltlis-conference/>



Profiles: Where Are They Now?

From the University of Miami, Miami, Florida to Medical School

Michael Gaines, Assistant Provost, Undergraduate Research and Community Outreach, writes: “Lilly was a Peer Leader with me in two general biology courses and went on to develop workshop material as my TA during her senior year.”

I am now a first-year medical student at the University of Minnesota Medical School. At the University of Miami (UM) I was a General Biology Peer Leader (PL) in the fall of 2022 and 2023. I served as a TA for general biology and helped guide the PLs and improve some of the workshop modules in the fall of 2024. I also served as an organic chemistry PL in the spring of 2023 and the fall of 2023.

PLTL was my first exposure to pedagogy and Bloom's taxonomy. I became very interested in education and curriculum improvement. In the fall of 2024, I got the opportunity to TA to help restructure the workshops based on student feedback. Dr. Gaines and I worked to make sessions more interactive and improve student engagement. In the spring of 2025, I participated in the PETAL (Platform for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) program at UM. I worked as a student advisor to an esteemed public health professor to help restructure and improve the “Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Across the Lifespan” public health course. Now, in medical school, I was recently elected to the Foundations Education Committee of student government where I serve as a student liaison. I represent the voice of the first year class for giving feedback and advising on curriculum changes for the didactic phase of medical education. The PLTL program introduced me to pedagogy, and I learned that I have an interest in curriculum design. I am now planning for medical education to be part of my future career.



5 - Lillyan Mullin

PLTL also changed the way I approached my own education. I made sure to focus on collaborative learning and consulting my peers. I learned firsthand the value of peer-peer discussion in the PLTL program. In medical school, I often notice that one of my peers is able to explain something to me in a way that it clicks. Professors serve as great education guides, but they are often so expert in their field that it is challenging to remember the struggle of learning. Peer-peer discussions often drive the most meaningful 'aha' moments in education.

Thank you for thinking of me! Med school has been very intellectually challenging and interesting.

From the University of Texas at Dallas to Cancer Research

Michael Saenz, Director of Peer Tutoring, Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), Supplemental Instruction (SI), and Web Services in the Student Success Center, recommended Usman Hyder as a former Peer Leader and notable alumnus.

I participated in the PLTL program my first year at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) as a student (2014-2015), became a PLTL leader in 2015, and continued leading different subjects (general and organic chemistry) until my last year in college (2018).

I'm currently a postdoctoral fellow at University of Colorado (CU) Anschutz medical campus (David Bentley lab). I got my PhD in genetics in 2023 at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW, Dallas, TX) and am currently studying molecular mechanisms in cancer biology at CU Anschutz. The goal of this work is to identify targetable dependencies in the transcription apparatus that are important for oncogenic transformation. We have identified a few key transcription steps that are altered in the transformation process that converts normal cells to cancer cells.



6 - Usman Hyder, PhD

My current goal is to apply for research faculty positions at universities within the next ~1.5 years. I use the skills I learned as a peer leader almost every day in my current day job. I've mentored many students, technicians, undergraduates, and sometimes other postdocs, training them on both experiments but also how to think and develop independently. Throughout that mentoring, I use the skills I learned as a leader to help guide people to solutions for their problems and how to design experiments so that next time they don't need me (how PLTL teaches students to think critically for themselves). PLTL gave me the confidence to know that I can teach large classrooms as a future professor, and gave me the soft skills to manage multiple

students at one time in the lab. During my time at UTD, I also served in a few managerial roles where I observed and trained other PLTL leaders. All of this experience gave me leadership experience early that I believe will help me as I navigate the next few years and after I become research faculty somewhere. In fact, the other day I was just guiding someone through some computational analysis and I remember leading them to the answer to debug their code instead of outright telling them why their code wasn't working (what PLTL teaches us). I'm thankful for my time as a leader and what skills it gave me that impact me now almost a decade later.

Editor's Note: Usman Hyder also served on the PLTLIS Board of Directors, including as its Secretary, from 2016-2021.

From California State University, Sacramento, to PALumni...

Jennifer Lundmark, Professor of Biology, with colleague Corey Shanbrom, Professor of Mathematics, guide the CSUS Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Program, with colleagues Vincent Pigno and Matthew Krauel, both faculty in mathematics. They reached out to two **PALumni**, Aracely Martinez and Melissa Bardo.

For more information on the PAL Program: <https://www.csus.edu/college/natural-sciences-mathematics/peer-assisted-learning-program-pal/>

Dr. Aracely Martinez is an Anatomy Instructor at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Paul L. Foster School of Medicine in El Paso, Texas. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Biomedical Sciences from the California State University Sacramento in 2019. While at CSU Sacramento, she was a Lead Facilitator of Introductory Human Anatomy through the Peer Assisted Learning Program, which sparked her love for anatomy instruction. She then earned a Master of Science in Anatomy Education from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 2020, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Clinical Anatomy from the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans in 2025 where she honed her cadaveric dissection and CT-based anatomical modeling skills. She is passionate about anatomical and medical education, and has experience teaching gross anatomy to medical, dental, allied health, and nursing students.



7 - Aracely Martinez

Melissa Bardo serves as the Director of Government Affairs for EdTrust-West, advocating at the state and local levels for policies that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the California education system.

At Sac State (California State University, Sacramento), Melissa found both community and purpose through her leadership in the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program, helping students navigate lower-division science courses and supporting faculty in transforming the way they approach science education. She also participated in student advocacy, eventually serving as President of ASI (Associated Students, Inc.) and sparking a lasting passion for education policy, social justice, and systemic change. Having experienced the transformational power of higher education firsthand, she now works to ensure that all students across California – particularly those most marginalized by the education system – have equitable access to the same life-changing opportunities.

A proud product of public schools and both public university systems (CSU and UC), Melissa holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Sacramento State and a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the University of California, Davis. She also has a Graduate certificate in Applied Policy and Government from Sacramento State.



8 - Melissa Bardo

Short Takes & Tips

- SHARE NEWS FROM YOUR CAMPUS! Send news items, story suggestions, and updates from your campus Peer-Led Team Learning program to info@ptlis.org
- Follow PLTLIS on LinkedIn: Share your enthusiasm and spread the word about PLTL!
- 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.
- 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!*