

The Peer Learning Association and the Learning by Teaching Model

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Beginning in 2009, a dedicated group of undergraduates took the initiative on the UW-Madison campus to develop a Peer Learning Association. The Peer Learning Association (PLA) operates by working with interested faculty/staff in development of peer learning programs tailored to their students' needs. The core concept behind the program is "learning by teaching" (Ploetzner et al. 1999). The specific topics/concepts to be addressed are determined by the course's faculty/staff and are communicated to peer members in advance of the weekly meetings. Peer members are responsible for learning the material well enough to teach it to others. The Peer Facilitator randomly assigns topics/concepts to peer members. During sessions, our Peer Facilitators "lead from the sidelines"; they do not lecture. Their primary role during their weekly sessions is to keep the peer group on track or to steer peer group members in the right direction via Socratic questioning. It is the peer group members who teach each other. This session described the basic organization of the PLA, the weekly training we provide our Peer Facilitators and the organization of a typical weekly peer group session. Access to the PLA handbook and time for questions about the organization can be found at: <https://uwmadison.box.com/v/PeerLearning>.

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Citing This Article

Heitz, J. 2016. The Peer Learning Association and the Learning by Teaching Model. Article 36 in *Tested Studies for Laboratory Teaching*, Volume 37 (K. McMahon, Editor). Proceedings of the 37th Conference of the Association for Biology Laboratory Education (ABLE). <http://www.ableweb.org/volumes/vol-37/?art=36>

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