As we wait to get started . . .

• Brief intros at tables
  – Name
  – Institution
  – Role
  – How are you currently using Peer Leaders?
Upgrade Your Peer Leader Program by Creating High-Impact and Transformative Experiences

Bryce Bunting, Brigham Young University

Dallin George Young, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
Transformative Learning

• Reflect on one of your own transformative learning experiences . . .

  – What did you learn? How were you changed?

  – What made this experience so impactful?
Transformative Learning

*What were the common characteristics of these experiences?*
Hopes for Today

What do you hope to gain from the session?
Goals for the Workshop

1. Briefly review key research on Peer Leadership
2. Introduce 3 tools or lenses for strengthening the PL experience
3. Discuss practical strategies for increasing transformative potential of the PL experience
4. Work collaboratively to develop concrete plans for improving the PL experiences on our campuses.
What is Peer Leadership?
Toward a Definition of Peer Leadership

“Students who have been selected, trained, and designated by a campus authority to offer educational services to their peers. These services are intentionally designed to assist peers toward attainment of educational goals”

(Newton & Ender, 2010, p. 6).
Toward a Definition of Peer Leadership

- **Common Elements in Definitions and Descriptions:**
  - Legitimacy within the institution
  - Responsibility to provide services related to educational mission of the institution
  - Asymmetry in experience between the peer mentor and the student recipient of the service
  - Proximity in situation such that they can still be considered peers
- (Collier, 2015; Newton & Ender, 2010; Whitman, 1988).
Synonymous Terms?

- Peer Leader
- Peer Educator
- Peer Mentor
Examples of Campus-Based Organizations with Peer Leader Roles

- Athletics
- Academic – peer advisor
- Academic – Supplemental Instruction leader
- Academic – tutor
- Academic – teaching assistant, lab assistant
- Admissions
- Campus activities
- Community service or service learning
- Counseling or mental health
- Financial literacy
- First-year experience
- Greek life
- International student office
- Judicial affairs or student conduct
- Multicultural affairs
- Orientation
- Outdoor or recreational sports
- Physical health
- Religious
- Residence hall
- Student clubs and organization(s)
- Student government
- Student productions or media
- Study abroad
- Others?
What do we NOT mean?

Consider the Teaching Assistant

• Not a PL:
  – Grading (feeding the Scantron machine)
  – Proctoring Tests
  – Passing out homework

High-Impact PL:
  – Engaging with students
  – Leading a recitation or lab section
  – Good mentoring from faculty member
What benefits have you observed from Peer Leader experiences?
Benefits of Peer Leadership

• The use of Peer Leaders provides benefits to:
  – Programs
  – Students
  – Peer Leaders
Benefits of Peer Leadership

- Ability to manage groups, empathize with students, and facilitate learning
- Development in
  - Communication and leadership skills
  - Knowledge of campus resources
  - Interaction with faculty, staff, and peers
  - Critical thinking
  - Decision making
  - Problem solving
  - Ability to work under pressure
- Factual knowledge, helping others, friendships, personal growth, positive regard for instructor skills,
- Peer leaders are also more likely to experience integrative and applied learning in their educational experience which can positively impact employability.
2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- Student survey administered from 3/26/2013-6/1/2013
- 4,932 student peer leaders responded to the survey (28.6% response rate)
- 49 Institutions in the US
- Student sample over-represents women and high academic performers
- Student sample has adequate representation by race/ethnicity, class standing, & Pell Grant eligibility
# Connection with the Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate Experience</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of campus resources</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with peers</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of belonging at institution</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with staff members</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with people from different backgrounds</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful interaction with faculty</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people from different backgrounds</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to engage in continuous learning</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to persist at institution</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Interaction with Faculty and Peers

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<td>Desire to persist at institution</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Real-World Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Development</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal communication</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Real-World Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employability Outcomes</th>
<th>% Increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building professional interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying knowledge to a real-world setting</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing together info from different places</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing direction through persuasion</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing a problem from new perspectives</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for success in a FT job after grad</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating innovative approaches to a task</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in ethical decision-making</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing ideas with others in writing</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satisfaction with PLEs

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your peer leadership experiences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly dissatisfied</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly satisfied</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you recommend being a peer leader to other students?

- Yes, absolutely: 80.4%
- Yes, for most of the peer leadership positions I have held: 14.9%
- Yes, for some of the peer leadership positions I have held (but not most): 3.0%
- No: 1.3%
- I don't know: 0.4%
In their own words…

It helps me because I learn to better manage my time, and since I can manage my time more efficiently I feel like I perform better in class. Tutoring in subjects also helps because I need to stay updated with the information I tutor, so it's almost like I'm studying as well when I tutor others. It has also helped me give better presentations because I am more comfortable now talking in front of others.
My experience as a peer leader has been invaluable. Once I began to realize that this was an opportunity for my own personal growth as well as the growth of my students, my experience changed. I have become a better mentor, a better student, a better family member, a better friend, and a better person as I have sought to apply the principles I have learned to all aspects of my life.
How do we provide a PL experience with transformative potential?
3 Tools for designing transformative PL experiences

#1 – Legitimate Peripheral Participation

#2 – High Impact Practices

#3 – Stories of Transformation
#1 – What is Learning?
Acquisition Metaphor

Learning =
Acquisition Metaphor

Learning =
Significant Learning Experiences
Participation Metaphor

Learning =
# Two Metaphors for Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Acquisition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Participation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is learning?</strong></td>
<td>Gaining knowledge/skill</td>
<td>Becoming a participant or member of a community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student role</strong></td>
<td>Recipient, consumer, constructor</td>
<td>Co-participant, apprentice, newcomer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher role</strong></td>
<td>Provider, facilitator, trainer</td>
<td>Experienced participant, master, advanced peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is knowledge?</strong></td>
<td>possession, ownership, accumulation</td>
<td>Activity, discourse, practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What does it mean to</strong></td>
<td>To have or possess</td>
<td>To belong, participate, become</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>know?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Sfard, 1998)
Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

• Learning = becoming a full participant in a “community of practice”

• Learning occurs through
  a) Acting or participating,
  b) In legitimate/meaningful practices,
  c) With more experienced members of the community
Learning as Transformation

“[Learning], in its deepest sense . . . concerns the opening of identities – exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. . . . It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. [Learning] is not merely formative – it is transformative.”

(Wenger, 1998)
#2 – High-Impact Practices
High-Impact Practices

“Teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending upon learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts. [HIPs are] practices that educational research suggests increase rates of retention and student engagement.”

(Kuh, 2010)
10 High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

• Creates an investment of time and energy
• Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
• Real-world applications
• High expectations
• Includes frequent feedback
• Exposure to diverse perspectives
• Demands reflection and integrated learning
• Demonstration of competence/Accountability

(Kuh & O’Donnell, 2013)
High-Impact Practices

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- Peer Leadership?
In their own words . . .

“When I became a peer mentor, my whole academic focus changed. . . . This was a very influential turning point for me. . . . I was able to become the type of learner that every college student has the responsibility to be.”

[Jennifer]
(Bunting, et al., 2012, p. 67)
#3 – Transformative Peer Learning

• Research Q?: What are the characteristics of transformative PL experiences?


**Free ePrints:**
[http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/8H63BxX45nVC7ev5mpwE/full](http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/8H63BxX45nVC7ev5mpwE/full)
Stories of Transformation

• Narrative analysis of the critical incidents of 12 experienced peer leaders (2+ years of exp.)
  – Purposeful & theoretical sampling (Patton, 2012)
  – Participants created timelines of their “critical peer leader experiences”
  – Timelines informed/guided semi-structured interviews

• Applied thematic analysis to identify themes of transformation across the narrative data
A framework for high-impact and transformative PL experience

- **Meaningful everydayness**
- Engagement w/ unfamiliarity
- Growth-oriented “pretending”
- Reflection on experience
- Participation alongside supportive mentors
A framework for high-impact and transformative PL experience

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If we were to end the workshop right now, what would you do to strengthen your peer leadership program?
So What?
What does this all mean?
Graffiti Board

What Q’s do you hope will be answered during Part II of the Workshop?
Practical Recommendations

a) Educative Experience

b) Reflection on Experience

c) Relationships that Support Learning
Educative Experience
Table Discussions

- What was it about this experience that led to growth?
- How might things have been different?
Not all experiences are created equal

Miseducative Experience
Closes off future opportunities; inhibits future growth

Vs.

Educative Experience
Expands opportunities for future growth

(Dewey, 1938)
10 High-Impact Practices

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- Demonstration of competence/Accountability  
  (Kuh & O’Donnell, 2013)
“Superlative performance is really a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities . . . done consistently or correctly, and all together” (Chambliss, 1989)
Meaningful “Everyday” Experiences

- Clear connection to “the whole” (legitimate)
- Safe & low-risk
- Eventually lead to more advanced/skilled participation
- Include regular interactions with Senior PLs, supervisors, faculty, etc.
Legitimate Peripheral Participation
*(Lave & Wenger, 1991)*

Meaningful “Everyday” Experiences (New Peer Leaders)

- Phone calls to prospective students
- Working alongside senior PL
- Documentation of student contacts
- Weekly reports
- One-on-one meetings w/ supervisors
- Readings, training videos
Meaningful “Everyday” Experiences (Experienced PLs)

• Involvement in developing new programming/resources
• Responsibility for developing training for new PLs
• Mentoring new PLs
• Personal learning plans
• Research & presentations
High-Impact Moments

• Elevation
  – Surprise, meaning, fulfillment, integration
    • Initial training/orientation experiences
    • “Capstone” experiences
    • Introduction of “threshold concepts”

• Pride
  – Celebration, milestones, transitions, triumph
    • Meaningful award recognitions
    • Senior PL opportunities
    • Letter to a new PL
High-Impact Moments

• Insight
  – New understanding, reflection, dissonance
    • Seminal concepts (e.g. readings, videos, etc.)
    • Recorded roleplays/simulations
    • Summative reflections

• Connection
  – Shared experiences, vulnerability, sense of community/belonging
    • Inductions/Graduations
    • Celebrating learning (e.g. Senior PL Showcase)
    • Sharing of failures
Work Time

• What are the simple, “everyday” experiences you could provide?

• Does timing matter?
  – How might brand new PLs be asked to “participate?”
  – What about more experienced PLs?

**What are the small changes you could make that would have an outsized impact?**
Reflection on Experience
Reflection on Experience

• “We do not learn from experience… we learn from reflecting on experience.”

– John Dewey
Reflection on Experience

• “Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning.”

– Boud, Keogh, & Walker
Why does reflection matter?

21st Century Learning Outcomes

Improved Performance

Opportunity to challenge fundamental assumptions

Develops Metacognitive Abilities
Why does reflection matter?

Opportunity to develop the teacher/learner relationship

Communicates an investment in the PL as learner
How to Build in Reflection to PL Experiences

• Reflection on action

• Reflection in action

Schon, 1983
How to Build in Reflection to PL Experiences

- Reflection on action
  - 1-1 Meetings
  - Staff Meetings
  - Retreats
  - Training

- Reflection in action
  - Planning
  - Informal interactions
  - Role playing
  - Training
  - Making reflective thinking part of the culture

Schon, 1983
Reflection in PL Experiences

Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training? (n = 3,353)

- Yes: 68.8%
- No: 28.8%
- I don't know: 2.4%

What type of additional ongoing formal training did you receive? (n = 2,303)

- Retreat: 38.5%
- Staff meetings: 61.2%
- Meetings with supervisor: 47.8%
- Other: 7.1%

(2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders)
Models for Facilitating Reflection

• Borton:
  – What?
  – So What?
  – Now What?
Models for Facilitating Reflection

• Borton:
  – What?
    • Describe what happened
  – So What?
    • Talk about any successes or disappointments; what did you learn?
  – Now What?
    • If you could do this again, what would you do differently?
Kolb’s Learning Theory: Prehension

- Prehension – how we grasp information
- Dialectic:
  - Concrete experience
    - We gain knowledge through our actions, perceptions, emotions, senses
  - Abstract conceptualization
    - We gain knowledge through exposure to new ideas, logical reasoning
Kolb’s Learning Theory: Transformation

- Transformation – what do we do with new information, how do we make meaning of it
- Dialectic
  - Reflective Observation
    - We make meaning of new information by comparing it to previous knowledge
  - Active Experimentation
    - We make meaning of new information by using it
Kolb Learning Theory

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

Abstract Conceptualization
Kolb Learning Theory

Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflective Observation

"Teaching Around The Circle"

Abstract Conceptualization
Kolb Learning Theory: Application

• Concrete Experience:
  – Interviews
  – Field experience
  – Observations
  – Demonstrations
  – Simulations/case studies/role play
  – Stories, videos

• Reflective Observation:
  – Journals
  – Discussion – small groups, class
  – Silent reflection
  – Asking for reactions

• Abstract Conceptualization
  – Print materials (books, articles, etc.)
  – Lectures
  – Programmed instruction

• Active Experimentation:
  – Papers
  – What-if situations
  – Lab experiences
  – Devising and executing action plans
  – Problem-solving activity
Kolb’s Learning Theory: Application – Time management

- Ask students to spend a week tracking their time hour-by-hour (Concrete Experience)

- Start class with small group discussions about their time-tracking experience (Reflective Observation)

- Present material on time management strategies, prioritization, and suggest approaches to improve use of time (Abstract Conceptualization)

- Have students engage in an exercise where they plan their next week (Active Experimentation)
Making Reflection Manageable

• “Micro-reflective activities”
  – 1-minute message
  – Highs and lows
  – Looking back, looking forward
  – Involving prompts in reports:
    • “How was the time spent effective?”

– Keys: Flexible, spontaneous, authentic
Application

• Respond to the prompts asking you to reflect on… reflection.
  – What is salient to you about incorporating reflection in PL experiences?
  – How will this improve the learning experiences of your peer leaders (in other words, so what)?
  – What are some ways you can build this into your PL program (Now what)?
Relationships that Support Learning
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(Kuh & O’Donnell, 2013)
Relationships Matter

- *How College Works*, Chambliss & Takacs; 2014
- *Thriving in Transitions*, Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson; 2012
- *Student Success in College*, Kuh, et al; 2005
- *Making the Most of College*, Light, 2000
- *What Matters in College?*, Astin, 1993
Long-Term Impact

Students who had a meaningful relationship with one faculty member were twice as likely to report

(a) being engaged at work
(b) an overall sense of well-being

*Gallup & Purdue University, 2014
Long-Term Impact

“Good developmental relationships promote socialization, learning, career advancement, and preparation for leadership. . . . Those with mentors tend to be more satisfied with their careers, enjoy more promotions and higher income, and report greater commitment to the organization or profession.”

(Johnson, 2007)
The Power of Relationships

Staff  Peer Leader  Student
Problematic Relationships
Balancing Tensions

Compensation  < ------------------ >  Volunteer
Mentor        < ------------------ >  Supervisor
Autonomy      < ------------------ >  Direction
Learning      < ------------------ >  Satisfaction
What makes the difference?

(a) Genuine concern interest in the student as an individual;

(b) A focus on and excitement for learning;

(c) Connection to future goals/plans

*Gallup & Purdue University, 2014
Practical Recommendations

• Regular one-on-one meetings between PLs and faculty/staff

• Staff-led project/research teams
  – Design & delivery of training
  – Research/assessment

• Personal Learning Plans

**Relationships w/ Senior PLs
Personal Learning Plans

Objective: Create a learning plan that connects your PL role with future goals/aspirations

a) Submit proposal to staff mentor

b) Complete readings (i.e. articles, book chapters, TED Talks)

c) Seek out growth experiences

d) Engage in regular written reflection to integrate learning

e) Meet regularly w/ staff mentor

f) Celebrate and share learning through final “capstone”
Application

– How are you creating structure, environments, and experiences that encourage meaningful relationships between PLs and others in your program?
– Are there any current barriers that might be inhibiting the formation of productive learning relationships?
– What are you doing already that is working?
– What could you implement to improve relationships
  • In the next month?
  • Next 6 months?
  • Next year?
Thank You!

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