

Peer Assisted Learning in Mathematics - An Intern's Perspective



Jack Tabcart

About Me

- Undergraduate at Loughborough University
 - About to go into 4th year of study in October (MMath)
 - Involved with Loughborough's SYMBoL Project and its **Peer Assisted Learning** scheme
- 1) (Participation in PAL as student)
 - 2) (Participation in PAL as 'student leader')
 - 3) Involvement with PAL as Ambassador/intern



Basic Information about the SYMBOL Project and PAL



- SYMBOL Project set up by Loughborough's MEC in 2011, to better support second year mathematicians.
- Two mathematics modules ('Complex Variables' and 'Vector Spaces') selected for attention.
- Interns employed over summer 2011 to develop resources for those modules.
- PAL scheme implemented from 2011/12 academic year onwards in those modules.

PAL Scheme

- Third and fourth year students trained by Loughborough staff to be 'student leaders'.
- Student leaders run one session per week (typically 10 sessions per semester) in Vector Spaces and Complex Variables.
- Focus on module-specific mathematics. Those students attending PAL sessions are encouraged to be more actively involved in their learning!

Participation in PAL: as a student



(October 2011 – June 2012)

Participation in PAL: as a student leader



(June 2012 – present)



Enhancing the second year experience for undergraduate mathematicians

Participation in PAL: as an Ambassador

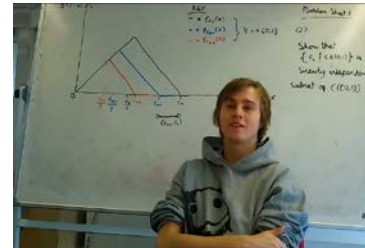
(February 2013 – present)

PAL Ambassadors

- Three mathematics students with interest in and personal experience of PAL support.
- Part-time (paid) work during term time, to investigate the peer support situation at LU.
- Three different strands of work – assessing current and future effectiveness of PAL, and its place within the wider peer support context at Loughborough.

My work as a PAL Ambassador

- Sustainability and future effectiveness of our PAL scheme.
- Conducted/transcribed interviews with current PAL leaders (2012/13).
- Produced recruitment video aimed at second year mathematics students.
- Presented findings at meetings and seminars at Loughborough Uni.
- Discussed future modules for PAL support.





Participation in PAL: as an Intern

(July 2013 – August 2013)

Why Did I Intern?

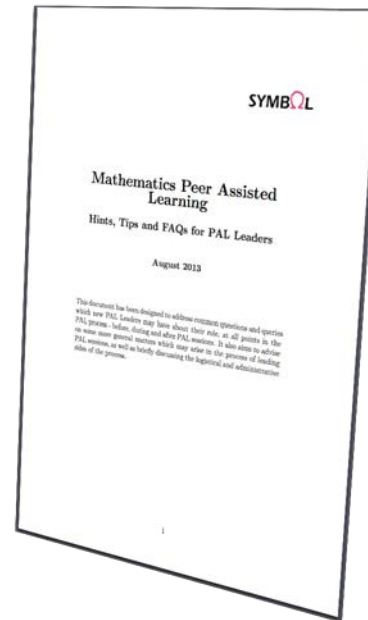
- Unique opportunity arose at the Mathematics Education Centre!
- Chance to develop further resources for PAL leaders to use (maths-specific and general leader support materials).
- Fed in nicely from my work as an Ambassador – in terms of recruitment/training/support of new leaders.

My Work as an Intern

- Build upon existing intern-produced resources for both modules.
- Liaise with appropriate academic staff members, in order to provide effective support materials where they were needed.
- Ensure materials produced were relevant and clear – work with incoming PAL leaders too!

Resources Produced

- FAQs document – aimed at answering leaders' questions about the PAL process.
- Vector Spaces handout – aimed at helping leaders (and students) who may be struggling with a specific part of the course.



My experience as a PAL Ambassador and Intern

- Plenty of support offered to me when I needed it.
- High level of independence and creative control over what I produced – plenty of trust!
- An exciting opportunity to see the PAL support scheme from a different angle, and contribute to the future of how maths is taught at Loughborough University!

Skills Developed from my Ambassadorial & Internship roles

- Improved mathematical knowledge.
- Communication and presentation of ideas.
- Increased confidence discussing academic matters with staff members.
- Time management skills and the ability to work independently.
- Greater confidence when presenting my work at meeting, seminars and conferences!



Thank you for listening!

Any Questions?