



Charles McVean, Founder

REIMAGINE + INNOVATE + REINVENT



DESIGN CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

As schools shifted to virtual learning,
Peer Power maintained its strong commitment
to student success by designing virtual programs
that provide high quality academic, social-emotional,
and college and career readiness support.

VIRTUAL



LEARNING



Descriptions of our programming, our findings and the takeaways that have shaped our current programming are below.



WHO WE ARE

Peer Power's mission is to inspire and empower student success through peer-to-peer tutoring. Since 2005, Peer Power has provided tutoring and mentoring in classrooms and after school for students in Memphis, TN. Today, Peer Power trains high-performing college students, called Success Coaches, to tutor high school students in the classroom and high-performing high school students to tutor and mentor students in grades K-8 during after school programs. We partner with principals, team-up with teachers, and serve students!

Dr. Sara Benson, Learning Lead + Program Director



I had the opportunity to serve as the Program Director for several of the programs we are highlighting today! In a world full of chaos and uncertainty Peer Power was able to serve as a **"lighthouse"** for students — illuminating the rocky path to achieving their post-secondary goals! It is with great pleasure to share with you all our findings and the experiences we had while reimagining what educational support looks within our current climate.

Dr. Marygrace Hemme, Director of Learning + Development



As Director of Learning and Development, I work with so many of my dedicated colleagues to design our programs and prepare and develop our tutors and mentors. Relationships are at the heart of Peer Power's programming, and during the time of social distancing, it became clear to us that interactive, individualized, student-centered support is key to student growth. Creating opportunities to build relationships with students of all ages across the Memphis community and beyond is the passion that drives us into the future.

2020
2021

PEER POWER INNOVATES
PANDEMIC-IMPACTED PROGRAM DESIGN

FALL 2020

VIRTUAL LEARNING LAB

Free virtual after-school program offered to all students across the State of Tennessee. Tutoring was provided by college-aged Success Coaches.

TWO SESSIONS PER DAY

Three days a week and on Saturdays from September-November 2020

Offered support in:

- » English 9 & 10
- » Algebra 1 & 2
- » Geometry
- » ACT Prep/College Readiness

Key Outcomes:

- » **Increased** average school attendance rate
- » **Increased** FASFA completion rate

FINDINGS

Most participants in the Virtual Learning Lab were from our local school district

Our college readiness sessions had the highest attendance

USING THIS DATA

We pivoted our approach for Spring 2021 to focus on providing virtual college and career readiness support for our local district.

SPRING 2021

VIRTUAL ACT PREP UNIVERSITY

Provided 6 weeks of ACT preparation through a video course and live virtual sessions with Peer Power Success Coaches.

Sessions on:

- » Test taking strategies
- » English, math, and science content review
- » Practice tests

Key Outcomes:

- » **Increased** ACT composite sub-scores
- » **Increased** FASFA completion rate
- » **Increased** TN Hope Lottery scholarship attainment

COLLEGE 101

Bi-weekly virtual sessions with seniors from partner schools to support the college admissions process

Session Topics:

- » Finding the Right College Major
- » Choosing Your College
- » Scholarships and Financial Aid
- » Campus Life
- » Student Involvement Opportunities

Key Outcomes:

- » **Increased** FASFA completion rate
- » **Increased** post-secondary enrollment rates

THE UOFM CONNECT – VIRTUAL CAMPUS TOUR

Students and parents from partner schools were invited to a customized virtual campus tour on Zoom. Provided an overview of campus life and specialized sessions tailored to students' interests from:

- » Student organizations on campus
- » Faculty from majors across campus
- » Admissions and financial aid representatives



Key Outcomes:

Overall, participants in Peer Power Virtual programming self-reported:

- » Experiencing **less screen fatigue** during our programs than during other virtual learning
- » A **reduction in anxiety** about the college admissions process after program attendance
- » **87%** responded they felt more motivated to apply for college after program attendance



our numbers
come from the heart

SURVEY DATA:

- » Number of participants: **981**
- » Surveyed participants after program completion for Virtual Learning Lab, UM Connect and ACT Prep University
- » 24 questions about Peer Power programming, college admissions, scholarships, financial aid and how COVID-19 has affected them.
- » **379 students** responded to survey

MEMPHIS-SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS DATA:

- » Attendance Data
- » End-of-Course testing data
- » ACT testing data





WHAT WE LEARNED

During pandemic impacted programming, students who were already experiencing screen fatigue were most interested in interactive virtual support for college and career readiness. Our virtual sessions that provided individualized information and opportunities for high school students to interact with college aged tutors and mentors had the most profound impact. Many of our student participants were persistent in their commitment to their goals and showed tremendous growth and resilience despite the challenges.

Integrated, relationship focused programming led to a reduction in anxiety and greater student motivation and engagement in the college readiness and application process.

Based on this learning, Peer Power has created additional college and career readiness support programs that address the needs of students impacted by social distancing and challenges of virtual learning. We have expanded our focus within and beyond high school by hiring and training high school students as tutors for K-8 students during after school programs, expanding our college and career readiness camps, launching the Peer Power Hub virtual career discovery and connection platform, and developing a learning community to support incoming freshman at the University of Memphis.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Margarita Hernandez

Virtual ACT Prep Student who is now a SIT tutor:



"Peer Power's Virtual ACT Prep helped me not panic during the test and showed me how to make wise choices about how to answer questions. I really enjoyed it and liked how everyone was friendly and had patience to answer my questions. My experience helped me decide to become a SIT tutor. The best thing about being a tutor is making connections with the students and being a mentor to them."

PEER POWER REINVENTS 2021-2022 AND BEYOND

SIT PROGRAM

Peer Power's SIT (Student Intern Tutor) Program is an expansion of our proven near-peer tutoring model in which we hire and train high achieving high school students as interns who tutor elementary and middle school students during after school programs. The program developed for each school is designed in partnership with teachers and school administrators.

THIS PROGRAM ENGAGED:

- » Over 200 high school student intern tutors
- » 1700+ K-8 students

SPRING BREAK ENRICHMENT CAMPS

Student intern tutors and partner high school students were invited to attend a weeklong college and career readiness camp on the University of Memphis Campus. In addition to these sessions, students and tutors toured downtown Memphis to connect with the culturally rich, economically growing and creatively vibrant city they call home.

THE PROGRAM INCLUDED:

- » College and Financial Literacy Prep
- » UM Connect University Tour
- » Downtown Immersion Experience

PEER POWER HUB

High school students interested in discovering immediate career paths are provided access to the Peer Power Hub virtual career development platform. Peer Power Hub helps students better understand prospective fields and employers, and set realistic goals based on real-life expectations for their future careers.

IT PROVIDES:

- » Career discovery resources
- » Skills assessment
- » Training modules and certificates
- » Job listings
- » Networking opportunities with employers



PEER EMPOWERMENT FELLOWSHIP

Learning Community for incoming University of Memphis freshmen to provide social and academic support and training for students who are planning to work as a Peer Power Success Coaches in high school classrooms.

Take two courses while beginning to work:

- » Academic Strategies
- » Intro to Ethics
- » Work at least 40 hours during the semester as a Success Coach



INSPIRE +
EMPOWER



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