



PEER TUTORING AN INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY: A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

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Introduction

Peer tutoring is an effective teaching strategy for all students. Most students find it interesting to interact with their peer group and they ask their queries without any hesitation and comfortable while learning along with their peer group.

In India peer tutoring have been used non-systematically and hence most of the students could not use this method beneficially. Hence it becomes an area of thrust and creative approach in the teaching learning process. Teachers can also get rid of overburden of teaching and students strength. More and more systematic work can be promoted to increase the use of peer tutoring in classrooms.

Peer tutoring is a teaching strategy that uses students as tutors. The student pairs might work on academic, social, behavioral, functional or even social skills. There are many different ways to pair students, such as by ability level, skills mastered, or age. The following model descriptions will assist you in selecting the correct model based on certain criteria. Peer tutoring has been extensively researched as an effective strategy to engage students and promote academic success.

Peer Tutoring Models

There are many different ways you can group students to tutor each other. It is important that the teacher make sure that any material being reviewed by tutor groups is accurately assessed in these groups. Peer tutoring is not meant for introducing new materials or concepts. You need to monitor for understanding on both ends.

Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT): In this model, the whole class would be divided into pairs, or small groups no larger than five. The groups should include students with different ability levels. For example, you would use this model if the whole class were preparing for a

school-wide spelling bee. Class wide peer tutoring involves dividing the entire class into groups of two to five students with differing ability levels. Students then act as tutors, tutees, or both tutors and tutees. Typically, CWPT involves highly structured procedures, direct rehearsal, competitive teams, and posting of scores (Maheady, Harper, & Mallette, 2001). The entire class participates in structured peer tutoring activities two or more times per week for approximately 30 minutes (Harper & Maheady, 2007). While the procedures and routines in CWPT remain the same, student pairings or groups may change weekly or biweekly. In CWPT, student pairings are fluid and may be based on achievement levels or student compatibility.

Cross-Age Peer Tutoring: Younger students are paired with an older student. The older student is there to model good behavioral, functional, adaptive or social skills. For example, a second grader could be paired with a kindergarten student to show them how to walk to the cafeteria, get a lunch tray, select foods, and find a place to sit. Older students are paired with younger students to teach or review a skill. The positions of tutor and tutee do not change. The older student serves as the tutor and the younger student is the tutee. The older student and younger student can have similar or differing skill levels, with the relationship being one of a cooperative or expert interaction. Tutors serve to model appropriate behavior, ask questions, and encourage better study habits. This arrangement is also beneficial for students with disabilities as they may serve as tutors for younger students.

Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT): Two or more students alternate between acting as the tutor and tutee during each session, with equitable time in each role. Often, higher performing students are paired with lower performing students. RPT utilizes a structured format that encourages teaching material, monitoring answers, and evaluating and encouraging peers. Both group and individual rewards may be earned to motivate and maximize learning. Students in RPT may prepare the instructional materials and are responsible for monitoring and evaluating their peers once they have selected a goal and reward as outlined by their teacher.

Same-age Peer Tutoring: Peers who are within one or two years of age are paired to review key concepts. Students may have similar ability levels or a more advanced student can be

paired with a less advanced student. Students who have similar abilities should have an equal understanding of the content material and concepts. When pairing students with differing levels, the roles of tutor and tutee may be alternated, allowing the lower performing student to quiz the higher performing student. Answers should be provided to the student who is lower achieving when acting as a tutor in order to assist with any deficits in content knowledge. Same-age peer tutoring, like class wide peer tutoring, can be completed within the students' classroom or tutoring can be completed across differing classes. Procedures are more flexible than traditional class wide peer tutoring configurations.

Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS): Students are paired with students around the same ability level. The tutee and tutor roles can change based on which student needs help on a particular skill. For example, one student may help his partner with science vocabulary words, and then the partner may change roles and help the other student with multiplication facts. PALS is a version of the CWPT model, involves a teacher pairing students who need additional instruction or help with a peer who can assist (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000). Groups are flexible and change often across a variety of subject areas or skills. Cue cards, small pieces of cardstock upon which are printed a list of tutoring steps, may be provided to help students remember PALS steps (Spencer, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003). All students have the opportunity to function as a tutor or tutee at differing times. Students are typically paired with other students who are at the same skill level, without a large discrepancy between abilities.

Academic requirements are increasing and educational funding is decreasing. Thus, schools must develop creative means to accomplish these goals. One such example could be the use of peer tutors. Peer tutoring provides a low-cost, research-supported method to improve academics (The Access Center; Coenen, 2002; Colvin, 2007; Hooper & Walker, 2002; Stenhoff & Lignugaris, 2007).

Here are five benefits that exemplify the importance of peer teaching:

- **Increased Literacy Scores** — According to an Ohio University Pilot Study, Students who read and discuss story passages with their peers recall more content and score higher on assessments. The researcher divided four average-reading 6th grade students into pairs. The first pair participated in peer reading activities twice a week,

whereas students in the second pair read the same passages individually at the same frequency. The first pair scored higher on each reading assessment.

- **Developed Reasoning and Critical Thinking Skills** — Students who work in pairs and groups typically perform better on tests that involve reasoning and critical thinking, according an oft-cited study about science education. This is largely because students must become active learners, discussing and rationalizing lesson concepts in their own words.
- **Improved Confidence and Interpersonal Skills** — Peer teaching point to students building confidence and communication abilities. Pioneering research from 1988 states tutors improve self-esteem and interpersonal skills by giving feedback. Tutees realize these benefits by asking questions and receiving immediate clarification. A later study of at-risk students echoed these advantages.
- **Increased Comfort and Openness** -The same 1988 study indicates that “students generally identify more easily with peer helpers than with adult authority figures.” This helps create an environment in which students are more comfortable to ask questions and work through challenging problems in an environment free from class ridicule.
- **Versatility** - you can run a range of peer teaching exercises based on different subjects and objectives, possibly involving other grades and classes. Lots of ideas can lead to lots of fun for your students.

Basis for choosing peer tutoring -

- It is a widely-researched practice across ages, grade levels, and subject areas
- The intervention allows students to receive one-to-one assistance
- Students have increased opportunities to respond in smaller groups
- It promotes academic and social development for both the tutor and tutee
- Student engagement and time on task increases
- Peer tutoring increases self-confidence and self-efficacy (Spencer, 2006)
- The strategy is supported by a strong research base (e.g., Calhoon, Al Otaiba, Cihak, King, & Avalos, 2007; Kunsch, Jitendra, & Sood, 2007; Vasquez & Slocum, 2012)

How should tutors and tutees be selected?

One common method for determining dyads, or groups, involves ranking students from the highest performing to the lowest performing student for the particular activity or subject. Pairs can be formed by cutting the list in half and then matching the top performing student with the first lowest performing student, the second highest performing student with the second lowest performing student, and so forth (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Kazdan, 1999). If heterogeneous groups are desired, the number of students in each team should be determined. The list of students can then be numbered from one to the desired number of persons in a group and then repeated until the entire class is included (Harper & Maheady, 2007).

When selecting tutors, teachers should be cognizant of which students can be most helpful in the process. Teachers should be mindful of differing student personalities, needs, and preferences. Dyads or groups should be established accordingly.

How should peer tutoring models be selected?

Peer tutoring models are flexible and can be altered to meet individual student or class learning needs. The academic task should dictate the appropriate model based on content and learning goals. While there is some upfront planning and instruction, once students develop an understanding of procedures, groups or dyads can be altered dependent upon the setting, activity, or desired learning outcomes.

How much instruction is needed to use peer tutoring?

Depending on the subject area and model selected, one to four, 30- to 45-minute sessions can be devoted to teaching and modeling (see Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007; Spencer, 2006; Polloway, Patton, & Serna, 2008). Students should master each step of the model selected before learning additional skills. A teacher will need to closely monitor student progress to ensure that established procedures are followed, students utilize interpersonal skills, and content is covered.

Benefits of peer tutoring to children with Intellectual Disability-

Children with Intellectual disability is the most marginalized group in the society in order to give them effective training we need to give priority to basic academic learning hence as a special educator we keep on introducing effective strategies for person with Intellectual disability.

Peer tutoring can be an effective strategy for children with ID as it helps in enhancing social skill, interpersonal skill and they get mutual benefit from each other. As one child achieves the goal all other achieve goals. Peer tutoring is also the form of collaborative learning. It also reduces burden of teacher as he has to teach a lot of skill personally to the students. One child who acquires mastery over the skill starts teaching other student who has not yet acquired the skill. In peer tutoring children are paired with another student after proving teaching sessions to the peer tutor.

What can be done to support peer tutoring initiatives?

- Provide direct, systematic instruction for the peer tutoring process selected.
- Consider providing cue cards summarizing procedures or post procedures until automaticity is established.
- Model error correction procedures.
- Chart, and consider posting, student or group progress.
- Praise use of tutoring procedures in addition to correct responses.
- Share with students the link between peer tutoring and increased achievement.

Conclusion

This paper dealt peer tutoring strategy which is a need of an hour to make the teaching learning process more active. The peer tutoring method helps the students to interact with their fellow peer group and clarify their doubts. They will be placed in a more comfortable zone. The students get an opportunity to share their ideas and creativity can also be induced through peer tutoring method. Thus this peer tutoring strategy is a boon to the teachers and it has to right planned and implemented by the teacher to get effective result.

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