Teaching Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms Part 2: Peer Tutoring

Peer Tutoring

He / she who teaches learns

What is peer tutoring?

- **A type of co-operative learning – two students working together**

- **A more skilled 'tutor' helping a less skilled 'tutee' on task**

- **Effective for wide range of students with variety of needs**

- **Can be used in variety of curriculum areas, for example, maths, written language, reading**

Types of peer tutoring

- **Cross age peer tutoring**
- **Same age peer tutoring**
- **Whole class peer tutoring (whole class working in pairs for some activities)**
- **School wide peer tutoring (across levels)**

Rationale

■ **Based on theory of responsive social contexts for learning:**

– **learner has greater control in learning process**

– **learner has opportunities to initiate as well as respond**

– **learner receives frequent feedback on responses**

■ **Helps teacher cater for range of individual needs**

Rationale
continued ...

- **Capitalises on natural social and helping relationships between students**

- **Cost effective – no 'outside' resources required**

- **Increases opportunities for individualised instruction in the classroom**

- **Increases amount of instruction for individuals, for example, mileage in reading**

Tutoring skills

- **Showing interest**
- **Praising success**
- **Offering support, fading as independence increases**
- **Encouraging attempts**
- **Correcting errors without criticising etc.**

To be modelled and monitored by teacher

Features of successful programmes

- **Skill gap between tutor and tutee not too great, for example, reading, 2 year skill difference**

- **Tutoring sessions occur at least 3 times a week**

- **Tutoring programmes 6–8 week blocks**

- **Tutors trained by teacher in task procedures, positive feedback, and corrective feedback strategies**

Successful programmes
continued ...

- **Tutoring programme emphasises repetition/ practice of skills**

- **Tutoring gives tutee frequent opportunities to respond**

- **Teacher checks and reinforces tutee's progress regularly**

- **Teacher reviews tutoring process with tutors regularly**

Outcomes

- **Benefits for tutees**
  - **more individual teaching**
  - **gains in learning**
  - **gains in social/relationship skills, for example, communicating, accepting help**
  - **improvement in attitude towards learning**
  - **improvement in self-esteem**

Outcomes
continued …

- **Benefits for teachers**
  - increased opportunity to interact effectively with range of individual students
  - more effective use of time
  - greater coverage of individual needs
  - opportunities to observe students at work, assess skills

Outcomes
continued …

- **Benefits for tutors**
  - **practice/reinforcement of skills at earlier level**
  - **gains in learning**
  - **insight into the learning process**
  - **development of social/relationship skills, for example, listening, encouraging**
  - **development of responsibility**
  - **development of self-esteem**

Steps in implementing a programme

Before the programme

- **Start small – 2 or 3 pairs in class**
- **Select pairs – consider individuals' academic and social needs, match between students**
- **Assess tutors and tutees – establish current skill levels, for example, informal reading prose, 10 minute writing sample, spelling test**
- **Inform all parents/caregivers of students' involvement in programme**

Before the programme
continued …

- **Prepare resources – tutoring kits, for example, reading texts, tutoring guidelines, record sheets**
- **Train the tutors (2–3 sessions out of class):**
  - **introduce concept, explain reasons for selection**
  - **provide guidelines, for example, steps for each session, how to prompt tutee, how to praise**

Before the programme
continued …

- Model procedures to tutors
- Practise procedures/skills in pairs within tutoring group, provide feedback

Introduction of programme

- **Meet with tutors and tutees:**
  - **match pairs**
  - **explain procedures**
  - **model tutoring process again**
  - **get pairs to do shared introductory task, for example, decorate tutoring folders**
- **Could ask RTLB for assistance in setting up programme**

During the programme

- **Monitor tutors' 'teaching':**
  - **observe individuals and give feedback**
  - **review tutors' checklists**
  - **meet with tutors regularly for group debriefing**
- **Monitor tutees' progress:**
  - **observe individuals and give feedback**
  - **assess briefly on regular basis, for example, brief running records**

At end of programme

- **Reassess all tutors and tutees, for example, repeat running record, 10 minute writing samples, acknowledge progress**

- **Seek feedback regarding participation in programme**

- **Publicly recognise tutors' assistance, for example, certificate, award in assembly**

- **Notify parents of conclusion of programme, provide feedback**

Example: Paired writing

- ***The Paired Writing Handbook***
  Cameron and Walker, 1994, Longman Paul

- **Video: *Paired Writing***
  (available from Video Unit, Auckland College of Education)

Outline of paired writing

- **Older students (8+) with some writing difficulties help younger students (6+) who are emergent writers**

- **Students work together on the tutee's story**

- **20–30 min sessions, 3 or 4 times a week for 6–8 weeks**

Paired writing

continued …

■ **Tutor provides support that tutee needs to produce coherent story:**
- **talks to tutee about story idea**
- **helps tutee to 'hear' sounds in unknown words**
- **praises spelling attempts**
- **asks tutee to read completed story**
- **writes positive comment about story**
- **completes tutoring checklist**

Modifications

- Can be used with older, more proficient writers
- Different focus:
  - for example, extending story ideas, creating longer stories (tutor helps with story map, tutee aims for target output)
  - proofreading / editing (tutor helps tutee check meaning, punctuation, spelling etc)

Example: Reading

- *Peer Tutoring in Reading,* Booklet by John Medcalf, SES (available Dunedin College of Education)

- Cross Age Tutoring programme

- 10 week intervention

Example: Reading
continued ...

- **Peer tutors trained to use Pause, Prompt, Praise (PPP) procedures**

- **Tutoring sessions tape recorded to facilitate teacher monitoring**

- **Teacher feedback to tutors regarding use of PPP procedures**

Example: Reading
continued ...

■ **Typical tutoring session:**
  - **tutee chooses book from individual box**
  - **tutor talks to tutee about book – orientation**
  - **tutor listens to tutee read, uses PPP procedures**
  - **tutor records book read, tutor and tutee complete chart**

Example: Reading
continued ...

- **Research results (Medcalf, 1989):**
  - **average gains for tutors and tutees 1.5–2 years in reading level**
  - **higher average gains for tutors**
  - **progress maintained over time**
- **Body of research indicates successful approach – primary, secondary and adult literacy levels**

Modifications

- **Could use parent or teacher aide as tutor**
- **At later stage could use ex-tutees as tutors to help another group of children with reading/writing tasks, for example, children in another class**

Example: School-wide secondary

- **Senior students helping younger students with special needs**

- **Formal 'option' for senior students – training by SENCO, assessment, etc**

- **Support / tutoring in variety of areas:**
  - **Correspondence School work, study skills, life skills, remedial reading, spelling etc**

- **Tutoring related to IEP, tutors attend IEPs**

Reverse role tutoring

- **Student with special needs tutors a peer without particular needs in task they have become 'expert' at, for example:**
  - **computer program**
  - **communication symbols**
  - **game**
- **Strategy for inclusion – promotes interaction, acceptance etc**

Reciprocal peer tutoring

- Students with similar skills/needs tutor each other, alternate roles (within session, across sessions)

- Teacher trains all students in procedures, skills etc

- Both students gain insights into learning strategies/processes/styles
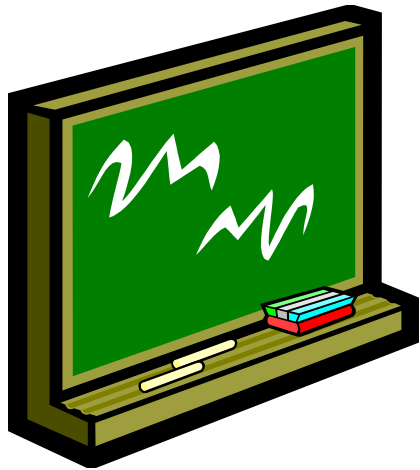
- Teacher monitors, provides feedback etc

Reciprocal peer tutoring
continued ...

- Can be used as apprenticeship for subsequent cross age/ability tutoring – part of tutor training

- Can be element in whole school peer support programme

Reciprocal Teaching

Background

- **Interactive teaching strategy developed to improve comprehension skills**

- **Approach pioneered by Palincsar and Brown, USA – 1980s**

- **NZ implementation of approach – 1980s, 1990s, for example, Dennis Moore, University of Auckland; video *Reciprocal Teaching: extending reading strategies* (by Shereen Maloney, for the Ministry of Education, 1993).**

Definition

- **A method of teaching students to read for meaning and to monitor their own understanding**

- **Involves a teacher and a group of students taking turns to lead a dialogue concerning a text**

Rationale

- **Based on theory and research regarding:**
  - **metacognitive strategy instruction (teaching students with difficulties 'how to' learn)**
  - **scaffolded instruction (providing support to students in interactive social learning contexts)**

Rationale
continued …

- As students move through school the curriculum becomes increasingly dependent on use of text

- Difficulties in comprehension affect progress in almost all areas of learning

- Skills often not taught, some students will not acquire them without help

Reciprocal teaching suitable for:

- students who are competent decoders but poor comprehenders
- reading instruction, theme work – upper primary level
- remedial reading instruction, reading in all subjects – secondary level
- all students – challenging non-fictional material

Comprehension strategies

- Dialogue between teacher and students structured by use of four key strategies which increase the student's active involvement with the text:
  - summarising
  - questioning
  - clarifying
  - predicting

Strategies
continued ...

- **Summarising:**
  - **identifying and stating most important information**
  - **move from sentences – paragraphs – whole passages**
- **Question generating:**
  - **formulating question about passage of text**
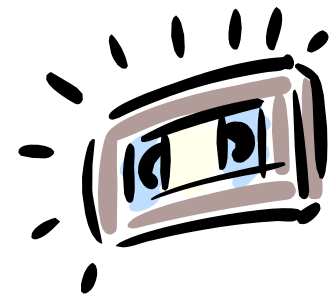 - **reinforces summarising/search for key idea**

Strategies
continued ...

- **Clarifying:**
  - **seeking clarification about difficult content, for example, unusual vocab, difficult structures/concepts**
  - **encourages searching for meaning**

- **Predicting:**
  - **hypothesising about what will come next**
  - **activates background knowledge**

Video

Reciprocal Teaching
– Extending Reading Strategies

Learning Media 1993

Procedures

- **Teacher asks students to read portion of text (instructional reading level)**

- **When passage read teacher models comprehension strategies:**
  - **summarises content**
  - **asks a question**
  - **discusses and clarifies any difficulties**
  - **makes a prediction about future content**

Procedures
continued ...

- Teacher selects next 'teacher' who repeats sequence

- Students take turns assuming 'teacher' role

- Once practised students can do independently, teacher can monitor and provide feedback

- Can incorporate other co-operative learning strategies, for example, reflection on group skills

Role of teacher

- **Introduce and explain strategy**
- **Instruct students how to use, model use of strategy**
- **Guide students' practice – prompt, praise, extend use of strategy**
- **Diagnose difficulties**
- **Monitor progress/assess outcomes**
- **Relinquish control**

Implementation in classroom

- **Use as intensive programme with readers who mastered decoding but difficulties with comprehension (in class, across classes)**

- **Use as part of balanced reading/language programme. Teach to all reading groups in class, use with each group in blocks (teacher guided then independent reading sessions)**

Implementation
continued …

■ **Use throughout curriculum when want class (range of reading levels) to access same material**

■ **Variety of organisational possibilities, for example:.**

  – **able readers – reciprocal teaching; rest of class – shared reading**

  – **average readers – reciprocal teaching; able readers – independent reading; less able readers – shared reading**

  – **less able readers – reciprocal teaching; rest – independent reading**

Outcomes

- **Overseas and New Zealand research indicates:**
  - **positive effects on reading comprehension, written work based on comprehension**
  - **positive outcomes – motivation to read**
  - **gains in social relationships, co-operative skills / co-operative learning**
  - **development of leadership skills**

Outcomes
continued …

- **Better results for extended programmes (for example, 20 sessions) students need thorough training in strategies and extensive practice of procedures**

Modifications

- **Can be used in peer tutoring**

- **Can be used to develop listening comprehension in pre-readers, beginning readers**

- **Can be combined with co-operative learning strategies, for example, group members assigned roles of questioner, predictor, clarifier, summariser / recorder**