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
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
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)
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
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