Peer assisted teaching learning strategies

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Abstract

Peer assisted learning Research supports that the use of pairs in the classroom provides more focus on individual student needs rather than a teacher-directed activity that may address the needs of a few students but not be able to meet the needs of all students.

Introduction

Peer assisted learning is a version of class wide peer tutoring where teachers evaluate and identify students who need help with specific skills and determine the most appropriate students in the class to assist them with those skills. The students are paired as "coaches" and "players" but rotate roles as activities change and students are required to work on a variety of skills. PATLS is designed to *complement*, not replace, the existing or reading curriculum by providing opportunities for students to practice what the teacher has taught. Research supports that the use of pairs in the classroom provides more focus on individual student needs rather than a teacher-directed activity that may address the needs of a few students but not be able to meet the needs of all student. **Some benefits attributed to the PATLS program include:**

- Actively involves all students in tasks they can perform successfully.
- Increases student opportunity to read and practice basic skills.
- Motivates students to do better in reading and communication.
- Expands instructional resources in the classroom.
- Provides for positive and productive peer interaction.
- Creates opportunity for lower functioning students to assume an integral role in a valued activity.
- Allows students with disabilities to spend more time in least restrictive environment and increases their access to the general education curriculum.
- Helps teachers accommodate academic diversity.
- Accelerates student achievement in learning.
- Is affordable and easily implemented.
- Is found to be an enjoyable activity by teachers and students.

Components of an effective peer learning program.

1. **Develop a plan for using structured partner work school-wide and throughout the day.**

   Using partner work school-wide is efficient. Once students learn the routines of pair work, they can quickly engage in practice opportunities in a wide variety of subjects. Using similar peer routines throughout the day
   allows teachers to augment the number of practice opportunities for all students.

2. **Use research-based techniques and strategies for structured partner work.**
   In addition to teaching students peer-assisted learning procedures, teachers need to structure the learning activities to maximize productive practice, including a product or way to check on the accuracy of responses. Research indicates results from about 90 minutes a week of peer practice.

3. **Prepare students to work with partners, including building on students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds**.

   To get the most out of practice together, procedures for working together need to become routine for students. Preparation includes providing training in appropriate discourse, including prompts and feedback, as well as teacher modeling of the intended learning activity.

4. **Provide professional development and support for teachers to use partner work.**

   Teachers may require in-class support (coaching) to help them get started with peer-assisted learning in addition to training in establishing peer routines as well as structuring assignments to maximize learning.

Features of PATL

- PATL is about exploratory discussion, not being 'told' the answer
- PATL is about *active* learning- learning by discussing and thinking
- The PATL Leader is there to help the group find the answers by discussion, through lecture notes, use of textbooks, etc.
- It is a safe place to admit not understanding
- PATL sessions are informal and friendly.
- PATL sessions are not replacements to lectures and seminars, they are to back them up
- Sessions are confidential in the sense that lecturers will not be told anything that might identify any particular student

- The PATL Leader will not teach or tell you the answer-they might not know the answers and don't have the responsibility of teachers
- *You* can decide what is discussed in PATL sessions
- The more everyone joins in discussion, the better sessions will work

Conclusion

The primary focus of this study was to determine the effectiveness of a class wide peer tutoring program in reading for three learner types: low achievers with and without disabilities and average achievers. Patls is *the internal Psychological process that causes the individual leaner to understand objective learning activity (incentives) and to spontaneously maintain the activity (needs, so as to guide the activity towards a predefined goal, thus satisfying the learning objectives (accomplishments).*

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