

CLASSWIDE PEER TUTORING

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

DO YOU HEAR THINGS LIKE THIS FROM TEACHERS?

Malia has trouble finishing her work by herself. She'll play with her pencil or get out of her seat to talk with other students when they are working on assignments.

Quinn is smart and likes to finish his work quickly. Because he works quickly, he often makes mistakes. He gets angry when I show him his mistakes and tells me he's not going to fix them.

Latoya takes a long time to read and has trouble understanding what she reads. She understands better when she reads with a friend.

I care about what each student needs and I want to work one-on-one with each student. But I have many students in my classroom. This makes it hard to give each student enough time.

DO YOU HEAR THINGS LIKE THIS FROM YOUR CHILD?

Jessica makes fun of me when the teacher calls on me to read out loud.

Mrs. Brown yells at me to hurry up and finish my work. She tells me if I don't finish that I have to do it for homework. But I want to ride my bike with my friends.

This report is too hard. This makes no sense. I don't know why I have to do this dumb project anyway!

WHAT IS CLASSWIDE PEER TUTORING?

Many teachers feel they don't have enough time in the school day to work with every student one-on-one. Classwide Peer Tutoring is a way for all students to get one-on-one help and enough time to practice and learn. When using Classwide Peer Tutoring, every student in the class is paired with another. The teacher writes

lessons that one student uses to teach or tutor another. During the tutoring, one student explains the work to another student, asks the student to answer questions, and tells the student if his or her answers are correct. Classwide Peer Tutoring has been shown to work for students with all kinds of special learning and behavioral needs like Malia, Quinn, and Latoya.

WHY DOES CLASSWIDE PEER TUTORING WORK?

Classwide Peer Tutoring helps teachers make sure that students have:

- someone who sits next to them to personally explain the work in a way that is just right for them- not too slow and not too fast;
- more opportunities to talk about what they are learning, to practice what they are learning, to read aloud, and to write;
- more opportunities to ask questions when they are confused without fear of being embarrassed in front of the whole class;
- someone who can tell them right away if their answers are right or wrong; and
- someone to help and encourage them to finish assignments.

DOES CLASSWIDE PEER TUTORING HELP STUDENTS?

Yes. Researchers have carefully studied Classwide Peer Tutoring with large and small groups of students. They have looked at the progress of students over one school year and over many school years.

Classwide Peer Tutoring is helpful to students in reading, spelling, math, and writing. It's used in all grade levels from preschool to high school, and in both regular and special education classrooms. But most of the studies have been done in elementary school.

Classwide Peer Tutoring is helpful for different groups of students (i.e., White, African American, Asian, and Hispanic), and students identified with disabilities (i.e., autism, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, mild mental retardation, and hearing impairments).

Research shows that Classwide Peer Tutoring works for all students, including students who have problems paying attention, problems learning, problems with emotions and behavior, and even those students who learn without problems. Classwide Peer Tutoring is very helpful for students who are “at-risk”- or those students whose parents and teachers worry that they will start to have problems in school.

HOW DO WE KNOW? LET’S LOOK AT A FEW STUDIES.

Studies done in the 1980s showed that Classwide Peer Tutoring helps students to learn better and more quickly. Researchers by the names of Debra Whorton and Joseph Delquadri did a study that looked at reading. They found that students who read only 24 words correctly were able to read 48 words correctly after their teachers started using Classwide Peer Tutoring. Joseph Delquadri and other researchers did another important study that looked at reading. They found that students with learning disabilities read more quickly and correctly after their teacher started using using Classwide Peer Tutoring.

Joseph Delquadri and a team of researchers also did studies to find out whether Classwide Peer Tutoring helps students in spelling. They found that students who scored the lowest on weekly spelling tests (getting 8 or more words wrong), started scoring as well as other students in the class, (getting fewer than 3 words wrong) after their teacher started using Classwide Peer Tutoring.

John Fantuzzo and Lauren Heller’s study found that Classwide Peer Tutoring helped African American 4^h and 5^h grade students in math. Most of the students in this study came from homes with low incomes.

Other studies in the 1980s and 1990s showed that Classwide Peer Tutoring increases the amount of class work students finish. For example, in one study by Charles Maher students who didn’t have Classwide Peer Tutoring finished only 3 of their 10 assignments. But when their teachers started using Classwide Peer Tutoring, they finished 8 of their 10 assignments.

Researchers named George DuPaul and Patricia Henningson showed that Classwide Peer Tutoring helps students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder to pay attention longer and to stay in their seats to finish assignments.

Classwide Peer Tutoring is also very helpful for students with behavioral disorders when the materials used are not too difficult—materials need to match the students’ skill levels. Thomas Scruggs and Lori Richter’s study found that after receiving or giving tutoring to another student, elementary age students with behavioral problems did better in school. They especially improved in areas like reading vocabulary and multiplication facts.

Researchers by the names of Judith Presley and Carolyn Hughes used Peer Tutoring to teach social skills and anger control to high school students with emotional and behavioral problems. During the time the students were learning social skills through peer tutoring, they showed less intense anger in situations that happened during the rest of the school day. Catherine Trapani and Maribeth Gettinger also had success with using peer tutoring to teach social skills to 4^h through 6^h grade boys with learning disabilities.

The benefits of Classwide Peer Tutoring have been found to last even when a student moves into a classroom where the teacher is not using Classwide Peer Tutoring. One group of students participated in Classwide Peer Tutoring during grades 1–4. Charles Greenwood and a team of researchers found that in 6^h grade, two years after they had stopped peer tutoring, these students were still making more progress on some parts of a basic skills test than students who had not been in classrooms with Classwide Peer Tutoring.

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

1. Explain and demonstrate peer tutoring and give your class time to practice tutoring before they do it for real. Two teachers can pretend to be a tutor and a tutee while the children watch. Show the class how to get into pairs quickly and quietly. Then pretend to go through a reading vocabulary or math lesson. Show the children how to begin the lesson, how to move through the lesson, and

how to finish the lesson. Then the children can practice or role-play with other children in the class like the teachers did. Teachers can give feedback to the children while they practice.

2. Teach children what good tutor and tutee behaviors are before starting Classwide Peer Tutoring. Explain how to tell their partner in a respectful way when they are wrong. Give them tips and demonstrate how not to get angry when another child tells them that they made a mistake. Research shows that practicing these behaviors will avoid many problems later.
3. Teach children how to keep track of their partner's right answers or their own. The tutee will then see that he/she is getting better over time.
4. Make sure children are tutoring with materials that are matched to their abilities. Materials that are too hard will make them feel frustrated and they will not be able to learn.
5. Have children tutor with new information as soon as they have learned the old material. This way they will not get bored.
6. Give all children opportunities to be the tutor, even in subjects where they have problems. They will learn from tutoring other students and they will gain more confidence in their abilities in that area.
7. Make Classwide Peer Tutoring fun – like a game. Tutors can reward their classmates with points for answers that are right, or for making progress. Research shows that rewarding children consistently helps keep them motivated. The handout written by George Dupaul (listed below) gives many examples of how to make tutoring into an exciting game.

HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

1. If your child's teacher is not using Classwide Peer Tutoring and you think it might be helpful for your child, you can share the idea with them through this information brief.
2. Speak with your child's teacher about the tutoring behaviors you can practice with

your child, like- how to tell a partner in a respectful way when they are wrong or how to not get angry when another child tells them that they made a mistake.

3. Let your child practice how to be a good tutor by explaining to you or another adult how to do a math problem or an English assignment.
4. Encourage your child to tell you about how tutoring is going at school. Ask things like, if they were a tutor or a tutee that day, what subjects they used tutoring in, and how well they got along with their partner.

WHAT CAN I READ & WHERE CAN I GET A COPY?

DuPaul, G.J. (1998). Peer tutoring procedures in general education classrooms. In A.S. Canter & S.A. Carroll's, *Helping children at home and school: Handouts from your school psychologist*. National Association of School Psychologists, Bethesda: MD.

To Order A Copy, Contact:

National Association of School Psychologists,
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402 Bethesda, MD 20814,
301-657-0270 (phone)
301-657-0275 (fax)
website: www.naspweb.org

Greenwood, C.R., Delquadri, J. & Carta, J.J. (1988). *Together We Can! Classwide Peer Tutoring to Improve Basic Academic Skills*. Longmont, CO 80504.

To Order A Copy, Contact:

Sopris West
4093 Specialty Place
Longmont, CO 80504
(303) 651-2829 (phone)
(303) 776-5934 (fax) website:
<http://www.sopriswest.com/>

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