Peer Tutoring and Small Groups in the Elementary Classroom

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So What is Peer Tutoring?

Peer Tutoring is the system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn by teaching.
Bell introduced trays of sand in his school as a cheap writing materials. His staff thought he was crazy so he used other children as monitors to teach using the trays. Soon Bell realized that using the child monitors was much more significant than the use of the sand trays.
After his discovery Bell redesigned his school. Bell had it arranged so that half of the students in each class would act as tutors and the other half would receive that tutor’s help. Teachers would monitor the tutors and make sure that the system was working and progressing smoothly.
Joseph Lancaster heard of Bell’s method and implemented it in his own classroom.

- Modified it by giving his tutors detailed instructional materials to help them.
How it Helps

- Both bring to the table different learning styles and background knowledge.
- The one being tutored is gaining a greater understanding of the material and the one tutoring is learning how to teach.
- Both the tutor and tutee are needed and vital in making this strategy a success in the classroom.
Benefits for Tutee

1. Increased individualized attention
2. Increased opportunity for closeness with the instructor and corresponding learning efficiency
3. Influence of a role model
4. Gain in self-esteem
Benefits for Tutor

1. Increase in the educational/subject area in which they are teaching

2. Increases self-esteem

3. Teaches good social skills

4. Develops helping and giving relationships
Small Groups

- Are another variation of peer tutoring except they are not one-on-one and they incorporate the teacher.
Small Groups Cont.

- In small groups, like with peer tutoring, students can receive individualized attention that might not be possible in large group settings.

- Allows teachers to better observe how individual children perform tasks and interact with other children.
Seven Important Guidelines & Benefits

1. Small groups should not exceed five children.

2. The actual size of the group activity should be determined by the learning goal of the activity.

3. Small groups should be intentionally organized.

4. Small groups should be distinct from center time activities.

5. Small groups are better than whole groups to teach content.

6. The teacher needs to play an active role in order for the group to be effective.

7. Small group time needs to be built into the daily schedule.

By Wasik
Effectiveness of Both

- Student tutors show gains in motivation toward learning, self-concept, and school achievement.
- Impact on language development.
- Creates a setting that supports children’s learning.
- Facilitates the development of their oral comprehension.
Effectiveness in Literacy

- Proven to be highly effective for literacy instruction.

- Instruction can be intensified by focusing on fewer high priority-reading skills during lessons.

- Small-group differentiated reading instruction allows teachers to accommodate the diverse needs of students.
Effectiveness in Literacy Cont.

- Gives students more opportunities to practice and respond.
- Helps teachers see individual learning progress and plan instruction accordingly to meet individual needs.
- Gives students more immediate feedback.
In Conclusion

Both small groups and peer tutoring have proved to be a vital asset in the classroom. They have provided a way for students to work in a small group setting and progress their learning and social state.
If the guidelines and suggestions are followed this will make both peer tutoring and small groups very effective.
Any Questions?