

Effects of peer tutoring in learning in elementary school essay sample

[Education](#), [School](#)



Introduction

It well known that peer tutoring has been a practice of human existence from the moment hunter-gatherer exists. Tutorial instruction through parents teaching the children how to make a fire and to observe and adolescents teaching younger siblings concerning ripe berries and roots was maybe the first pedagogy relating to primeval societies. In the first century A. D. the beginning of peer tutoring in Western civilization headed back to Greece and throughout Rome, Germany, other European locales, and last but not least America. The more efficient exercise of peer tutoring is back to the year 1700. Other academics trace peer tutoring back to the " Monitorial System" near the start of the nineteenth century.

General Discussion

Peer tutoring is a way in which one student educates another student in material on which the first student is an expert and the second student is a novice. On the other hand, multiple definitions of peer tutoring exist, and they are not all constant. For instance, not all peer tutors are " experts." They are at times randomly assigned, with the same-age classmate or same-aged low achievers. Some researchers entail that there is no such thing as a true " peer" tutor. Peer tutoring is frequently called " cross-age" tutoring, for the reason that the tutor is more often than not two or more years older than the tutee. In a strict logic, the phrase " peer tutoring" is somewhat of an oxymoron.

According to Greenwood, Carta, and Hall (1988), there are three commonly cited benefits of peer and cross-age tutoring: the learning of academic skills, the improvement of social behaviors and classroom discipline, and the improvement of peer relations. Researchers have also recognized improvements in self-esteem and one of its components, inner locus of control. It is significant to note that all such benefits build up to both tutor and tutee. Several writers also cite broader benefits. Hedin, for instance, said “ a much cooperative, pleasing classroom environment” and “[recruiting] promising potential teachers into the profession” (1987). Still other possible good results are better-adjusted students with skills convenient to parenting as soon as the students mature. The focus of this report is direct benefits for tutors and tutees, but it also touches briefly on some indirect effects of interest to parents, teachers, and administrators.

The effects of peer tutoring vary in different categories. Both tutors and tutees have been shown to benefit academically from peer in elementary mathematics. Math skills addressed in this research included ratio, proportion, and perspective taking, among others. Effects on affective outcomes in mathematics research were less conclusive; although there is proof that peer tutoring can boost the formation of friendship bonds among partners. Many of the students in this research were low achievers, mildly handicapped, or socially disadvantaged. Areas of Language arts investigated include comprehension strategies, phonemic skills, vocabulary acquisition, story grammar, general decoding skills, fluency practice, and sight word identification (Barbetta et al., 1991; Giesecke, et al, 1993; Palincsar & Brown,

1984; Wheldall & Colmar, 1990; and Wheldall & Mettem, 1985). Research study in the part of peer and cross- in tutoring in social studies, health, science, and art are too few to allow firm conclusions concerning the attainment effects of these practices, indeed, some of this study did not address accomplishment outcomes.

Conversely, several positive accomplishment outcomes were noted (Bland and Harris 1989; Maheady, Sacca, and Harper 1988; Thurston 1994; Rosenthal 1994; and Anliker, et al. 1993). Studies whose key focus was the affective results created by peer tutoring have usually revealed positive outcomes. These comprise enhanced attitudes of younger students to older ones, amplified internality of locus of control, and enhanced school attendance. In a comparison of the cost-effectiveness of Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), peer tutoring, reducing class size and raising the length of the school day, peer tutoring was established to be more cost-effective than CAI (Levin, Glass, and Meister 1987). Both peer tutoring and CAI were shown to be more cost-effective than reducing class size or increasing the length of the school day. On the other hand, Greenwood, Carta, and Kamps (1990) have called attention to high start-up costs, consisting teacher training, consultation, peer-group or peer-tutor training, preparation time, and observing to ensure quality control. Nevertheless, they say peer-tutoring operating costs may be less significant than those of other programs.

Peer tutoring is often promoted on the grounds that, for the tutors, it is "Learning by Teaching". This view is expanded in the old saying "to teach is to learn twice". Sternberg's (1985) theory of intelligent performance

identifies components which might be enhanced during peer tutoring (Hartman 1990): the meta-cognitive abilities of planning, observing and evaluating and the related use of declarative, procedural and appropriate knowledge; and the cognitive methods of perceiving, differentiating, selecting, storing, inferring, applying, combining, justifying and responding. Just preparing to be a peer tutor has been planned to improve cognitive processing in the tutor by increasing attention to and motivation for the task, and necessitating review of existing knowledge and skills. Consequently, existing knowledge is transformed by re-organization, involving new associations and a new integration. The act of tutoring itself involves further cognitive challenge, particularly with respect to simplification, clarification and exemplification.

An excellent study by Annis (1983) compared three randomly allocated groups of students: one which merely read the material to be studied, one which read the material in the expectation of having to teach it to a peer, and a third which read the material with the expectation of teaching it to a peer and then actually carried this out. On a 48 item test of both specific and general competence, the 'read only' group gained less than the 'read to teach' group which in turn gained less than the 'read and teach' group. The tutors gained more than the tutees. A similar study by Benware and Deci (1984) compared the relative effectiveness of reading to learn for a test and reading for learning to teach a peer. Subjects were randomly assigned to conditions and the outcome measure was a 24 item test of both rote memory and conceptual understanding. While both groups performed

equally well on rote learning, the “learn to teach” group is considered better on higher order analytical understanding and on a questionnaire with reference to inspiration and learning seeming their experience as more lively and motivating.

Many other advantages have been claimed for peer tutoring and related forms of peer assisted learning (Greenwood, Carta and Kamps 1990).

Pedagogical advantages for the tutee include more active, interactive and participative learning, immediate feedback, swift prompting, lowered anxiety with correspondingly higher self-disclosure, and greater student ownership of the learning process. The “pupil/teacher” ratio is much reduced and engaged time on task increased. Opportunities to respond are high, and opportunities to make errors and be corrected similarly high. In addition to immediate cognitive gains, improved retention, greater meta-cognitive awareness and better application of knowledge and skills to new situations have been claimed. Motivational and attitudinal gains can include greater commitment, self-esteem, self-confidence and empathy with others. Much of this links with work on self-efficacy and motivated learning (Schunk 1987), leading to the self-regulation of learning and performance (Schunk and Zimmermann 1994). Modeling and attributional response are significant here possibly peer tutoring can go many way towards fighting the dependency culture connected with superficial learning.

From a social psychological viewpoint, social isolation might be reduced, the functionality of the subject modeled, and aspirations rose, while combating any excess of individualistic competition between students. Moust and

Schmidt (1994a) said that students considers peer tutors were better than staff tutors for the reason that they are suppose to know better their troubles in studying, were more attached in their lives and individualities, and were less authoritarian, yet more paying attention on assessment. Economic advantages might embrace the possibility of teaching more students more successfully, releasing staff time for other causes. Politically, peer tutoring assigns the management of learning to the learners in an independent way, seeks to empower students rather than de-skill them by dependency on imitation of a master culture, and might reduce student dissatisfaction and unrest.

One reason peer tutoring works may be that tutors and tutees speak a more similar language than do teachers and students. In peer tutoring the skilled student is not very far detached from the trainee one in authority or understanding; nor has the expert party any special claims to instructional competence. Such differences affect the nature of discourse between tutor and tutee, because they place the tutee in a less passive role than does the adult/child instructional relation. Being closer in knowledge and status, the tutee in a peer relation feels freer to express opinions, ask questions, and risk untested solutions.

The interaction between instructor and pupil is more balanced and livelier. This is why conversations among peer tutors and the tutees are high in mutuality although the relationship is not precisely equal in status. Peer tutors may simply be " good teachers." Teaching behaviors that were found to be positively related to response rates and academic gains in the research

include on-task behavior, prompting and guiding, praise and encouragement, adjusting to the child's needs, managing behavior problems, allowing autonomous performance, bonding, cooperation, "go-faster" prompts, and "help". Six conditions have been identified which may be needed for effectively transmitting knowledge through peer tutoring: (1) The tutor must provide relevant help which is (2) appropriately elaborated, (3) timely, and (4) understandable to the target student; (5) the tutor must provide an opportunity for the tutee to use the new information; and (6) the tutee must take advantage of that opportunity.

Many writers express grief for the fact that Peer tutoring is not used more frequently. Martino (1994) said that nevertheless ancient peer tutoring might be many schools bypassed it when searching for effective ways to meet academic goals. A retired teacher and professor, who is quite passionate about the need for such expansion, has said that "what has been fundamentally wrong with formal schooling for thousands of years is [the basic instructional unit of teacher-and-class]" and peer tutoring (or, as he says, "mutual instruction") is the solution. One reason why peer tutoring is not in widespread use may be that, in spite of the many positive reviews and studies discussed above, prominent researchers considered the evidence on tutoring to be insufficient as recently as 1988. There are five indicated limitations and/or areas in need of future research at that time: (1) Strategies utilizing students with disabilities as tutors were insufficiently developed and validated; (2) peer tutoring procedures other than specific cooperative learning strategies were insufficiently validated; (3) the fidelity

of peer-tutoring interventions had not yet been examined carefully enough; (4) few peer-tutoring procedures had been compared to alternative teacher- or materials-mediated procedures; and (5) there were no commercially available peer-mediated curricula.

As shown in the preceding section on research support for peer and cross-age tutoring, many of these concerns have since been laid to rest. Another reason peer tutoring is still not widely used may be that, in effect all schooling, in this country and somewhere else, is structured around the customary belief that information is best passed on from adult to child in linear fashion. All of the following have also been cited as obstacles: tradition, teacher resistance, possible disadvantages accruing to the tutor, possible tutor impatience, implications of tutor selection, parent cautiousness, implications for school organization, variable suitability of different subjects for peer tutoring, and possible lack of expertise on tutors' parts. Others have speculated that peer tutoring may not be more widely used partly because of " the demands placed on teacher time". These authors note that teachers may lack the skill to train their students properly to be tutors, the teachers may be a bit worried with regards to the behavior of the tutors and their way of tutoring, and they may question the superiority of teaching served by students, mostly high-needs students. It is also pointed out that teachers be likely to be concerned in relation to the time and effort needed to train tutors.

Conclusion

Regardless of the obstacles discussed above, research presents extensive proof supporting the use of peer tutoring. The achievement of student got involve in peer tutoring is increasing and their social inter relation with their co student becomes better. And regardless of popular suspicions with regards to the dangers that “ peer pressure” creates for youth, scientific studies have left several doubt that peer relations can tremendously benefit children’s social and academic growth. The situation for peer associations of children has been made commonly and overwhelmingly in progressing theory and study. Constant studies have shown that peer interaction is advantageous, perhaps even essential, to a host of important early achievements: children’s definition of fairness, their self-esteem, their proclivities toward sharing and kindness, their mastery of representational expression, their acquisition of role-taking and communication skills, and their advancement of imaginative and critical thinking.