CLASSWIDE PEER TUTORING: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

FOR ALL STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS[1]

The idea of students teaching one another is not new (Lancaster, 1806). In traditional approaches to peer tutoring, the teacher identifies a high-achieving student to help a classmate who has not mastered a particular skill. In contrast, contemporary classwide peer tutoring (CWPT) models include low achievers and students with disabilities as full participants in an ongoing, whole-class activity in which all students help one another learn new curriculum content.

Four Evidence-Based Models

Four classwide peer tutoring models have emerged from more than 25 years of solid empirical research (Alber Morgan, 2006).

Juniper Gardens Children's Project CWPT The Juniper Gardens Children's Project CWPT model was the brainchild of Greenwood, Delquadri, and Carta (1997). The whole class is divided into two weekly competing teams that are further broken into tutoring dyads and triads. Tutors present individual items, evaluate tutees' performance, and provide feedback and points. Daily and weekly public posting of team points serves as motivation.

   A 12-year longitudinal study that compared groups of at-risk and non-risk students who had or had not received CWPT instruction found that CWPT increased students' active engagement during instruction in grades 1 to 3; improved pupil achievement at grades 2, 3, 4, and 6; reduced the need for special education services by seventh grade; and decreased the number of students who dropped out of school by the end of 11th grade (Greenwood, Maheady, & Delquadri, 2002).

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[1] From William L. Heward *Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education* (10th ed.) (pp. 74-76). Copyright 2013 by Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies The Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) program was developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University working collaboratively with local school districts (Morgan, Young, & Fuchs, 2006). The original PALS program was designed for use in reading and math by students in grades 2–6 (D. Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1996). K-PALS for kindergarten, First Grade PALS for beginning reading instruction, and High School PALS for content-area instruction have been added (D. Fuchs et al., 2001). PALS tutors and tutees interact in a set of structured activities for three 35-minute sessions per week. Examples of reading activities include Partner Reading with Retell, Paragraph Shrinking, and Prediction Relay. Teachers use brief scripted lessons to train all students to implement the activities independently. Over 15 years of research have demonstrated the effectiveness of this CWPT program in improving the reading performance of students at all performance levels, including students with disabilities and English language learners, from kindergarten through high school (McMaster, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2006; McMaster, Kung, Han, & Cao, 2008).

SUNY Fredonia Classwide Student Tutoring Teams The SUNY Fredonia Classwide Student Tutoring Teams (CSTT) model combines elements of Slavin's (1986) Student Team Learning approach with components from the Juniper Gardens CWPT model. Pupils work in four-member, heterogeneous learning teams and take turns reading and responding to items on teacher-developed study guides and/or concept cards. Tutor roles rotate clockwise on each item, and the process continues until a predetermined time limit (e.g., 20 to 30 minutes) has elapsed (Maheady, Mallette, & Harper, 2006). One study compared CSTT instruction to conventional teacher-led instruction on the math performance of 91 low-achieving ninth- and tenth-grade pupils enrolled in a program for potential high school dropouts (Maheady, Sacca, & Harper, 1987).

During CSTT instruction, students' weekly math quiz scores increased by an average of 20 percentage points

The Ohio State University Model The Ohio State University CWPT model evolved from research in the late 1970s and early 1980s aimed at finding a low-cost approach for individualizing instruction of beginning reading and math skills for diverse groups of learners in the primary grades (Heron, Heward, Cooke, & Hill, 1983; Heward, Heron, & Cooke, 1982; Parson & Heward, 1979). The OSU model has been replicated and extended by hundreds of teachers in elementary, middle, and secondary classrooms across a wide range of curriculum areas such as spelling, science facts and vocabulary, algebra, geometry, reading fluency, foreign language vocabulary, and social studies (e.g., Gardner et al., 2001; Miller, Barbetta, & Heron, 1994; Wright, Cavanaugh, Sainato, & Heward, 1995). Daily sessions last about 20 minutes, with each student serving as both tutor and tutee during the session. When in the role of tutee, the child responds to questions presented by his or her partner (tutor) using a set of individualized task cards of unknown facts, problems, or items determined by a teacher-given pretest. The basic elements of the OSU model follow.

Tutoring Folders and Task Cards - Each student in the class has a tutoring folder (see Figure A) containing a set of task cards on specific curriculum content. Each card identifies one word, problem, concept, or fact to be taught to the child's tutoring partner. The task cards are in a GO pocket on one side of the folder. Also in the folder are a track chart to record the tutee's progress, markers to use for recording, and a STOP pocket to collect learned cards.

FIGURE A — PEER TUTORING FOLDER

Stop

Star Card and Crayons

Go

Stop

Tutor's Name (Student's Name)

Start
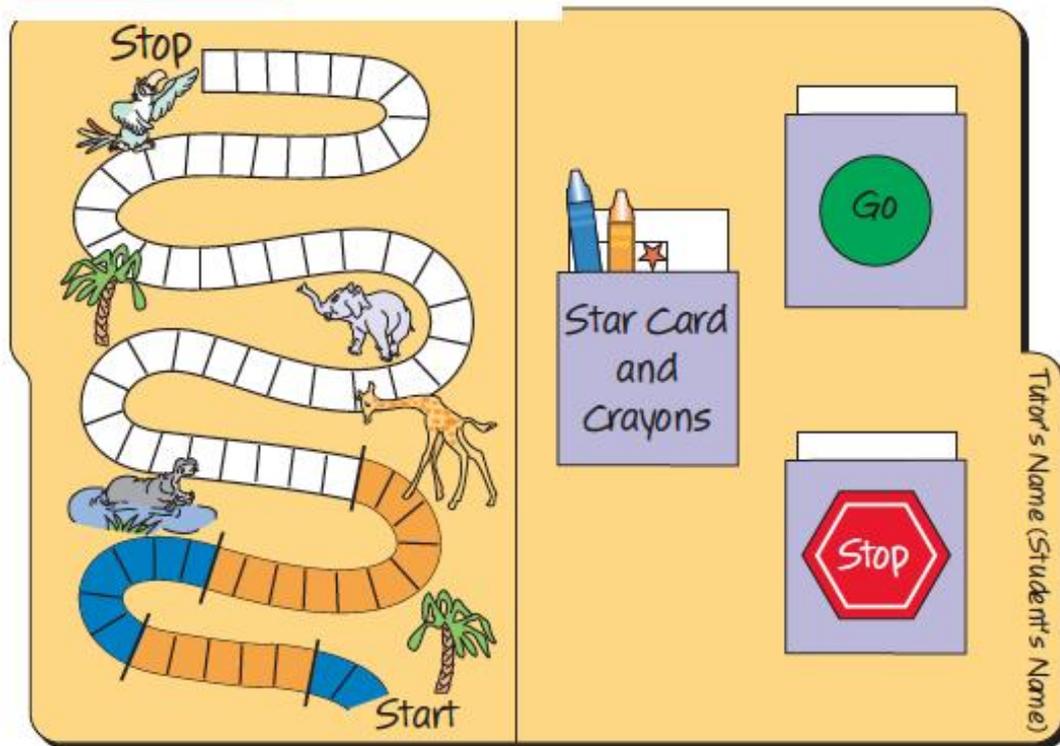
Source: Adapted from "Total Tutoring for Special and General Educators [Instructor's Manual]" by T. E. Heron & W. L. Heward, 2000. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Special Education Program. Used by permission.

Practice One child begins in the role of tutor, presenting the task cards as many times as possible during a 5-minute practice period, shuffling the set of cards after each round. The teacher trains tutors to praise their partners' correct responses and to say, "Try again" when the tutee makes an error. If the tutee still does not respond correctly, the tutor says, for example, "This word is tree; say tree." A timer signals the end of the first practice period, and the partners switch roles. While students are tutoring, the teacher walks around the room, prompting and rewarding good tutoring behaviors, answering questions, and generally supervising the activity.

Testing After the second practice period, the students reverse roles again; and the first tutor tests her partner by presenting each task card once with no prompts or cues. The teacher gives tutors about 5 minutes each to test and record their tutees' progress.

➢ The tutor places cards that a tutee reads or answers correctly in one pile and missed cards in another.

➢ The students then switch roles again, and the first tutor is now tested on the words she practiced.

➢ The tutors then mark the back of each card to identify if it was "correct" or "incorrect" during the test. Each tutor records his tutee's daily progress on the chart.

➢ When a child correctly responds to a task card on the test for three consecutive sessions, that item is considered learned, and the tutor moves it to the folder's STOP pocket.

➢ When the students have learned all 10 cards, the teacher places a new set of words in the GO pocket.

➢ Each session ends with the partners praising and complimenting each other for their good work.

Characteristics Common to All Four Models

➢ *Clearly defined learning tasks/ responses*. CWPT programs are based on clearly defined learning tasks and explicitly defined peer tutoring roles and teaching responsibilities. Tutoring procedures are often scripted, and each tutor is expected to use standard procedures with little variation.

➢ *Individualized instruction*. Frequent pre- and posttests are used to determine individualized learning tasks for each student. Additionally, because CWPT uses one-to-one instruction, each learner's performance can be observed, checked, and redirected in ways more frequent and continuous than in teacher-led group instruction.

➢ *High rates of active student responding (ASR)*. Well-designed CWPT programs provide each student with many opportunities to respond. Depending on the curriculum content, a student may make 100 or more responses during a 10-minute peer tutoring session. Total ASR increases further in reciprocal CWPT programs because each student responds to each item in the role of tutee (initial responses to tutor's prompts, repeating missed items) and tutor (prompting responses, discriminating between correct and incorrect responses, and providing feedback).

➢ *Immediate feedback and praise for correct responses*. Peer tutors provide feedback and praise to their tutees, and the teacher provides feedback to the tutors as a means of promoting high-quality peer teaching and learning during CWPT sessions.

➢ *Systematic error correction*. Tutors immediately and systematically correct mistakes by their tutees. Materials that reveal the correct response to the tutor enable students who are themselves learning the material to detect and correct errors.

➢ *Continuous monitoring of student progress*. All evidence-based CWPT models incorporate direct and frequent measurement of students' progress. These data are obtained in a variety of ways, such as end-of-session assessments by tutors, regularly scheduled, teacher-administered "check outs" of students' performances, weekly pre- and posttests, and curriculum-based measures. In some models, items missed on follow-up assessments are returned to the student's folder for additional practice and relearning.

➢ *Motivation*. Students have fun doing CWPT. Participation and learning are motivated by game-like formats, individual and team goals, charting their progress, and point/reward systems.

How to Get Started

1. *Identify curriculum area and measurable learning outcome*. What should students know or be able to do as a result of CWPT?

2. *Design practice activity that will provide tutors and tutees with direct and repeated practice with this knowledge and/or skill.*

3. *Determine the sequence of activities that will make up each CWPT session*. For example: Students obtaining materials and setting up; tutoring practice trials, testing, recording performance, and clean-up/putting materials away. For each component, specify (a) materials needed, (b) what the tutors and tutees will do, (c) what the teacher (you) will do, and (d) how many minutes it should take.

4. *Create tutoring folders, task cards, and other necessary materials*. Consider having students make their CWPT materials from models you provide.

5. *Build-in a motivation component*. Specify how you will reinforce desired behavior by tutors (e.g., providing tutees with frequent response opportunities) and tutees (e.g., acquiring targeted knowledge and skills). Consider incentive systems such as "Mystery Motivators" described in Chapter 6.

6. *Train students to carry out the CWPT procedures*. Teach peer tutoring skills as you would any other skill: be explicit, provide models, have students discriminate correct and incorrect procedures, provide guided practice, give feedback, reinforce accurate responses, and correct errors.

7. *Implement and evaluate*. Collect data to answer three questions: Are students implementing the tutoring procedures correctly? Are students acquiring and

maintaining targeted knowledge and skills? Do students enjoy the CWPT

program? CWPT should be fun for students and their teacher.

{MEL VIDEO MN: To observe teachers have adapted the OSU CWPT model to fit the needs of their students, go to the book resources for this text on MyEducationLab.}

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