



Empowering education through peer tutoring

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of peer tutoring programs in enhancing social science learning in educational settings. It examines the shift from traditional teacher-centered learning to learner-centered approaches, emphasizing the importance of cooperative learning and positive interpersonal relationships among students. Peer tutoring, wherein students teach and assist their peers in learning, is highlighted as a significant instructional strategy. The study reviews literature on peer tutoring, including its historical development, theoretical foundations, and empirical evidence supporting its benefits. Various studies demonstrate the positive impact of peer tutoring on academic achievement, social integration, and skill development among students, particularly those with special needs. The findings underscore the need for learner-centered, active classrooms where peer tutoring facilitates meaningful learning experiences and fosters collaborative problem-solving. Overall, the study advocates for the adoption of peer tutoring programs as a valuable educational tool to promote student engagement, academic success, and positive learning environments.

Keywords: Peer tutoring, cooperative learning, learner-centered instruction, social science education, academic achievement, student engagement, interpersonal relationships, educational strategies, collaborative problem-solving, active classrooms

Introduction

Education is the structuring of situation in ways that help students change through learning, in intentional and sometimes unintentional ways. Learning is a change within the student that is brought about by the instructional program of a school. Only changes that are due to experience are called Learning. As far as teaching is concerned, learning is a change observed in the student after instruction has taken place. Teachers assess learning by observing the student's performance within a structured situation, the student's performance is observed, instruction is given and the student's performance is observed again. If changes have taken place, the teacher conclude that learning has occurred.

Teachers are expected to implement and some times build instructional systems so that student's learning is facilitated. Instruction can be defined as the process of arranging the learning situation in such a way that student learning is facilitated. Theories of instruction prescribes procedures concerning the most effective way of facilitating student acquisition of knowledge, attitude and skills. The theory instruction states that successful instruction depends upon some components. They are specifying desired outcomes for the students and setting appropriate instructional goals, implementing the appropriate goal structure, goal structure can be cooperative, competitive or individualistic. Assembling the instructional materials and resources needed to facilitate the desired learning. Creating an instructional climate that facilitates the type of interaction among students and between students and teacher needed to achieve the instructional goals. Assessing and providing feedback on student's progress toward the desired outcomes while instruction is underway. Assessing and providing feedback on the intended and unintended outcomes of instruction, besides sought –for outcomes, many times there are unanticipated outcomes; a teacher should be concerned

with the actual consequences of an instructional programs, irrespective of whether they are planned or expected.

Certainly there is a general agreement that schools are created to socialize students in to the attitudes, capabilities and skills they need to be productive and self actualizing members of society. The school is responsible for developing an understanding of the nature of cooperative procedure and for teaching the skills involved (Alice 1952). Although cooperation is a prerequisite for effective problem solving and for learning of complex material, and also noted authorities such as Colemn (1972) state that a major goal of the school must be to educate students to work co-operatively.

Mutual understanding and cooperation with peers have a vital role in learning process. Mutual cooperation is the best way to build human interaction. Education needs to focus upon the attitudes, values and beliefs that promote human interaction and the skills and capacities needed for building and maintaining humanizing relationships.

In the teacher centered instruction, learner have no particular importance in learning. Learners are passive and no humanizing relationship with peers. When students turn to be teachers it is a way for bringing joy to the classroom. This technique is pedagogically called as Peer Tutoring. Peer Tutoring means having children help other children to learn. Sometimes older children help younger children and sometimes more able children help less able children of the same age. In a strict sense Peer Tutoring refers to children teaching others of their own age who are not functioning at an average level.

Learning is a complex process which calls upon the student to employ many techniques and skills. In the past, learning considered from the point of view of the teacher. Recently there has been growing emphasis on looking at learning from the perspective of the learner themselves.(wbtle N.J,1987). A mutual cooperation and understanding among

students more suitable for academic achievement and total development of the individuality. For this, much more attention needs to be paid to helping students develop the interpersonal skills needed to cooperate one another and to build and maintain positive interpersonal relationships with in the class room. An increasing emphasis in the school is on encouraging students to function as problem solvers. Positive interpersonal relationships among students is necessary both for effective problem solving in groups and for general class room enjoyment of instructional activities. Class cohesion is based upon Positive interpersonal relationships among students. The concept of Peer Tutoring fundamentally stands on the concept of cooperative learning. Peer Tutoring is instructional arrangement in which students teach their peers. The use of peer tutors has been an educational tool for centuries. Students benefit by receiving immediate clarification of information, they do not understand and feed back in a non – threatening environment. Tutors reinforce their on knowledge and skills, build their self confidence and develop a sense of responsibility. Students of any age and at risk students are as capable of serving as Peer tutors as any other students and the benefits to them can be significant. Peer Tutoring can also help gifted students who need to be challenged. Peer Tutoring has the potential to increase academic engagement(Olmschied and Carrey, 1999)

The present examination oriented education system absolutely existed on competition. Cooperation is so useful in the place of competition. A give and take process is more practicable in social science learning. When the entire students in the class is sub divided into a number of small groups that serve as the social units in which learning is pursued, the roll of the teachers differs considerably from that typical traditional class room. While various cooperative small group learning methods make some what different demands on teachers, the fact that student's attention in all of these method is to be focused on their group makes with whom they interact and not on the teacher. Children learn best when they can control the learning process (Rogers, 1969) ^[12]. Tutors ought to be felicitators of other's learning rather than subject experts.

The present study is an attempt to realize whether the Peer Tutoring program of learning is effective in social science learning. In the over crowded class room, teaching of social science can only on explanation. The learners should get more chances to produce their ideas in verbal forms as well as written form. The meaningful learning situations should leads to the learner to free expression of ideas.

The present study is intended for violation of existing traditional teacher centered learning. A more useful and learner centered active class room is needed for the joyful atmosphere for social science learning. Students plan together what they will study about problems they have identified that invite genuine enquiry. The adolescent children are more willing to participate in joint effort, coordinate their activities more effectively and often collaborate successfully in solving problems (Mussev Henny Paul, 1990)

Teacher Tutoring may be defined as a series of interaction between some one in the role of teacher and some one in the role of learner; with the explicit goal of changing one or more of the learners cognitive states or affective states. It is especially important to note that teaching is a rational

process in that it is constituted of conduct planned to attain some specific goal of learner change. The task good teacher is to help others to learn. Consequently, of prime importance is the organization of children's activities in such a way that each child is working at his own level and is finding enough to interest and challenged him.

Tutoring is a method of instruction in which a student or small group of students receive personalized and individualized instruction from a tutor. The student is commonly referred to as a tutee. Tutoring is most often used to provide remedial or supplemental instruction to students who have difficulty learning by conventional methods or who have special needs that prevent them from participating in a regular instructional program. The peer tutoring programme encourages positive interpersonal relationships characterized by mutual liking, positive attitude towards each other, mutual concern, friendliness, attentiveness, feelings of obligation to win the respect of other students (Anderson, 1939). Working together in small groups, children learn for more than the facts of curriculum. Skill of cooperation of getting along together of doing one's share are learning that comes only in such a setting. Giving consideration to the pupil's choice of working companions helps to ensure a pleasant atmosphere for the learning of group skills (David & John, 1998). It has been demonstrated by Flanders and Havumki (1960) ^[1] that individual adolescents are influenced in their evaluation of their peers by the ways the peers are treated by their teachers.

Peer Tutoring improves the attainment in the tutored subject area of both tutor and tutee. Although the tutors may be covering again material they had been presumed to have mastered, there are nevertheless gains from this process. The tutors may be reviewing and consolidating existing knowledge, filling in gap, finding extra meanings and formulating their knowledge in to new conceptual frame works. Above all, they are likely to remember the material better from experience of the need to put knowledge to some purpose. The benefit for the tutee are considerable. Given one to one attention, individualized learning is possible. Tasks can be selected to suit ideally the sole recipient of the tutoring and the speed of presentation constantly adjusted for optimum learning. The tutee receives regular and responsive feedback on the correctness of learner's efforts and is subject to close monitoring which maximizes the amount of time spent on.

When one student teaches another student, this is called peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is a method of offering of an individual instruction in the regular class room by using peers to teach target students. The student who teaches is the tutor, and the student being taught is the tutee. The tutor helps the tutee learn, practice, or review an academic skill. The peer tutor may be the same age as the tutee or older. Peer tutoring is a topic of current importance among educationists. Studies in the area of education coupled by observations in school show the collaboration between special and regular education. In the regular education initiative, or lot of strategies like peer tutoring, cooperative learning, gentle teaching are being used in the general class room. Cooperative learning is a method of promoting learning through student co-operation rather than competition. In the same way, in peer tutoring programs students work together to seek solutions to problem instead of competing against one another. Through cooperative learning, students develop more positive attitudes towards a

subject area than they do through competitive learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1983). Fundamentally peer tutoring stands on this view. Peer tutoring is a method of effectively using student group in a class room.. The primary elements involved in this technique are the following

1. Positive inter dependence; or the feeling that individual
2. goal attainment relies on the performance of all group
3. members.
4. Individual accountability.
5. Face to face interaction with peers.
6. Use of prosocial skills and group processing of a given academic task.

The important definitions of peer tutoring are as follows:

1. Peer Tutoring is a method of instruction in which one student or a small group of students receives personalized and individualized instructions from their peers (International encyclopedia of education, 1994).
2. Peer Tutoring is an instructional arrangement in which students teach their peers (Greenwood *et al.*, 1988)
3. Peer Tutoring means having children help other children to learn (Keith Topping, 1988).

The use of peer imitation has been shown to have direct influence on children's social relations as well as on affective and cognitive skills (Bandura, 1960). Peer influence has a vital role in children's academic achievement. Systematic interactions between a tutor and a learner are necessary for cognitive development (Bruner, 1966).

In a peer tutoring programme, cooperation among the members of the group, increases positive feelings towards one another, reducing alienation and loneliness, building relationships and providing affirmative views of other members (Bruce Joyce & Marsha Weil, 1992)^[7]. The shared responsibility and interaction, produce more positive feelings toward tasks and others generate better inter group relations and result in better self images for students with histories of poor achievement. In other words, the result generally affirm the assumptions that under lie the use of co-operative learning methods (Sharan, 1990)^[13].

The first systematic use of peer tutoring in the world is undoubtedly associated with the name of Andrew Bell. Bell was appointed as superintendent of a charity school for the orphaned son of soldiers at Chennai. Bell found the schools's teacher resistant to some of the new educational ideas he wished to introduce, and so he turned to experimenting with monitors or peer tutors using these new ideas. He rapidly became aware that the use of children to teach other children was an innovation of greater significance than the new ideas themselves (Keith Topping, 1988).

There is a considerable volume of good quality literature on the subject of peer tutoring, many of it originating from the United states. In the rest of this chapter, the primary concern will be with the conclusion of the more substantial reviews of research which have appeared since 1970.

Gardner, Kohler and Riesman (1971)^[4] suggests that, as an instructional strategy, Peer tutoring has a vital role in learning process. The strategy directly influence on children's learning outcomes. Children are the pivot in the process of learning and therefore the whole experiences in the class room should be always learner centered. For this purpose peer tutoring is the best method.

Feldman, Devin- Sheehan and Vernon Allen (1976) offered the first review of research which conformed to generally accepted academic standards. They noted that the evidence concerning the effectiveness of peer tutoring programmes in the schools had often consisted of anecdotal reports rather than rigorous data. The authors found that low achievers in reading made significant gains in reading ability following their tutoring of younger children.

Griffin and Bryan. W. (1997) investigated the effects of Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT) on Graduate student's achievement, Test Anxiety and Academic Self-efficacy. The result suggests that RPT may help students achieve learning objectives.

Utay Carol & Utay Joe (1997) identified the effects of combining cross-age tutoring, peer tutoring, co-operative learning and computer mediated writing in a peer assisted learning package on writing skills of second graders with learning disabilities. Study found that the treatment group enjoyed working with partners, asked each other for help and friendship, extending outside the treatment setting and had improved attitude towards writing.

The study conducted by Arrega-Mayer and Carmen (1998) explain the use of class wide peer tutoring to actively engage all students, including those with disabilities and to promote mastery, accuracy and fluency in content learning. Rafoth & Mary Ann (1988) describes a model for increasing the impact of peer tutoring beyond the specific subject matter tutored. Peer tutors were taught to also be study skill coaches, sharing the secrets of learning and studying that allowed them to succeed. Evaluation indicated that the study skill component positively impacted student achievement and attitude.

The study conducted by Shastri & Anuradha (1998)^[14] shows that peer tutoring increases achievement scores for both the tutors and the students being tutored.

Arrega-Mayer & Carnen (1998) explain the use of class wide peer tutoring to actively engage all students, including those with disabilities and to promote mastery, accuracy and fluency in context learning.

Griffin Bryan W & Griffin, Marilyn M conducted two experiments involving 131 graduate students were conducted to determine effects of reciprocal peer tutoring on graduate student's academic achievement, test anxiety. Which suggest that reciprocal peer tutoring may help students to achieve learning objectives.

Olmscheid and Carey (1999)^[10] studied on the effectiveness of peer tutoring in the elementary grades. The investigators listed many beneficial factors of the programme. The investigation found the following factors.

- a. Tutors reinforce their own knowledge skills, build their self confidence and develop a sense of responsibility.
- b. Peer tutoring can help gifted students who need to be challenged.
- c. By utilizing peer tutoring program, teachers can more effectively.
- d. Peer tutoring enables teachers to focus on new materials as peer tutors reinforce material already covered and give help to students in need.
- e. A structured system of one-to-one tutoring can afford the benefits of one-to-one instruction for large numbers of students.
- f. Peer tutoring has the potential to increase academic achievement.

Reddy *et al.* (1999) pointed that class wide peer tutoring is more better to teach health and safety in an inclusive setting than the conventional style of instruction.

Harper Gregory. F.etal.(1999) describes the need of minority children with disabilities and two peer tutoring programs, class wide peer tutoring and class wide student tutoring teams, that have been used effectively to promote the academic and social integration of minority children with disabilities in to general education settings.

Bandura. A. (1969)suggested that the use of modeling and peer imitation has been shown to have direct influence on children's social relations as well as on affective and cognitive skills.

Thelen Herbert.A.(1950) suggested that the reciprocal sharing in peer groups satisfies needs and provides a basis for the majority of enduring friendships.

Kurt Lewin (1950) ^[8] suggested that children and adolescents are probably influenced by their peers in much the same manners and by the same dynamics as adults are influenced by their peers.

Studies by Tuddenham (1951), Tryon(1939) and Kukhen & Lee(1943) indicated that boys and girls who were best liked and admired, thereby having the greatest probability of influencing their peers, can be described as follows: good looking, fun to be with, charming, good conversationalists, good natured bright and possessing most of the attributes that middle class parents of the past few decades have wanted to find in their children.

The Research of Gensemer and Patricih (2000) shows that elementary peer tutoring programs can increase the use of critical thinking skills, inter personal skills, and conflict resolution skills. The study also highlight the benefit of cross-age monitoring and peer tutoring programs. The study show positive effects of class wide peer tutoring.

The review of related studies reflects a wide perspective of the topic under investigation. The review indicates that, as a novel idea in its implementation, the peer tutoring program always violates the outdated conventional method of instruction. Components of successful tutoring programs depend upon the specific procedures that are most effective in each particular circumstance. Successful programs should help teachers to become facilitators who oversee their student's mastery of necessary concepts and skills and guide them toward independent learning. It is sure that the academic achievement of pupils always depends upon their motivation, interest and involvement in the learning process. The review indicates the effectiveness of peer tutoring programs. The studies shows negative relationship between peer tutoring and pupil outcome is not happened. The effectiveness of peer tutoring is a strong area for research in Indian context.

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