

Research-Based Practice: Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) for Literacy

Research:

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., Mathes, P. G., & Simmons, D. C. (1997). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies: Making classrooms more responsive to diversity. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34, 174–206.

Mathes, P. G., & Babyak, A. E. (2001). The effects of Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies for first-grade readers with and without additional mini-skills lessons. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 16(1), 28–44

Description: Students engage in peer-tutoring routines through a series of structured interactions. Teachers assign students to pairs based on an area in which one student is deficient and the other is proficient (initially, the former serves as the tutee and the latter as the tutor). Throughout the intervention, students are assigned different partners and have the opportunity to be both the provider and recipient of tutoring. PALS activities last 35 minutes per session and are intended to be implemented three to four times a week. A typical lesson includes the following activities:

1. Partner reading: The stronger reader (tutor) reads first to allow the weaker reader (tutee) to preview the passage and review difficult words before it is her or her turn to read. After five-minutes (or less if necessary) the weaker reader re-reads the same selection aloud, receiving immediate corrective feedback from the stronger reader if words are mispronounced.
2. Paragraph “shrinking”: The reader states the main idea (i.e., who or what the passage is about), gives a 10-word summary of the passage, and provides a sequential retelling of the important events of the passage. The peer gives immediate feedback.
3. Prediction relay: The reader predicts what is likely to happen next on the next page, reads aloud from the page, and summarizes the just-read text, with the peer deciding whether the predictions are accurate. Students switch roles after five-minute blocks.