

## Reciprocal Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is a term that's been used to describe a wide array of tutoring arrangements, but most of the research on its success refers to students working in pairs to help one another learn material or practice an academic task. Peer tutoring works best when students of different ability levels work together (Kunsch, Jitendra, & Sood, 2007). During a peer tutoring assignment, it is common for the teacher to have students switch roles partway through, so the tutor becomes the tutee. Since explaining a concept to another person helps extend one's own learning, this practice gives both students the opportunity to better understand the material being studied.

Research has also shown that a variety of peer-tutoring programs are effective in teaching mathematics, including Classwide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), and Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT) (Barley et al., 2002). Successful peer-tutoring approaches may involve the use of different materials, reward systems, and reinforcement procedures, but at their core they share the following characteristics (Barley et al., 2002):

- The teacher trains the students to act both as tutors and tutees, so they are prepared to tutor, and receive tutoring from, their peers. Before engaging in a peer-tutoring program, students need to understand how the peer-tutoring process works and what is expected of them in each role.
- Peer-tutoring programs benefit from using highly structured activities. Structured activities may include teacher-prepared materials and lessons (as in Classwide Peer Tutoring) or structured teaching routines that students follow when it is their turn to be the teacher (as in Reciprocal Peer Tutoring).
- Materials used for the lesson (e.g., flashcards, worksheets, manipulatives, and assessment materials) should be provided to the students. Students engaging in peer tutoring require the same materials to teach each other as a teacher would use for the lesson.
- Continual monitoring and feedback from the teacher help students engaged in peer tutoring stay focused on the lesson and improve their tutoring and learning skills.

Finally, there is mounting research evidence to suggest that, while low-achieving students may receive moderate benefits from peer tutoring, effects for students specifically identified with LD may be less noticeable unless care is taken to pair these students with a more proficient peer who can model and guide learning objectives (Kunsch, Jitendra, & Sood, 2007).