Peer Assisted Learning/Literacy Strategies

Common Core State Standards
Reading:
Foundational Skills
- Fluency
- Phonics & Word Recognition

Grade Level
K-5

Purpose
Use with students to support fluency and phonics and word recognition: explicitly teach students to decode, read fluently, and monitor their comprehension.

When to Use
Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Grouping
Partners

ABOUT THE STRATEGY
PEER ASSISTED LEARNING/LITERACY STRATEGIES (PALS) is a peer tutoring strategy that can be incorporated into a literacy curriculum to improve fluency, decoding, and comprehension. In PALS, students are divided into pairs and alternate between the role of the tutor and tutee. Each student takes a turn reading aloud, listening to his/her partner read, and providing systematic feedback to each other. Students are trained to use partner reading, paragraph shrinking, and predication relay during PALS. More information about PALS procedures and materials can be found at: http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/pals/.For additional information about Reading: Foundational Skills, see Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts Appendix A, pages 17-22 (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY
- Train students in the PALS procedures.
- Rank the students from highest to lowest reading achievement. Split the list in half. The first student listed on the first half of the list is paired with the first student listed on the second half of the list.
- Have the stronger reader read for five minutes while the weaker reader acts as a tutor. Tutors should identify errors and provide error correction procedures and then ask students what they learned. After five minutes the students switch roles.
- Students engage in paragraph shrinking to identify the main idea of each paragraph. The stronger reader reads one paragraph at a time, and after each paragraph, the partner has to state the main idea in 10 words or less. After five minutes, the students switch roles with the second reader reading new content.
- Students engage in prediction relay. Before reading half a page, the stronger reader stops for two minutes to predict what might happen or what they might learn. After reading for five minutes, the students switch roles and follow the same procedure with new reading material.
- PALS takes place in 35 minute sessions 3-4 times a week.

MEASURING PROGRESS
- Teacher observation
- Informal fluency assessments

RESEARCH
Calhoon, M. B., Al Otaiba, S., Greenberg, D., King, A., & Avalos, A. (2007). Improving reading skills in predominantly Hispanic Title I first-grade classrooms: The promise of Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly, 21*, 261-272.

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