PEER TUTORING: AN OVERVIEW ON ITS EFFECT ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY

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Damon and Phelps (1989), outline peer tutoring as “an approach that one kid instructs another child in material on which the primary may be an skilled and also the second is a novice”. The peer tutor is more experienced and has more knowledge or skills and is expected to take a supportive role in the interaction with his tutee.

Peer tutoring is an instructional strategy that fits to all learning areas of diverse age of learners. A teacher or school can use it for some weeks, or decide to implement it for a complete academic year, or for several consecutive years throughout the children’s school career (Topping, K et.al 2017)

Some studies have supported that peer tutoring has a positive effect on the reading level of the learners as well as the academic performance.

In a study that examined the effects of classwide peer tutoring relative to traditional reading instruction on reading skills and social interaction time for 3 high-functioning students with autism and their typical peers in integrated, general education classrooms, the results of reading assessments demonstrated that classwide peer tutoring increased reading fluency and correct responses to reading comprehension questions for students with autism and their peers. The procedure further increased the total duration of free-time social interactions for students with autism and typical peers, with individual variation in performance (Kamps,D.M et al, 1994).

Topping and Bryce (2014) conducted a pilot study that aimed to partial the impact on quality of thinking of a peer-tutored thinking intervention from that of a peer-tutored
reading intervention, controlling for time on task and amount of peer interactivity. It was discussed and concluded here that in a controlled study of peer tutoring of thinking skills, two classes of 11-year-olds tutored two classes of seven-year-olds. All classes experienced six weeks of paired reading, then two experimental classes began the paired thinking method while two comparison classes continued with paired reading. Tests of thinking skills suggested that the experimental Peer Tutoring (PT) tutees showed growth in thinking skills in relation to the comparison (alternative treatment) paired reading tutees and some evidence of improved attitudes to reading. However, for the experimental tutors in this study, there was no evidence that the PT experience added statistically significant value to their thinking skills or attitude to reading in relation to the comparison group.

Meanwhile, local studies focusing on peer tutoring and its effect on the performance of the learners have influenced on the intensification of PT. Campit et al (2015) studied the effect of peer tutoring on achievements of students in discrete structures. It attempted to determine and compare the achievements of the students exposed to peer tutoring and conventional teaching. Based on the finding, it is concluded that the achievement of the students is enhanced when exposed to peer tutoring strategy. It is recommended that peer tutoring strategy should be used by mathematics teachers in order to improve the performance of their students in the subject.

Furthermore, Galia (2015) determined the effectiveness of cross-age peer tutoring among cultural minority students who have learning difficulties in Mathematics at Mindanao State University General Santos City. To determine its effectiveness, two groups of cultural minority students were examined one group which attended peer tutoring classes and the other group which did not attend peer tutoring classes. Pretest and posttest scores were analyzed for both groups to determine their Mathematics performance. Interviews were also conducted to determine students’ perception and appreciation of the peer tutoring. Results of the research showed that cultural minority
students benefitted academically and socially in peer tutoring. Mean gain scores of those who attended were significantly higher.

The advantages of peer tutoring undoubtedly come from the educational potential that it has, compared with the limited individual assistance a single teacher can offer to each member of his or her class. It is impossible for the teacher to provide tailored or customized aid to each and every one of the students in the class. However, it is possible to arrange the classroom so that students in pairs can offer such personalized aid to each other, (Topping, 2016)

Here in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has crafted programs that aimed to increase the literacy rate of the learners. Here are the literacy-initiative programs (Cristobal, 2015)

1. Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)- this tool is used to assess and gauge the reading level of elementary pupils and they are categorized as frustration, instructional and independent.

2. The use of mother tongue where the learners learned the lessons through their native language.

3. Language and Reading development in K-12 curriculum through the Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN)

4. Observation of Nation Reading Month (every month of November)

Notably, through peer tutoring, teachers can give opportunities to all students to participate and learn in the regular classroom. Cooperation between students engaged in the tutor and tutee roles, regardless of their characteristics, will create a network of mutual aid which will result in a true learning community. In this, each and every one of the students will be aware of the accomplishments generated and have social responsibility goals for themselves and their peers (Topping et al 2016).
Finally, the literatures on peer tutoring, teachers can use peer tutoring as their teaching approach to help struggling learners in literacy and numeracy. The interaction within the group as a team through cooperation will promote positive effect on the part of the tutors. Peer tutoring is effective! With its effectivity to provide higher rates on literacy and numeracy.

References:

Galia, M.L (2015) Cross-Age Peer Tutoring as intervention to cultural minority students with learning difficulties in mathematics. Journal of Teaching and Education. 327-332