

## **Research-Based Practice:** Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) for Math

### **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.

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Yazdian, L., & Powell, S. R. (2002). Enhancing first-grade children's mathematical development with Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies. *School Psychology Review*, 31(4), 569–583

**Description:** This approach uses two peer-tutoring procedures: coaching and practice.

**Coaching:** Students work on problems in the skill area (e.g., adding, subtracting with regrouping, number concepts, charts, and graphs) to which they have been assigned. One of the students serves as the coach (peer tutor) and one serves as the tutee. The tutoring sessions are organized around completion of student worksheets that contain a series of questions, differing by problem type (e.g., addition or subtraction). Coaches correct errors when the tutee gets an answer wrong. Coaching usually lasts 15–20 minutes.

**Practice:** Students work independently on a mixed-problem worksheet containing problems of the type just completed, then exchange papers and score each other's practice sheets. Practice lasts 5–10 minutes.

Teachers select student groups by identifying student's strengths and weaknesses and put students together who will best learn from each other. Groups are changed regularly, and as students work on a variety of skills over time, all students have the opportunity to serve as coaches (i.e., the students charged with asking questions and correcting errors).