

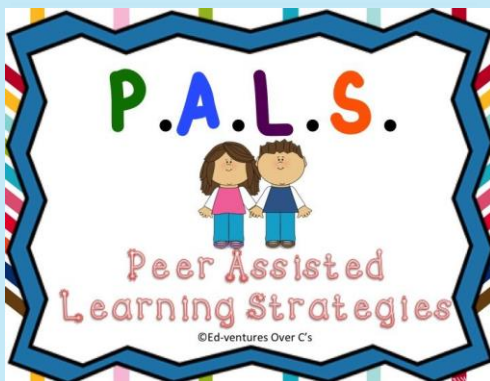
# Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)

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## What is PALS?

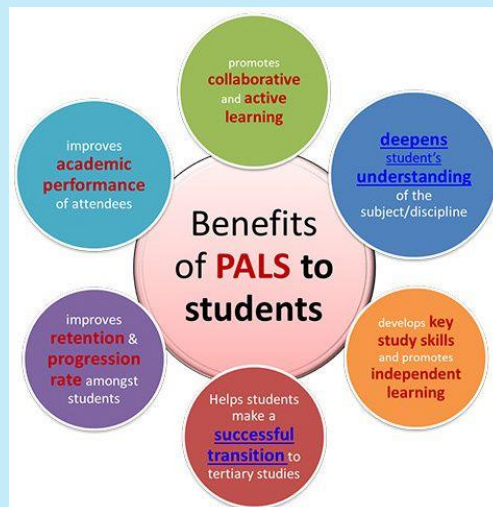
PALS is a peer tutoring program that is classwide in schools. Teachers carefully partner students together. These pairs work on different activities that are fixated on the academic needs for both students. The pairs can be changed over time and PALS can be used across any content area. It does not require any special reading material, meaning that the teachers can use any reading material they would like. This strategy has been implemented for English Language Learners with a Learning Disability. PALS allows for differentiated instruction by having partners work together on different activities directed by the teacher.



## How is it implemented in classrooms?

These strategies are implemented in the classroom by one lesson or can be done all year around, depending on the teacher. Depending on the grade level, each week can have 3 to 5 times doing PALS for 10 to 30 minutes. These strategies are mostly implemented in reading and mathematics content areas in grades second to sixth grade. These activities can be based on student's individual needs.

1. Teachers will divide the classroom into pairs with the high student and low student paired together.
2. Assigning roles where the high student is the tutor, and the low student is the tutee.
  - a. It is a mutual support system, where both students take turns on being the tutor or tutee.
3. Structure activities are based on the subject area that the students need to work on
4. Points system can be used for performance based, social and behavioral points, or even getting the answers right or wrong (depends on how the teacher would like the system to be placed)



## Reference Articles:

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# Why does it increase student's learning?

These are just a few benefits of what PALS structure activities can do for the student's learning in content areas. Depending on the grade level and subject area, the teachers structure the activity based on the student's individual needs and how well the collaboration is in the classroom.

- Improves academic performance.
  - Working in pairs increases the student's chances on learning more about the content they are learning and working on their individual needs.
- Deepening students understanding of the content.
  - Being able to work in pairs helps them get each other's perspective on how they understand the content and bringing those thoughts can help increase the chances of understanding the content in different ways.
- Developing study skills
  - By working in pairs improves how they students use their skills (organizing, highlighting, sticky notes, etc.) to share information of the content.
- Promoting collaboration
  - Giving each student a change to take on the two different roles and being able to provide corrective and positive feedback.
- Independent learning
  - After hearing some corrective and positive feedback from their pair. The student can go on their own to learn from their "mishaps" and begin to learn how to work them on their own.

## READING EXAMPLE

**PARTNER SHRINKING:** helps improve the students reading comprehension skills and the students take turns reading, pausing, and summarizing main points of the paragraph.

- The teacher chooses the assigned reading(s) and introduces the text to the students.
- The teacher creates the pairs with one high and one low student (the pairs can be different based on the teacher's perspective and the students need)
- The teacher models the procedure to make sure the students understand how to use this strategy.
- Each student will take turns being the "Coach" and the "Player."
- Each student will read out loud for 5 minutes.
- After each paragraph, the students will stop to summarize the main points of the reading.
  - For example: who or what of the paragraph, most important thing about who or what, and the main idea (10 words or less)

## DOES IT WORK WITH ALL LEARNERS?

PALS does not work with all learners depending on their individual needs.

- Research says they are still trying to figure out ways to where it can meet all individual needs.
- It does work with students who have learning disabilities and emotional behavioral disorder.
- PALS places positive feedback for all students
- Staying on task has helped those who have ADHD to where games, or playful objects can be in the activities.

One strategy example I found can be used for a math problem:

- The picture demonstrates the teacher/coach perspective and then the student perspective on the other side.
- The "coach" lets the students work on the math problems.
  - Next, he/she ask the students questions on the steps on how to solve these math problems.
  - Once, have found the steps on the math problem like adding fractions with uncommon denominators has a lot of steps. That is when the "coach" let us them try it in their PALS pair.
- Pair Practice
  - The pairs work on the problems independently and once they are both done, they come together to discuss the problems.
  - One student will be the tutor first and the other will be the tutee. After some time, the pair will switch roles.
    - During this time, the tutor will ask the tutee how he/she went about the problem. A step-by-step explanation
    - Encouragement and cooperation are essential.

## Two Parts to Gr 2-6 PALS Math Lessons:

### Coaching: 15-20 minutes

- Each of the partners work on math problems in a specific area
- The coach questions the player in order to guide the activity
- Coach has been trained on how to provide feedback

### Practice: 5-10 minutes

- Students do independent practice worksheet with mix of difficult and less challenging problems
- Students exchange papers and score them
- Students earn points based on cooperation, explanations and accuracy



## MATHEMATICS EXAMPLE



