

Peer Collaboration:
Establishing 21st Century Skills & Creating a Positive School Environment that Prevents Bullying

What is Peer Collaboration?
Collaboration by definition is:

Working together, Teamwork

Synonyms: partnership, group effort, association, alliance, relationship, and cooperation

Peer by definition is:

Someone who is of similar age and within the same cohort

Synonyms: colleague, friend, and person of equal value

A Peer Collaboration Program by definition is:

An organized program that fosters:

Genuine relationships, Communication, Friendship,
Understanding, Empathy, A positive school climate,
Teamwork that moves all participants forward

Synonyms: peer buddy, peer mentor, peer tutor, peer role model, and peer helper

How else can one define a Peer Collaboration Program?

It is a program where peers help one another with academics and with navigating the social world. The program tremendously supports those with academic and social needs but equally enhances the lives of those providing the support (see research documenting Twenty First Century Skills for peers). Peers can support one another in the general education classroom, in study hall, during elective classes, at lunch, in the hallways, after school with extracurricular activities, and more! Students build relationships and authentic friendships.

What can Peer Collaboration Do For Your School?

Increases Student Achievement – Thru Academics

1. Increases student attendance
2. Supports teachers' ability to differentiate and provide one on one instruction
3. Support for at risk students
4. Support for special education students
5. Support for ELL students

Increases Student Achievement – Thru Social and Career Readiness

1. Helps students feel connected to the school
2. Enrichment providing career and college readiness skills
3. Creates positive school climate
4. Builds collaborative relationships between teachers and students
5. Helps students acquire 21st Century Skills

Peer Collaboration Outcomes – Analyzing Existing Research

For Special Education Students:

- When included special education students become members of inclusive classroom communities, they construct a relatively confident, hopeful sense of themselves as legitimate participants in the mainstream of school culture (Fitch, 2003)

- Research has found that the more time spent in general education classes, the more likely it is that students with disabilities are accepted (Smoot, 2011).

For Special Education Students:

*The research on peer mentoring programs, while limited, has noted indirect positive outcomes related to:

-attitude and academic improvements (Strader & Gagnepain, 2000)

-decline in drop out rate(Strader & Gagnepain, 2000)

-progress in self esteem, self-control and problem solving (Dopp & Block,2004)

Our Research Key Question: To what extent do general education students gain 21st Century skills from participating in a peer collaboration program?

Our Study:

1. Attempted to quantify gains

2. Used a Likert Survey of 23 questions Related to Acquisition of 21st Century Skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) completed by teachers two times during the 2011-2012 School year.

3. Used two groups: Random Sophomore Students (control) and Sophomore Peer Collaborators (experimental group)

Results - Gains Made by Each Group	
Peer Collaborators	Random Students
Student prompts others to participate	Student prompts others to participate
Student conducts him/herself in a respectable, professional manner	Student conducts him/herself in a respectable, professional manner
Student provides assistance to others without doing it for them	Student provides assistance to others without doing it for them
Student connects ideas during classroom discussions	
Student is comfortable interacting with the differences of others (i.e., cultural, social, political, gender, religious, ability level, etc.)	
*Student uses feedback to guide future actions	
Student helps motivate others (i.e., gives positive feedback to others)	
Student actively listens to adult instruction (i.e., nodding, eye contact, asking questions)	
Student is willing to listen to constructive criticism	
Student completes and submits assignments on time	

*Statistically significant gains made

Want More Information or Support Starting a Program?

We created a 288-page manual with specific instructions on starting and maintaining a peer program in your school. The manual contains everything you will need... ready to use lesson/training plans, forms, sample letters to parents, and students, resources, and our research study. We provide training to individuals, schools and districts with copies of the manual included, a full day of training and follow up. Teachers interested in starting the program with our support may contact us at: peerbuddyohio@gmail.com

See our website at: www.peercollaboration.net

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Our next training date is: June 14th 9-2 at Dublin Coffman High School. Those who attend and go through the steps to starting a program may be eligible for Ashland University Credit. Contact us for more details.