

Classwide Example

Class: 4th Grade ELA Class

Background: An ELA teacher of a 4th grade class has noticed that a handful of students have low vocabulary quiz scores and decides to implement classwide peer tutoring/partner work for her class, as she thinks pairing these students with more skilled students could be an efficient way to support their needs.

Getting Started

Identify specific subject areas or skills for partner work, like reading comprehension, math facts, or vocabulary practice.

The ELA teacher chooses the next unit of 10 vocabulary words for partner work.

Group students in pairs or small groups by considering complementary strengths and areas for growth.

She groups her students in pairs of two. In each group, she pairs a student who scored well on the last quiz with a student who scored lower. She then directs the students to sit next to each other.

Implementation

Develop clear guidelines with visual and verbal instructions. Conduct a brief training on how partners should work together, including examples and tips on how to give and receive feedback.

She presents a lesson on partner work, describing expected behaviors and modeling what effective partnerships look like. She also asks her class to give examples of positive feedback and negative feedback.

Allow students to role-play partner work with teacher feedback.

She gives the students a few minutes to practice, and the teacher praises students who are following the expectations and/or give positive feedback.

Set a clear time limit for partner work to promote time management.

The teacher tells the students they have 20 minutes to review their vocabulary words. She reminds them that they should allow time for each partner to practice their words, so they should switch at the 10-minute warning.

Actively supervise partner work sessions and notice if partnerships are effective. If groupings are not productive, regroup these students during the next session.

The teacher starts the visual timer and closely monitors all pairings. She notices that one group is off task and chatting about something unrelated. Another group is getting frustrated at each other. After she redirects these students, she takes note of these pairings for revisions for the next unit.