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**A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTS OF TWO PEER
TUTORING PROGRAMMES ON THE READING ABILITY
OF CHILDREN WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN THE
REGULAR CLASSROOM.**

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ABSTRACT

A context emphasis peer tutoring programme was compared with a code emphasis programme to ascertain whether phonological processing strategies could be taught through peer tutoring and which peer tutoring programme was more effective in improving the reading ability of older poor readers. The comparison between the different theories of teaching reading was in response to the debate between context and code methods of teaching reading.

Forty-eight Year 3 to 6 (7 to 10 year old) children were identified as needing assistance in reading and were paired with a successful reader within their own classroom. Ten Year 3 to 6 classes were involved and were randomly assigned to either Pause Prompt Praise (context emphasis) or Sound Sense (code emphasis) or as Control. There were four Pause Prompt Praise classes, four Sound Sense classes and two control classes with 16 pairs of children in each experimental condition. The programme was a 20-minute daily session, over a seven-week period in the second term of the school year. The tutoring took place within the regular classroom and was in addition to the regular classroom reading programme. The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (1988), the Burt Word Test (1981), and three tasks of phonological processing ability, (Phoneme Segmentation, Pseudoword Reading, and Words with Common Rime Units) were administered to all 48 disabled readers in Term 1, prior to the tutoring beginning in Term 2. The alternate forms of the same tests were administered in Term 3 of the school year to all students at the completion of the tutoring period.

The results indicate that neither of the peer tutoring programmes was more effective than each other or the control condition in improving the reading performance of reading disabled students. There were no significant differences between the two methods of peer tutoring. This lack of difference in the results may be attributed to a variety of factors namely, age of the students and the severity of the reading disability, the reading history of the students, lack of monitoring of peer tutoring procedures, and the difficulties inherent in learning and teaching new strategies.

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