*TRAINING PEERS TO TUTOR:
EVALUATION OF A TUTOR TRAINING PACKAGE
FOR PRIMARY LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS*

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Peer tutoring—academic instruction given by a student to a same-aged classmate—can be a cost-effective way of providing needed instruction in the typical classroom where one teacher must deal with many students of varying ability levels. This study evaluated an instructional package as a training method for increasing the use of selected tutoring behaviors by peer tutors. Nine male students, aged 7 to 9 years, from a learning disabilities resource room served as subjects; four subjects served as tutors, four as students, and one as a generalization student who was assigned to all tutors during generalization testing. Subjects were assigned to tutor-student pairs based on their performances on a pretest of the 220 Dolch Basic Sight Words, with the subjects scoring highest on the pretest serving as tutors. Each tutor worked with his assigned student throughout the study, except for pre- and posttest sessions with the generalization student. During daily sessions, tutors trained their students to recognize sight words using 10 flash cards, each with 1 of the Dolch words printed on it. Training was conducted with all four tutors in a group and was evaluated using a multiple baseline design across three classes of tutoring behaviors: Preparation Behaviors, Prompting Behaviors, and Praising Behaviors. Training consisted of: (a) verbal instructions on how to perform the tutoring behaviors; (b) charts illustrating the appropriate tutoring behaviors with stick figures; (c) role playing with each tutor with the experimenter playing the part of the student and giving feedback and verbal reinforcement to the tutor for performance of the appropriate tutoring behaviors; and (d) verbal testing of each tutor by asking him to state orally the behaviors he was to perform. Training sessions took approximately 30 minutes for each of the 3 classes of tutoring behaviors. Results showed an increased use of tutoring behaviors by tutors as a function of the instructional package. Increases in tutoring behaviors were also observed during postintervention generalization testing of tutors instructing their regular student in new subject matter (math). Data taken from pre-, mid-, and postintervention testing of the 220 Dolch Words showed an increase of identifiable sight words by both students and tutors after completing the peer tutoring program. This study demonstrates that a simple tutor training package can be employed to teach young, special education students to serve as effective tutors for their peers. In addition, the academic gains evidenced by the subjects lend positive support to the effectiveness of peer tutoring programs and specifically to the research of Dineen, Clark, and Risley

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(*Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1977, **10**, 231-238) which demonstrated the educational benefits of tutoring incurred by the tutor as well as by the student.

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