

Peer Support Strategies

*for Improving
All Students'
Social Lives
and Learning*



by

Erik W. Carter, Ph.D.

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Lisa S. Cushing, Ph.D., BCBA

University of Illinois at Chicago

and

Craig H. Kennedy, Ph.D., BCBA

Vanderbilt University

Nashville, Tennessee

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Table 6.1. Facilitation strategies used by paraprofessionals and educators

Strategy	Example statements
Modeling ways for students to interact and work together	<p>"If you show Tyler where to click, he would be able to help you finish up that computer project."</p> <p>"Madeline is still learning to use her DynaVox device. If you give her a little extra time to respond, she can usually answer your questions."</p> <p>"Here is how you can help Abby program her communication device so that she can contribute to the group presentation."</p>
Highlighting similarities among students	<p>"You also like country music? I think Todd went to a Toby Keith concert last week. You should ask him about it."</p> <p>"Aren't you both taking science this semester?"</p> <p>"You know who else is a movie buff? Aiden could probably tell you who starred in that film."</p>
Teaching social interaction skills to students	<p>"Alan wasn't looking when you said that. So, I don't think he heard you. You could ask again, but this time make sure he knows you are talking to him."</p> <p>"Can you think of how you could ask Sean if you can work with him on this project?"</p> <p>"Let's practice what you can say when you no longer want to work with a partner."</p>
Interpreting behaviors	<p>"That is usually a sign Sarah is feeling a little anxious. The best way to respond is usually to let her know what activity is coming up next."</p> <p>"You know how you give someone a 'high five' when something goes really well? Anna expresses her excitement in a different way—usually by rocking back and forth."</p> <p>"Bryant has a difficult time letting people know when he is getting frustrated. Encourage him to use his communication book to ask for a break when he seems upset."</p>
Redirecting questions and conversations to other students	<p>"Mark can definitely answer that question better than I can. Go ahead and ask him."</p> <p>"Ask your group members what they think about your idea. They can help you finish up this worksheet."</p> <p>"Anita might be willing to check to see if your answers are correct. Go ahead and ask her."</p> <p>"Hmmm...I'm not sure what you should do next. Why don't you see if Yun knows what the next assignment is?"</p>
Identifying and reinforcing students' strengths	<p>"It looks like everyone played an important role in getting this project done. Ruben's cover art looks fantastic, and the materials Devin gathered go perfect with it!"</p> <p>"That presentation was fantastic. You both work really well together. Looks like your creativity is a nice complement to Hayden's comic timing."</p>
Assigning responsibilities that encourage interaction	<p>"Amanda, can you and Robyn collate these worksheets and pass them out to the class?"</p> <p>"Evan, you are responsible for making sure everyone in your group is sharing ideas for the project. If someone is being too quiet or has not had the chance to speak, you can call on them to share an idea."</p>
Increasing physical and social proximity	<p>"Brian, why don't you go and sit with your lab group?"</p> <p>"Hmm...the group has already started working on the assignment and you are still way over here."</p> <p>"Is everyone close enough to be involved?"</p> <p>"Hey, guys, I think you are missing someone..."</p>
Asking peers to provide support	<p>"Mary, will you please help Brian with his worksheet? If you point to and read the question, he can keep his place and answer."</p> <p>"Would you be willing to be Allen's partner and read out loud to him?"</p>

Sources: Causton-Theoharis and Malmgren (2005a, 2005b); Downing (2005a); Ghre, York-Barr, and Sommerness (2002); Kronberg, York-Barr, and Doyle (1996).

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