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WP 6 Peer supported learning intervention method

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GUIDE FOR PEER LEARNING INTERVENTION METHOD

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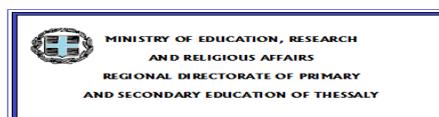




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Introduction

This guide is created within the framework of the erasmus+ ka3 project: ‘towards inclusive education for refugee children’ (project number: 592142-EPP-1-2017-1-TR-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN). The aim of this guide is mainly to introduce the peer learning intervention method as an innovative and inclusive practice that promotes and facilitates refugee children integration into the formal educational system of a country.

Inclusion is defined as the practice of "providing the supportive tools necessary to promote the learning of each pupil at school without the use of separate special education schools" (Westling & Fox, 1995, p. 228). At the same time, education is a social process in which peers play a predominant role (Bukowski, Brendgen, & Vitaro, 2007). Therefore, inclusion of pupils with difficulties in general schools can be achieved with the help of their peers.

Peer learning intervention is based on the social cognitive learning theory (1997), and can be viewed as an effective strategy of enhancing learning and school engagement. It has been also been observed that peer learning contributed to the strengthening of students’ self-concept and autonomy helping them cultivate 21st century skills such as critical thinking, cooperative ability, decision- making etc.

The guide comprises of ten sections structured as following:

- Section 1: Overview of inclusion practices for refugee students in partner countries.
- Section 2: Defining refugee peer support method
- Section 3: Benefits of peer support collaboration
- Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities of all involved participants in the refugee peer support method
- Section 5: Considerations for the development and implementation of a peer support relationship
- Section 6: Conducting refugee peer support programme
- Section 7: Training of coordinators / mentors of the peer support method
- Section 8: Matching peers
- Section 9: Supervision guidelines



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- Section 10: Gathering and analyzing the impact of the conducted peer support relationship.



1. Overview of inclusion practices for refugee students in partner countries

Greece

In the greek educational system, “asylum-seeking children have access to the education system under similar conditions as Greek nationals, and facilitation is provided in case of incomplete documentation, as long as no removal measure against them or their parents is actually enforced. Access to secondary education shall not be withheld for the sole reason that the child has reached the age of maturity. Registration may not take longer than 3 months from the identification of the child” (Article 13 L 4540/2018).

All Children under the age of 6-15 years, living in various urban settings (such as UNHCR accommodation, squats, apartments, hotels, and reception centres for asylum seekers and unaccompanied children), have the right to attend schools near their place of residence and be taught in the morning classes alongside Greek children. There are school units identified by the greek Ministry of Education which have a ZEP class (Zone of Educational Priority), where refugee students are taught the greek language for 3 hours per day (15 hours per week) and are placed in the mainstream classes for the remaining hours. Refugee children attend subjects such as Maths, Physics, Art, Music, IT, Physical Education and English (as well as other foreign languages taught at schools). In January 2019 the estimated number of refugee and migrant children in Greece was 27,000, among them 3,464 unaccompanied children. Out of this number of children present in Greece, it is estimated that 11,700 refugee and migrant children of school age (4-17 years old) are enrolled in formal education, (UNICEF, 2019).

In August 2016, the Ministry of Education established a programme of afternoon preparatory classes (*Δομές Υποδοχής και Εκπαίδευσης Προσφύγων*, DYEP) for all school-age children aged 4 to 15 (Ministerial Decision 152360/ΓΔ4/2016).

Turkey

Under Turkish law, “basic education” for children lasts for 12 years, divided into 3 levels, each level covering 4 years. All children, including those with different nationality and country of origin, have the right to access “basic education” services conducted by public schools. All children who have been registered as “temporary protection beneficiaries” and have the Temporary Protection Beneficiary Identification Cards assume the right to be registered at public schools to receive education. Children



who are not officially registered can proceed with temporal enrollment and are characterized as “guest students” which means that they can attend classes but cannot obtain any official documentation or diploma. This can be done only when their temporary protection registration is completed and are officially admitted by the school.

Once a refugee child or foreign child is enrolled in a school, then the Provincial Directorate of National Education is obliged to examine and assess the student’s prior knowledge and then place him/her in the appropriate grade-level. In 2018, the Turkish Ministry of National Education launched an Accelerated Learning Programme (*Hızlandırılmış Eğitim Programı*, HEP) for children aged 10-18 who have missed three or more years of schooling. The programme had reached 6,600 children by the end of 2018 and was implemented in 9 pilot provinces (Inter-Agency Coordination Turkey, 2018).

In 2014, The Ministry of National Education Circular 2014/21 on “Education Services for Foreign Nationals” launched the concept of Temporary Education Centre (*Geçici Eğitim Merkezi*, GEM). GEM stands for schools which are established in order to provide educational services to persons arriving in Turkey for a temporary period as part of a mass influx. More specifically, the children accommodated in the camps have the right to fully access basic education mainly at GEM which run inside the camps. By the end of 2018, a total of 590,114 children under temporary protection were enrolled in public schools and Temporary Education Centres (*Geçici Eğitim Merkezi*, GEM), (UNICEF, 2018).

Bulgaria

According to Article 26(1) LAR, asylum-seeking children have full access to the National Educational System without a limitation regarding age. Minor beneficiaries of international protection are enrolled in kindergartens or schools under the terms and following the procedure for Bulgarian nationals laid down in Chapter Five, Section IV of the Pre-school and School Education Act and in Ordinance No 5 on Pre-school Education issued by the Minister of Education and Science. In terms of inclusion in the education system of beneficiaries of international protection of school age have the same rights as Bulgarian nationals laid down in the Pre-school and School Education Act. The persons of school age are provided free education in state and municipal



schools of the Republic of Bulgaria under the terms and conditions of the Bulgarian citizens.

Additional Bulgarian language training for children and pupils who seek or have been granted international protection is provided on the grounds of Chapter III of Ordinance No 6 of 11.08.2016 on Learning the Bulgarian Literary Language issued by the Minister of Education and Science. It provides in Art.13 (1) additional training in Bulgarian as a foreign language to support the integration of children and students seeking or having received international protection. The training is carried out individually or in a group at the discretion of the headmaster of the host school or kindergarten respectively, following a decision of the coordinating team based on the state educational standard for inclusive education according to the needs of each child.

Access to the educational system of adults (16+) with international protection is free of charge. They can continue to pursue different forms of education, such as:

- evening classes (in evening schools basic or secondary education and/or vocational training is organized);
- an independent form of education (a non-formal form in which, after self-preparation, the student is examined in the subjects included in the school curriculum), (www.refugee-integration.bg).

Italy

According to Italian legislation, all children until the age of 16, either nationals or foreigners, are entitled as well as obliged to take part in the national education system. Drawing upon the Reception Decree, “unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children of asylum seekers exercise these rights and are also admitted to the courses of Italian language” (Article 21(2) Reception Decree). Article 38 TUI is also referred to in the Reception Decree, where it is stated that foreign children on Italian territory are subject to compulsory education, taking into consideration that all provisions which ensure that the right to education and the access to education services apply to foreign children as well, without any discrimination.

Furthermore, asylum seeking children are entitled to the same assistance and arrangements as Italian students in case they have special needs, with automatic integration in the obligatory National Educational System. As far as preparatory classes



at National level are concerned, there is no such provision, but taking into consideration that the Italian education system allows for a certain degree of autonomy in the organisation of the study courses, some institutions can be legitimate to design and administer additional courses with a view to assisting the integration of foreign children.

Romania

In Romania, the empowered Immigration Office is the General Inspectorate for Immigration. The General Inspectorate for Immigration is organized and functions as a specialized structure of the central public administration, a public institution with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Administration and Interns on the basis of Law no. 118/2012 regarding the approval of the Government Emergency Ordinance no.18 / 2012 for amending Government Emergency Ordinance no.30 / 2007 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Administration and Interns, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no.461 of 9 July 2012.

Established by the reorganization of the Romanian Immigration Office, the General Inspectorate for Immigration exercises the powers given to it by the law to implement Romania's policies in the fields of migration, asylum and the integration of foreigners, as well as the relevant legislation in these areas. The activity of the General Inspectorate for Immigration is a public service and is carried out in the interest of the people and the community, in support of the state institutions, exclusively on the basis and in the exercise of the law. The Immigration General Inspectorate disposes of experienced staff, made up of police officers and contract staff as well as a leader that is assigned an active role in regional and international cooperation in the field of competence and contributes to the development of functional asylum systems in eastern and south-eastern Europe.

Minor asylum seekers have the right to access pre-school education (3-6 years) and compulsory education (6-18 years) following the same rules as minors Romanian citizens, as long as no measure is taken to remove them or their parents from Romania, (Article 17(1)(p) Asylum Act). Compulsory general education is comprised of 10 grades and is divided into primary and lower secondary education. Compulsory education ends at the age of 18, (Article 16(1) and (2) Public Education Act).



Education for refugee children is provided in regular public schools where they are enrolled in normal classes and are taught together with Romanian children as observers for the first year. An “observer” means that he/she is not listed in the class book, their progress is not officially tested nor do they receive grades.

Within the framework of the 2015 reform, the Asylum Act makes provisions of a free intensive preparatory course for asylum-seeking children with the aim of facilitating their access to education before their enrolment at the national education system (Article 18(1)-(4) Asylum Act). The training course is organised by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research, in collaboration with IGI-DAI. A prerequisite for a child to attend a preparatory course is that he/she has been enrolled within 3 months from the date their asylum application was made. Attending preparatory classes does not deprive a child from the right to be enrolled as an observer in the relevant year of study.

Once the preparatory course is completed the level of knowledge of the Romanian language is assessed by an Evaluation Commission, (established by the Minister of National Education and Scientific Research), and in this way the registration of asylum seekers in the corresponding year of study is established.

2. Defining refugee peer support method

A common used refugee support method is Peer Learning method which can be characterised as the active inclusion of refugees in the educational process of the host country schools where a native is the tutor and a refugee the trainee. Peer learning in education can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions. It involves people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by so doing (Topping, 2005).

According to Gardiner (1996), peer learning through cooperative learning transforms students from passive to active and from dependent on the teachers into autonomous ones (Beasley, 1997). Methods for peer learning are influenced by a variety of variables, such as curriculum content, internal or external school collaboration, pupils' age, abilities, time, place, pupil characteristics, characteristics of assistance, the objectives set, its voluntary or mandatory implementation and feedback



(Topping 2005). In addition, when designing group learning, account should be taken of parameters such as context, objectives, subjects, participants, intervention technique, contact, materials, training, monitoring and evaluation of the process and the feedback (Topping, 2001).

The longest established and most intensively researched forms of peer learning are peer tutoring and cooperative learning. Both have been researched more in schools than in other contexts.

2.1 Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring, a flexible peer-mediated strategy, in which students take on the role of a teacher or trainer focusing on the content of study and interacting with each other.

According to Keith and Ehly (2009), peer tutoring can be defined as "people from similar social grouping, who are not professional teachers, helping each other to learn and learning themselves by teaching" (Godlad, ...).

Peer tutoring (PT) is focused on curriculum content and usually also on clear procedures for interaction, in which participants receive generic and/or specific training. Typically, a higher performing student is paired with a lower performing student to review critical academic or behavioral concepts.

Some peer tutoring methods scaffold the interaction with structured materials, while others prescribe structured interactive behaviours that can be effectively applied to any materials of interest. The tutor-tutee situation and cross-age grouping is thought to have a beneficial impact on the tutor's academic and personal levels, as well as developing positive life and social skills (e.g., Beasley, 1997; Boudouris, 2005; Colvin, 2007; Jones & Kolko, 2005; Raizada & Koedinger, 2010).

The most frequently used peer tutoring models are the next ones:

Classwide Peer Tutoring (CWPT): Classwide peer tutoring model is based on the division of the entire class into smaller groups of two to five students with differing ability levels. Students then act as tutors, tutees, or both tutors and tutees. The particular model follows highly structured procedures and involves direct rehearsals, competitive teams and posting of scores (Maheady, Harper & Mallette, 2001). The specific structured tutoring activities take place twice or more times per week for approximately 30 minutes. In CWPT, student pairings are fluid and may be based on achievement levels or student compatibility (Harper & Maheady, 2007).



Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS): PALS, a version of the CWPT model, involves a teacher pairing students who need additional instruction or help with a peer who can assist (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000). Groups are flexible and change often across a variety of subject areas or skills. Cue cards, small pieces of cardstock upon which are printed a list of tutoring steps, may be provided to help students remember PALS steps (Spencer, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003). All students have the opportunity to function as a tutor or tutee at differing times. Students are typically paired with other students who are at the same skill level, without a large discrepancy between abilities.

Cross-age Peer Tutoring: According to this model older students are paired with younger students to teach or review a skill. Their roles as tutor and tutee are predefined and unchangeable. The older student serves as the tutor and the younger student is the tutee. Their skills can be at a same or different level and the relationship between is based on a cooperative or expert interaction. Tutors usually serve appropriate behavior, ask questions, and encourage better study habits. This arrangement is also beneficial for students with disabilities as they may serve as tutors for younger students.

Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT): In line with the procedure of this model, two or more students alternate between acting as the tutor and tutee during each session, with equitable time in each role. The pairing often takes place between higher performing students with lower performing students. The structured format encourages teaching material, monitoring answers, evaluation and peers' encouragement for best learning motivation. The instructional materials can be prepared by students themselves and rewards can be outlined due to the proposal of the teachers (Harper & Maheady, 2007).

Same-age Peer Tutoring: In the same-age peer tutoring model peers, who are within one or two years of age, are paired to review key concepts. Students can be at a same skill level or a more advanced student can be paired with a less advanced one. Students who have similar abilities should have an equal understanding of the content material and concepts. When pairing students with differing levels, the roles of tutor and tutee may be alternated, allowing the lower performing student to quiz the higher performing student. Answers should be provided to the student who is lower achieving when acting as a tutor in order to assist with any deficits in content knowledge. Same-age peer tutoring, like classwide peer tutoring, can be completed within the students' classroom or tutoring can be completed across differing classes (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Kazdan, 1999).



Taking all the above in mind, we can conclude that peer tutoring is a strategy which is supported by a strong research base (e.g., Calhoun, Al Otaiba, Cihak, King, & Avalos, 2007; Kunsch, Jitendra & Sood, 2007; Vasquez & Slocum, 2012). As an educational process allows the intervention between students, enhance the students' engagement with different tasks, increases self-confidence and self-efficacy and increases students opportunities to respond in smaller groups and receive one-to-one assistance. Generally it is a widely-researched practice across ages, grade levels, and subject areas that promotes academic and social development for both the tutor and the tutee. (Spencer, 2006)

2.2 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is based on the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Students' learning goals may be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts. Within cooperative situations, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. In every classroom, instructional activities are aimed at accomplishing goals and are conducted under a goal structure. A learning goal is a desired future state of demonstrating competence or mastery in the subject area being studied. The goal structure specifies the ways in which students will interact with each other and the teacher during the instructional session. Each goal structure has its place (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999).

2.2.1 Formal cooperative learning

In formal cooperative learning students work together, for one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008). In formal cooperative learning groups the teachers' role includes (see Figure 4):

1. *Making preinstructional decisions.* In this case teachers (a) formulate both academic and social skills objectives, (b) decide on the size of groups, (c) choose a method for assigning students to groups, (d) decide which roles to assign group members, (e)



arrange the room, and (f) arrange the materials students need to complete the assignment. In these preinstructional decisions, the social skills objectives specify the interpersonal and small group skills students are to learn. By assigning students roles, role interdependence is established. The way in which materials are distributed can create resource interdependence. The arrangement of the room can create environmental interdependence and provide the teacher with easy access to observe each group, which increases individual accountability and provides data for group processing.

2. *Explaining the instructional task and cooperative structure.* Teachers (a) explain the academic assignment to students, (b) explain the criteria for success, (c) structure positive interdependence, (d) structure individual accountability, (e) explain the behaviors (i.e., social skills) students are expected to use, and (f) emphasize intergroup cooperation (this eliminates the possibility of competition among students and extends positive goal interdependence to the class as a whole). Teachers may also teach the concepts and strategies required to complete the assignment. By explaining the social skills emphasized in the lesson, teachers operationalize (a) the social skill objectives of the lesson and (b) the interaction patterns (such as oral rehearsal and jointly building conceptual frameworks) teachers wish to create.

3. *Monitoring students' learning and intervening to provide assistance* in (a) completing the task successfully or (b) using the targeted interpersonal and group skills effectively. While conducting the lesson, teachers monitor each learning group and intervene when needed to improve taskwork and teamwork. Monitoring the learning groups creates individual accountability; whenever a teacher observes a group, members tend to feel accountable to be constructive members. In addition, teachers collect specific data on promotive interaction, the use of targeted social skills, and the engagement in the desired interaction patterns. This data is used to intervene in groups and to guide group processing.

4. *Assessing students' learning and helping students process how well their groups functioned.* Teachers (a) bring closure to the lesson, (b) assess and evaluate the quality and quantity of student achievement, (c) ensure students carefully discuss how effectively they worked together (i.e., process the effectiveness of their learning groups), (d) have students make a plan for improvement, and (e) have students celebrate



the hard work of group members. The assessment of student achievement highlights individual and group accountability (i.e., how well each student performed) and indicates whether the group achieved its goals (i.e., focusing on positive goal interdependence). The group celebration is a form of reward interdependence. The feedback received during group processing is aimed at improving the use of social skills and is a form of individual accountability. Discussing the processes the group used to function, furthermore, emphasizes the continuous improvement of promotive interaction and the patterns of interaction need to maximize student learning and retention.

2.2.2 Informal Cooperative Learning

Informal cooperative learning consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008). During a lecture, demonstration, or film, informal cooperative learning can be used to focus student attention on the material to be learned, set a mood conducive to learning, help set expectations as to what will be covered in a class session, ensure that students cognitively process and rehearse the material being taught, summarize what was learned and precue the next session, and provide closure to an instructional session. The teacher's role for using informal cooperative learning to keep students more actively engaged intellectually entails having focused discussions before and after the lesson (i.e., bookends) and interspersing pair discussions throughout the lesson. Two important aspects of using informal cooperative learning groups are to (a) make the task and the instructions explicit and precise and (b) require the groups to produce a specific product (such as a written answer). The procedure is as follows.

1. Introductory Focused Discussion: Teachers assign students to pairs or triads and explain (a) the task of answering the questions in a four to five minute time period and (b) the positive goal interdependence of reaching consensus. The discussion task is aimed at promoting advance organizing of what the students know about the topic to be presented and establishing expectations about what the lecture will cover. Individual accountability is ensured by the small size of the group. A basic interaction pattern of eliciting oral rehearsal, higher-level reasoning, and consensus building is required.



2. *Intermittent Focused Discussions*: Teachers divide the lecture into 10 to 15 minute segments. This is about the length of time a motivated adult can concentrate on information being presented. After each segment, students are asked to turn to the person next to them and work cooperatively in answering a question (specific enough so that students can answer it in about three minutes) that requires students to cognitively process the material just presented. The procedure is:

- Each student formulates his or her answer.
- Students share their answer with their partner.
- Students listen carefully to their partner's answer.
- The pairs create a new answer that is superior to each member's initial formulation by integrating the two answers, building on each other's thoughts, and synthesizing.

The question may require students to:

- Summarize the material just presented.
- Give a reaction to the theory, concepts, or information presented.
- Predict what is going to be presented next; hypothesize.
- Solve a problem.
- Relate material to past learning and integrate it into conceptual frameworks.
- Resolve conceptual conflict created by presentation.

Teachers should ensure that students are seeking to reach an agreement on the answers to the questions (i.e., ensure positive goal interdependence is established), not just share their ideas with each other. Randomly choose two or three students to give 30 second summaries of their discussions. Such individual accountability ensures that the pairs take the tasks seriously and check each other to ensure that both are prepared to answer. Periodically, the teacher should structure a discussion of how effectively the pairs are working together (i.e., group processing). Group celebrations add reward interdependence to the pairs.

3. *Closure Focused Discussion*: Teachers give students an ending discussion task lasting four to five minutes. The task requires students to summarize what they have learned from the lecture and integrate it into existing conceptual frameworks. The task



may also point students toward what the homework will cover or what will be presented in the next class session. This provides closure to the lecture.

Informal cooperative learning ensures students are actively involved in understanding what is being presented. It also provides time for teachers to move around the class listening to what students are saying. Listening to student discussions can give instructors direction and insight into how well students understand the concepts and material being as well as increase the individual accountability of participating in the discussions.

3. Benefits of Peer Collaboration

The research evidence is clear that both peer tutoring and cooperative learning can yield significant gains in academic achievement in the targeted curriculum area. In the case of CL (Cooperative Learning) this can be for all members of the group. In the case of PT (Peer Tutoring) both tutees and tutors can gain – if the organisation is appropriate. When peer tutoring or cooperative learning is implemented with thoughtfulness about what form of organisation best fits the target purpose, context, and population, and with reasonably high implementation integrity, results are typically very good (Topping, 2001a, 2005; Topping & Ehly, 1998).

This latter finding helps dispel concerns that engagement in peer tutoring might be a “waste of time” for more able tutors – but with the caveat about organisation.

Additionally, both CL and PT can simultaneously yield gains in transferable social and communication skills and in affective functioning (improvements in self-esteem, liking for partner or subject area; regarding CL see Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Slavin, 1990, 1995; regarding PT see Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Rohrbeck, Ginsburg-Block, Fantuzzo, & Miller, 2003; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1981). Although these are more elusive to measure and are not found as reliably as academic gains, they represent considerable added value for no more input.

Peer learning has also been noted to be among the most cost-effective of learning strategies (e.g., Levine, Glass, & Meister, 1987). Some studies certainly demonstrate high effect size at low delivery cost. However, even in the research literature there are occasional reports of peer learning programs which did not show significant effects. Additionally, the average effect size across many studies is generally



modest, again emphasising the importance of appropriate selection of method for purpose and context, and the need to quality assure implementation For example, peer tutoring has been found effective on a large scale with tutors as young as kindergarten or first grade (five to six years old; e.g., Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997; Mathes, Howard, Allen, & Fuchs, 1998).

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1998) reviewed the effectiveness of peer tutoring with tutors and tutees with special needs, and concluded:

- Students with special needs benefit academically whether tutees or tutors.
- Tutors benefit less academically if there is no cognitive challenge for them.
- Participants benefit more if carefully selected and trained.
- Participants benefit more if progress is continuously monitored.
- Improved attitudes to the curriculum area are frequent.
- Improved interactions with partners outside tutoring sessions are frequent.
- More generalised attitudinal or interactive gains are less consistent.

Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies was found to have potentially positive effects on comprehension for adolescent learners. In addition, researchers have recognized the powerful influence that socialization experiences with peers have on student academic motivation and achievement (Light & Littleton, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1992; Wentzel, 1999). This recognition has led to the development of numerous classroom-based peer-assisted learning (PAL) interventions aimed at enhancing learning, motivation, and, consequently, achievement. Incorporating systematic, peermediated teaching strategies into elementary school curricula is a promising educational innovation.

Peer tutoring is regarded as a fruitful experience (e.g. Mastudam Keiser, Raizada & Koedinger, 2010; Sadovi, 2008; Boudouris, 2005; & Beasley, 1997) that is helpful for both tutors and tutees. It develops a sense of achievement and self-worth, and brings about a feeling of fulfilment in tutors who believe that they contribute something positive to their communities (Beasley, 1995). These gains may differ from one context to another, influenced by various factors, such as age, subject, format and others. Therefore, the researchers' results could take opposite directions. However, most of the studies in this literature review agreed on the effectiveness of learning by



teaching. Also, they almost all agreed on the social and personal advantages. Below is a summary of the benefits that peer tutors gain from being involved in a peer-tutoring and cross-age grouping experience, as quoted from a peer-tutoring handbook compiled by Tudor at Tennessee High School:

In General, Tutoring

- Improves communication skills
- Improves organizational skills
- Improves learning
- For tutor, the understanding of the concept is raised to higher levels, rather than superficial levels
- Improves self esteem and self-confidence
- Provides positive role models and emotional support
- Creates opportunities for enrichment
- Increases mastery of academic skills
- Improves student's attitudes toward school: reduces dropout rates and trancies
- Breaks down social barriers and creates new friendships

The Tutors Receive

- A sense of pride and accomplishment for having helped someone else
- Increased academic mastery
- A greater sense of dedication to their own instruction, so they can effectively transmit it to the tutees
- Increased self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of being named a tutor
- A new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students- Empathy for tutees for whom learning may be much more of a struggle Source: Tudor, A. M. (N.D). *Peer Tutoring Handbook for Tutors and Mentor Teachers*. Tennessee HighSchool, Bristol.



3.1. Aims and Ways of collaboration

There are several educational aims of acting, learning and tutoring collaboratively. Some of these are the next:

- Collaboration helps students understand writing as a public, communal act, rather than as a private, isolated one. Many students write papers that make sense to them but that aren't clear or persuasive for others. Peer reviewers help students to understand that they aren't writing for themselves, but for readers.
- Collaboration therefore helps student writers to develop a sense of audience. Too often students write only to please their instructors, whose expectations they rarely understand. Knowing that their peers will read their papers gives students a concrete sense of to whom they are writing, and why.
- Collaboration helps students to better understand the conventions of academic discourse. When talking about their papers with their peers, students will learn where their readers stumble. They can also find out why. Often, these conversations lead to a better understanding of the writing conventions that the student writer has neglected or misunderstood.
- Collaboration helps students realize that academic conventions are not simply arbitrary rules, but in fact reflect readers' expectations. If student writers want to be understood by an academic audience, they must heed the conventions of academic writing.
- Collaboration gives students practice in analyzing writing. It is easier to see where a classmate's writing is going awry than it is to find flaws in one's own prose. It is also easier to critique student writing than it is to analyze the published writing that instructors often give their students as models.
- Collaboration encourages students to talk about their writing. In peer review sessions, students have to field questions about their writing. They have to explain and sometimes defend their writing strategies.
- Collaboration helps students to understand writing as a process, and to increase their sense of mastery of what is often a complex and difficult task.



The best way to learn something is to teach it. When instructing their peers, students learn how to improve their own prose.

The question that remains is how collaboration is most effectively used. Can collaborative exercises be whole-class events? Or do they work better when the groups are smaller? Should groups have three members? Two? Four? Should collaborative work be done in class, or might it be done outside of class? Should an instructor supply guidelines for collaborating? Should she develop criteria for evaluating peer work, or should she encourage students to develop their own?

The beauty of collaborative learning is that it might be practiced in a number of ways. Collaborative exercises can be whole-class events; they might also be done in small groups. Some collaborative exercises work best with pairs—in particular, those exercises that require close attention (such as sharing whole essays). Other collaborative exercises work best when student writers receive multiple points of view (for example, when the aim of the exercise is to narrow a topic, sharpen a thesis, and so on).

Whatever you decide, it's important to remember that peer exercises should be carefully designed so that they reflect your goals and meet your students' needs. You don't, necessarily, have to design the exercises on your own—sometimes (as in collaborative assessment exercises) you may want to design the exercise with your students. What follows are some ideas for designing collaborative enterprises for your class.

For example one very effective use of collaborative learning in the Writing Classroom involves asking students to diagnose and then respond to their peers' written work. To insure that our students are able to comment productively and effectively on their peers' papers, we must first teach them methods of diagnosis and response. We can begin by modeling the reading process for our students, illustrating that there are several ways to read a paper. (For a discussion of how you can use these same methods to sharpen your diagnostic skills, see [Diagnosing and Responding to Student Writing](#).)

Too often when diagnosing their peers' writing, students either 1) try to emulate their instructors, or 2) respond as editors. Neither response is particularly effective: in the first case, students appropriate authority over their classmates' work; in the second,



they correct errors rather than facilitate good writing. Accordingly, we offer some ways of reading that will help students avoid these pitfalls:

1. ***Reading as a common reader.*** When students read as what Virginia Woolf called "common readers," they take note of their personal responses to a text. Are they bored? Fascinated? Annoyed? Delighted? Typically, a negative response to a paper reflects a problem with the writing. If a reader is bored, the paper is likely unfocused. Perhaps the writer digresses. Perhaps the writer has not learned how to write strong, emphatic sentences. Instructors should ask students to keep track of their experiences of a particular text, as these responses can lead them to a sense of the paper's particular strengths and weaknesses.
2. ***Reading to know the writer.*** Buried in our students' papers is an abundance of information regarding who they are and what they believe in. Students should read not only for what is in the paper, but for what isn't in it: sometimes the prejudices and assumptions that are never explicitly stated in the paper are precisely the paper's problem. Students should try to determine what feelings, values, opinions, and assumptions might be undermining a text. They should also try to determine what the writer does (and does not) know about academic writing. For instance, does the writer understand how to craft an effective thesis? Does the writer understand how to effectively use and cite evidence? Noting what the writer knows about writing gives the peer editors a place to begin; noting what the writer does NOT know suggests a strategy for the peer review.
3. ***Reading to diagnose the problem.*** If you provide the proper terminology and guidelines, students are generally able to diagnose what is wrong with their classmates' papers. Instructors should devote some class time to explaining what concepts they deem most important to the success of a particular paper: Does it have a persuasive thesis sentence? Focused topic sentences? Coherent paragraphs? Clear and elegant sentences? Students can then check the paper for these particular problems, discussing among themselves what might be going wrong.
4. ***Reading to improve the paper.*** Even though students can generally diagnose what is wrong with a paper, they are less skillful at giving advice for improving



it. They may have no trouble determining, for example, that a thesis is weak. But how to make it better? Of all the ways of reading we've considered so far, this is the one in which students require the most careful and thorough instruction. Instructors can model this process by transforming a poor thesis (or paragraph, or sentence) into a good one. This modeling should be done collectively, with students offering various suggestions. The instructor can try out suggestions, discovering with students which will yield better sentences and paragraphs, and which will not. Students can then do the same in their work with their peers.

3.2. Additional Ideas for Collaborative Learning

Though peer group work is the most commonly used method for collaborative learning, many instructors employ collaborative assignments in order to reap the benefits of peer learning. Consider, for example:

Collaborative Research Assignments

The collaborative research assignment allows students to work together to explore a topic relevant to the course, but not necessarily covered in class. Working together, students can cover more ground than they can on their own. They can also try out different research strategies and then discuss among themselves which strategies are most useful, and why. Sometimes collaborative research leads to some other collaborative assignment—a group paper or presentation, for example.

Not all collaborative research assignments involve "big" tasks. In the first-year classroom in particular, instructors look for creative ways to introduce their students to the research process through small assignments. For example, some instructors assign students to research groups, give them a set of questions to answer, and then send them to the library or to the Internet to find the answers together. One instructor sends groups of students on a scholarly scavenger hunt, requiring them to explore different databases and to use different search engines in order to accomplish their research tasks. Others provide students with a topic and ask them to create an annotated bibliography together.



The point is to get students working and talking together about what it means to do academic research.

Group Presentations

Group presentations are common in many Dartmouth classrooms. In these instances, instructors prepare topics or questions for the groups to consider, and then require the groups to prepare a presentation for the class. Sometimes the groups are asked to lead discussion of one of the course's primary texts; sometimes they are asked to come to class with historical or cultural information that can put a particular work in context. Sometimes groups are encouraged to be creative and to use several media when presenting to the class.

Some instructors express concern that group presentations allow weaker students to depend on stronger ones for their success in the course. In fact, this concern can be understood as one of the "positives" of group work, in that the stronger students can model the academic process for their less-prepared peers. If you remain concerned about your students' individual performances, you might begin by having groups prepare the first round of class presentations. The next round of presentations might be managed by pairs, and the final round by individuals. Students learn with each round to become more independent in the research and presentation processes.

Collaborative Papers

Like collaborative research assignments or group presentations, collaborative papers permit instructors to ask students to tackle an idea associated with the course that has not been covered in class. Students are assigned to produce the paper together: they may be asked to write the entire paper together, or they may be permitted to write the paper in sections and then to edit the paper together so that it seems to come from a single author, employing a consistent voice. One instructor allows students to divvy up the bulk of the work but insists that they write the introduction and conclusion together, attending to transitions between sections so that the paper reads seamlessly.

One benefit of the group paper is that it requires students to consider the stages of the writing process as they determine how to divide the labor among the group. For example, will the collaborative writing be most efficiently done if the group does its



brainstorming together? Should the paper be divided into sections, with each member responsible for a single part? Can one student write effectively about something that has been researched by another student? As the group considers these questions, they are brought to think carefully and critically about the writing process.

Finally, collaborative writing makes students more conscious of their own writing processes and styles. As they debate strategies and sentences, students must defend their choices. They also come to see other possible ways of expressing their ideas. For this reason, the group papers will likely not be the best papers that students produce, but they may be the most educational.

Discussion Groups

Some instructors ask students to meet formally or informally in discussion groups, where they can work together to improve their understanding of difficult texts. Whole-class discussions are greatly improved when students have met in smaller groups to discuss the course materials among themselves. Instructors can direct these groups by furnishing them with questions to consider, or they might simply ask the group to meet and to return to class with the questions and observations that have arisen.

Evaluating Peer Work

Evaluating collaborative work can be problematic—particularly if this work constitutes a considerable part of the course grade. Instructors might simply grade the project and give the same grade to all students. Or they might ask the students to submit a paper that documents their contributions to the presentation. Or they might ask each member of the group to evaluate the work of their group mates. Any strategy is equally good, as long as the standards and processes of evaluation are made clear to students long before collaboration begins.

In terms of peer critique: instructors who require peer critiques want some way of insuring that students are giving these exercises their best efforts. One way to evaluate peer critiques is to ask students to do their critiques in writing. Instructors can collect these critiques in class or on Canvas and evaluate them. Another idea is to ask students to write a brief summary of how the peer review process did (or did not) help them to rethink and rewrite their papers. Whatever the method, the instructor should



make sure that students understand that their work in the peer groups is an important element of the course, and in what way it will count towards their final grades.

Using Canvas to Enhance Collaborative Learning

Many instructors have found that Canvas is a very useful tool in engaging students in collaborative learning exercises. Especially useful are the Discussion Board and the Wiki tool.

The Discussion Board allows instructors to create "threads," where students can post drafts of their papers and receive comments from their peers. The Discussion Board conveniently provides instructors and students with an archive of student work, in its various stages. It also provides instructors with a way to oversee the written critiques that students are doing of their classmates' work. The Wiki tool is designed so that students can write and revise collaboratively. The Wiki keeps track of every draft, noting the changes made and who made them. Instructors use the Wiki in a variety of ways, sometimes asking students to write short Wikipedia-style entries on related course topics, other times asking them to create and maintain a glossary of key terms. (for more information, see *Barbara Knauff, Instructional Technologist for Academic Computing*. Last updated: April 8, 2016).

4. Roles and responsibilities of all involved participants in the refugee peer support method

According to the literature there are two identified categories of peer associations: relational ties and ideational ties (Kindermann & Gest, 2009). Relational ties are close, emotional and intimate associations; friendships and cliques are two types of relational ties. Ideational ties are social associations; crowds is considered to be an ideational tie. Friendships, cliques, and crowds will be explored in turn.

Friendships. Friendships are consistently defined in the literature as dyadic, mutual relationships (Berndt & McCandless, 2009; Birch & Ladd, 1996; Bukowski et al., 2007; Ladd et al., 2009; Wentzel & Looney, 2007). Researchers have focused on conceptualizing friendships based on emotional properties of affection and intimacy



(Bukowski et al., 2007), social properties of reciprocity and egalitarianism (Bukowski et al., 2007; Bukowski, Motzoi, & Meyer, 2009; Wentzel, 2005), or utilitarian properties such as material support and rivalry (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Ladd et al., 2009).

Friendships satisfy socio-emotional goals (Bukowski et al., 2009) and are usually formed when students find commonalities with a peer (Wentzel & Looney, 2007). Friendships begin as a preference for a particular peer and increased socialization with this preferred peer can result in the development of a friendship (Ladd et al., 2009).

The degree of closeness between friends has been characterized as a continuum with the extreme left being *strangers*, the extreme right being *best friends*, and with *acquaintances*, *just friends*, *good friends*, and *close friends* sequentially lying between the extremes (Ladd et al., 2009).

Friends play an important role on students' academic success. Positive friendships may result in the modeling of prosocial goals such as helping, sharing, and reciprocity (Bukowski et al., 2009; Ladd et al., 2009; Wentzel, 2009). Moreover, positive friendships have been linked to academic outcomes such as increased engagement (Li, Lynch, Calvin, Liu, & Lerner, 2011), higher sense of enjoyment and importance for academic tasks (Wentzel, 2005) higher grades, higher test scores, and increased motivation (Wentzel, 2009). Negative friendships that are competitive, antagonistic, and not academically supportive have not been as widely investigated.

In Qualitative Research in Education, however, studies have found negative friendships to affect maladjustment to school due to negative school attitudes, disaffection, (Ladd et al., 2009) and disruptiveness (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Ladd et al., 2009).

Crowds and cliques. While friendships are dyadic and close interactions, crowds are ideational ties characterized as large collectives based on stereotypes and reputations (Brown, 2004; Hartup, 2009) and cliques are relational ties characterized as small groups of friends with personal relationships (Brown, 2004; Bukowski et al., 2007). Crowds and cliques are not stable and exclusive groupings; instead, students form complex and dynamic peer networks. In this interlocking peer network, dyadic friendships exist within and outside crowds and cliques, and cliques may exist within, outside, and between crowds (Brown, 2004). Nearly all schools have cliques, but



crowds may not exist in small schools as small size brings an intimacy among the student body that hinders the development of stereotype-based groupings (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2007).

Crowds are important developmentally because crowds provide a sense of identity and a structure for social interaction (Hartup, 2009). Membership in a crowd is not necessarily voluntary as membership is based on peer perception of an individual, not an individual student's desire to be associated with a particular stereotype (Brown, 2004; Hartup, 2009; Kindermann & Gest, 2009; Wentzel, 2005). Crowd stereotypes are usually based on school activities, abilities, behaviors, race, and socio-economic status (Brown & Dietz, 2009). Crowds can include hundreds of students while cliques are much smaller with approximately three to 10 students. Cliques have a hierarchical structure and are exclusionary in nature; moreover, the nature of cliques is inconsistent, ranging from small collectives of dyadic friendships to friendship circles where all members of the clique have close relationships with every other member (Adler & Adler, 1998).

Crowd membership has been found to be associated with academic and developmental outcomes as these stereotypes are accompanied with expectations in behavior (Wentzel, 2005). Moreover, there is a development trajectory that each crowd may follow in relation to students' academic attitudes and behaviors. For instance, the social status of students stereotyped as smart tends to be highest in middle school and lowest at the beginning of high school (Hartup, 2009). This developmental trajectory *Leach – Peer bonds in urban school communities* may lead to students moving away from behaviors that lead to academic success as the stereotype of being smart becomes less popular in the transition to high school. Cliques are less studied than crowds, but cliques have been found to effect intrinsic value and academic achievement (Ryan, 2001). Thus, peer associations such as cliques, crowds, and dyadic friendships both positively and negatively affect students' developmental and academic outcomes.

While many schools feel that they are applying peer learning, they actually just put the kids together to do some activity and hope for the best. Researchers observed that children often worked individually, although they were grouped (Bennett, Desforges, Cockburn and Wilkinson, 1984). For that reason, specific roles and



responsibilities for all involved participants in the refugee peer support method should be defined, so that they become effective and have the advantages mentioned above.

Initially, a philosophy of integrating refugee children into school should be created. Prior to applying the intervention method, administrators and school teachers should plan how refugee children should be included. During the planning phase, the members of the working group may review the literature and discuss how to formulate the intervention method that will be applied and evaluated. Over time, a good number of teachers who support peer learning can grow in school. In this direction training sessions could be made to educators to get acquainted with peer learning and its benefits, so that they can then apply it in practice.

The school director has to support teachers by giving them the necessary time, to encourage collaboration and support them in decision-making. He should also facilitate what is needed when implementing peer learning.

Teachers should carefully select couples who think they will work more effectively on the basis of their observations. Their role, at the time of application of the method, will be supportive and they will be able to oversee many lessons at the same time and address a wider range of learners' educational needs. There could be an observation sheet where they would record their observations on the achievement of the objectives of the program that will be used for feedback.

Regarding native students, it is important to be aware of the difficulties faced by refugees and to be encouraged to become active participants in their integration into the educational process. One way to do this is through their participation in the peer learning intervention method.

Peer support workers, also, will demonstrate innate abilities and acquired skills that make them suitable for peer support of this more formal nature. The primary personal attribute necessary to provide quality peer support is lived experience with a mental health challenge or illness (either personally or through a loved one), accompanied by the experience of finding a path of recovery. Skills, abilities and attributes include:

- a sense of hopefulness and a strong belief in the possibility of recovery



- a personal commitment to self-care through stress management and resiliency strategies to maintain health and wellbeing, and a recognition that each peer whom they support will need to find their own unique approach to self-care
- an ability to detect when their own stressors or triggers may be resulting in unhealthy or unwanted attitudes or behaviours, coupled with a willingness to request assistance and/or take steps to work towards recovery
- an ability to relate to the experience and challenges of the peer as a result of their own life experience

Interpersonal communication is critical to building open, honest, non-judgmental and trusting peer relationships. Skills, abilities and attributes include:

- a personal demeanour that is warm, empathetic and non-judgmental, demonstrating a genuine interest in their peer and valuing their peer as an equal and a whole person
- communication and listening skills that encourage honesty, openness and clarity for full understanding of the situation being discussed, while honouring personal integrity
- interactions that respect the peer's right to self-determination and empower the peer to explore options and co-create new ideas on how to proceed, rather than providing advice or having a personal agenda of what should be accomplished
- an ability to know when the time is right to share aspects of their own lived experience in a manner that provides relevant insight and/or hopefulness while keeping the focus on the peer and their situation

5. Considerations for the development and implementation of a peer support relationship.

Establishing a peer support relationship is by no means an easy task since it presupposes the establishment of trust, mutual respect and reliability amongst the members of a community. Peer support has the characteristic of being shaped and formed by the



individuals involved and is open to any modifications, adaptations and alterations when the circumstances call for it.

In the case of refugee education, peer support is synonymous to a “give and take” relationship between the native classmates and the refugee ones. The native classmates are most likely those that are in a position to provide information about the daily school routine, their town (history, monuments, social services etc.), their country’s culture and the local people’s way of thinking and living. They can also be the persons that can assist refugee students engage in the educational practice and feel that they are participating in the learning process, avoiding feelings of exclusion and early drop out. Refugee students are not only the recipients of this transfer of knowledge and the provision of learning support, they can also be sources of information regarding other cultures and civilizations, different educational systems and learning experiences. They can also act as role models, teaching life skills and management drawing upon the hardships they have gone through.

The development of a peer support programme should be based on the assessment of students’ needs and the analysis of these as it facilitates a proper design and development of a peer support relationship. Two indicative needs assessment documents are created using google form which can be found in the following links (<https://urlzs.com/WvaKF> and <https://urlzs.com/FF2Zh>).

The first one aims at assessing refugee students’ needs and comprises areas related to their learning needs and their learning profile, their preferences regarding school subjects, their attitude towards school environment etc. The analysis of the refugee students’ needs helps derive useful information about them and the level of their psychological readiness in respect to their adaptability in the new environment, so that the peer support programme is realistic and feasible to attain and implement. Complementary to this, the analysis of the needs assessment of the native students is an indicator of their attitudes towards their refugee classmates, the level of tolerance to diversity and acceptance of it and their disposition towards collaborative learning schemata which are the corner stone of peer support.

The development of such an intervention presupposes not only a training of students but of teachers, parents and other stakeholders as well, in order to raise empathy and foster an intercultural approach in the daily exchange with refugees.



Moreover, the development of a peer support relationship focuses and draws upon:

- A linkage to the whole school community.
- Assistance in managing school routine
- Inclusive practices that facilitate school achievement
- The cultivation of a sense of belonging in a group
- On-going support, extended beyond school time.

Implementation of the peer support relationship is to be carried out in and out of the school classroom. In the school classroom, it can be facilitated in case the guide is embodied in the daily school curriculum. Depending on the student's profile, peer support practices can take place in groups or in one-to-one basis. In the cases of children with learning disorders, trauma, or emotional disturbances, it might be better to be one-to-one to keep their own pace (Horsman, 1999; Isserlis, 2000).

Special concern should be given to refugee students facing disabilities either mental or/and physical. Special needs students have always been a rather challenging group of students since they are often marginalized and stigmatized due to ignorance, prejudices and lack of support and inclusion practices. The majority of countries in Europe have developed various settings to include these students such as special schools, special classes in integrated schools, even inclusive schools where special needs students are taught with the typically developed peers (co-education). Special needs students with a refugee background face more challenges since the lack of the hosting country's language adds more barriers in their education.

Local community can participate as well through certain services and staff who are specialized in psychological support. In the majority of municipalities there are NGOs or Centers with a humanitarian orientation which can assist refugee families and their children in the process of adjusting to the new environment.

6. Conducting refugee peer support programme

The realization of the peer support programme will take place in and beyond the school classroom. The main prerequisite for the implementation of a refugee peer support programme is to create an inclusive environment. Inclusion is the antidote to



marginalization and refers to the sense of community created amongst student population, accompanied by a sense of belonging in a group sharing not necessarily common ideology, religion or language but common dreams, ambitions and everyday routine.

6.1 In the classroom:

- Creation of learning communities involving group work where a native student of an empathetic profile with cooperative and communicative skills can be the guide.
- Project - based assignments which promote cooperation and group work, enhancing thus participation and personal involvement.
- Active learning strategies which allow for peer support since they are student-centered. A typical active learning strategy is the “**post-it parade**” where students are given post-its and are asked to write an idea, a solution or a thought on a topic. Then, all post-its are placed on the wall or on a chalkboard and a discussion may follow. Another example of an active learning strategy is the “**group text reading**” where a text is selected and is then divided into 2 or 3 smaller sections and given to equal groups of students. Guiding questions are given to students and after they have read through their text and have discussed about it (15-20 min.) “Debates”, the “Round table”, “Pro-cons grids” etc. are some more active learning strategies which embody the peer support learning intervention since they promote cooperation and sharing. They also cultivate communicative skills and help refugee students gain self-confidence and feel included in the learning process.
- Differentiation techniques which take into consideration the different learning styles and the different needs students have. Some differentiation techniques are the following: 1) “**Learning stations**”: The class is divided in sections (stations) and each section contains material on a key concept of the new lesson. The students rotate in groups, stop at each section to look into the available information and then, in groups, they answer questions or complete assignments they had been given. Learning stations can include material in the form of on-line applications, articles or journals, artworks, infographics, charts, audiobooks, short videos with the teacher revising key concepts, etc. 2) “**Interviewing**”: Students interview each other asking questions related to the content of the lesson. The questions can have been either given by the teacher (pre-



made task cards) or made by the students themselves boosting their creativity and skills such as decision- making, critical thinking and turn-taking. 3) “**Think-pair-share**” strategy: Initially, students think on a specific topic or question. Then, students are paired (in our case a native student is paired with a refugee) and discuss their findings or ideas on it. Finally, each pair presents their ideas to the rest of the class and is engaged in a discussion where they can agree/disagree, support their opinion with arguments etc.

- Creation of on-line (learning) communities (web and mobile-based, fb, twitter etc.) since they promote a sense of belonging and allow for peer support through socialization patterns. Students are sources of information on their own and sharing experiences and ideas in a reciprocal way can contribute to the establishment of a positive learning environment. Technology and especially the web can facilitate this since it engages even more “solitary” personalities into a broader electronic community where they are exposed to other people’s minds but retain the “privilege” to control how and to what extent they will share their own thoughts and experiences. This is very important in the case of refugee students who may have traumatic experiences and feel rather reserved and skeptical in the beginning. On- line communities give them the sense that they are part of a group, that they are included in what native students are doing and access the learning material more easily since they can have the option of a “flipped” class with positive results (Hamdan, McKnight, Mcknight & Arfstrom, 2013).

- Involvement in drama clubs and other school activities which offer a chance to express themselves, to share feelings and personal stories etc. Drama has always been an important tool, promoting social inclusion and integration of vulnerable social groups such as immigrants and refugees. Drama techniques create a humanistic and anti-racist learning environment, they build empathy, help in the breaking of stereotypes and promote intercultural learning, team work and mutual understanding. The Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (<http://theatroedu.gr>) has developed two educational programmes “Monologues from the Aegean” and “it could be me...it could be you” to promote the inclusion of refugee students in the educational system. The first programme draws upon the narrations from minor refugees who reached the Greek coasts without their parents



(<https://theatroedu.wixsite.com/aegeanmonologues/home-en>) and (https://youtu.be/CqhROSW6y_g) and the second one is an awareness project focusing on human rights (<https://www.humanrights.theatroedu.gr>). The project is organised and implemented in Greece since 2015 by the **Hellenic Theatre/Drama & Education Network (TENet-Gr)** in association with and the support of **UNHCR Greece** (UN Agency for Refugees). Indicatively, for the Greek teachers, useful material with drama techniques to be used in the classroom can be found in the following book: http://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2012/120517_compass_edition_gr.pdf and in the following link <http://noracismschools.blogspot.com/>.

6.2 Beyond the classroom:

- Involvement in extracurricular activities with a focus on knowing their surroundings, the location of important places and on how to go about their town/village, where they can find community services etc. They can be taught how to read maps or/and how to search for info on-line or even how to guide themselves to an info kiosk to gather information about their new settlement. They can also participate with their peers in games which involve wandering around in the area. A typical example is the "Hunting of the lost treasure" whereby refugee students always in cooperation with their peers, try to read the guidelines and wander around in the town/city in order to find the lost treasure.
- Activities on acculturation. Acculturation is the process of getting adapted to the culture of the host country maintaining though the cultural values and traditions of the home country. The notion of acculturation embraces Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2005) and Kramer's theory of "cultural fusion" (Kramer & Croucher 2016) whereby the individual is put in a reciprocal relationship and interdependence with the environment. Such activities can be realized by involving refugee students in special days of the host country. More specifically, peers can inform their refugee classmates about National Holidays or Celebrations, Religious days-off etc. and involve them in parades, celebrations and any other collaborative activities which help refugee students have access to their new country's traditions and mores. "Try walking in our shoes" (DOI:10.1177/0098628316649484) is a scientific article containing many role-play exercises on acculturation as well cultural adjustment processes that could be implemented at schools where refugee and/or immigrant students attend.



- Development of projects based on intercultural exchange (cuisine, music, art etc.). Refugee students can work with their native classmates within the frame of peer support in order to carry out collaborative projects based on the collection of recipes, music sheets, forms of art etc. They can afterwards create a digital book or issue a book or a magazine to share and disseminate its multicultural content. Refugee or immigrant students can also take up the role of the ‘‘Cultural exchange Ambassador’’ and inform the host country’s students as well as the local community about their country, their culture and traditions. More ideas and good practices can be found in the site https://uni-collaboration.eu/sample_projects_all.
- Organization of festivals with a multicultural dimension where they can share cultural information with their peers and break any stereotypes that may exist. These festivals can draw inspiration from traditional ways of expression such as folk dances which render a fun way of getting people doing things together. In this way, refugee students learn important elements of the host country’s traditions and give information about their own to their peers. Peers’ participation in joyful activities such as dancing relaxes them, brings them closer to people from other cultures bonds them with positive feelings.
- Organization of sport activities as inclusive practices. Sports undeniably bring people closer and foster inclusion, participation, cooperation and team work. Refugee or immigrant students can get acquainted with sports not practiced in their country and in turn, they can introduce popular sports of their country to the students of the host country. Sports tournaments can be organized where students with a migrant or refugee background can have leading roles boosting their confidence and self-esteem.

7. Training of coordinators/mentors of the peer support method

The implementation of the peer support method embracing the main principles of cross-cultural communication cannot be realized unless the teachers are properly trained in order to do so. The training of the people who will be involved in the peer support method will be done at large through seminars by specialists in this field. School units are learning organizations and the members of it should be engaged in lifelong learning processes in order to update their knowledge and skills.

The training will be conducted by:



- Staff of the Institute of Educational policy which launches the curriculum and pedagogic material for the education of refugee students.
- Regional Coordinators for the inclusion of refugees in the National school system.
- Coordinators of education who hold an advisory role and have the scientific knowledge, specialization and capacity to induce teachers in new didactic and pedagogic approaches.
- Regional directorates and local Directorates of Education who have staff specialized in pedagogical issues and learning techniques.
- University staff that has an expertise in cross cultural education and peer support method in the broader spectrum of peer learning and collaborative learning.
- Teachers with relevant qualifications in the field of peer learning and cross cultural education.
- Trainers of NGO's and other organizations (public or private) whose expertise is relevant to inclusive education.

Teachers will be mainly trained in active learning and student-centered strategies which will enhance and facilitate the peer learning intervention since they share a common pedagogical philosophy. Approaches such as experiential learning and project based tasks will be given priority since they embrace the main principles of critical pedagogy and constructivism, the corner stones of cross cultural and inclusive education.

Principals will be further trained (except for the afore-mentioned areas) on bureaucratic procedures that need to be taken into account.

Moreover, they will be trained on how to inspire and motivate teachers in their school units to be actively involved in the peer support programme.

The training methods can be in the form of :

- Brain-storming techniques so as to gather trainees' prior knowledge and build upon it with the aim of expanding it further.
- Seminars-lectures- presentations (to set the theoretical basis)
- Workshops
- Distant learning (e-learning platforms such as Moodle, Moocs etc.)



- Job shadowing

Along with the seminars, there will be encouragement for participation in projects which aim at raising empathy and intercultural awareness. What needs to be stressed out is that there will be a continuous revision and feedback assessment throughout the realization of the program, therefore participants, settings and methodological tools can be modified and adjusted to the actual needs.

Teachers' training can also embed *external elements* such as prior similar projects which have already been evaluated or/and researches on teachers' needs and attitudes towards peer learning. *Internal elements* could be existing material and relevant areas in the school books (in their cognitive subject) that can also function as training material where proper adaptation can be made.

8. Matching peers

The following section provides a brief synopsis of the growing body of literature surrounding the various types of peer support in order to more clearly specify the type of peer support being referred to within these two sets of Guidelines. For a thorough review of the many approaches to peer support, please refer to the Making the Case for Peer Support report, found on the MHCC website.

The various types or formats of peer support are often described as falling along a spectrum ranging from informal support among acquaintances through to formal peer support within a structured organizational setting. One of the determinants in defining the type of peer support is mutuality (the mutual benefit), which results from an equal and sharing relationship. Another key factor is the degree of preparation, as well as an intention or plan to make oneself available for peer support work (see Figure 1).

“Friendship” and “Clinical Care” are specified at either end of the spectrum. The range of peer support options begins with “informal peer support” when acquaintances notice the similarity of their lived experience with mental health challenges and therefore listen to and support each other. This type of interaction is more focused than a typical friendship may be. At the other end of the spectrum is peer support within a structured clinical setting, in which there may be a program where peer support workers make a connection with patients based on similarity of lived



experience, and offer the opportunity for a supportive, empowering relationship. At the end of the spectrum closest to “friendship”, true mutual benefit is found when two or more people share similar challenges (either personally or in relation to loved ones) as each strives to find a path towards wellbeing, while supporting one another. Participants are drawn together by what they have in common and neither is more experienced or better prepared to offer support than the other.

Hence, the authentic nature and mutual benefit that comes from empathetic support is more identifiable. This may be considered a more informal, less structured relationship providing peer support that is of a true reciprocal, (or give-and-take), nature (see below). The two sets of Guidelines are intended for the type of peer support that falls at the more formal end of the spectrum. The types of organizations that intentionally offer peer support vary.

Examples include clinical organizations, community organizations and workplaces. There are many community organizations that are very focused on providing peer support in a structured manner, while others may have a different focus with peer support naturally happening on a more reciprocal, less formal manner. Both approaches provide the benefits of hope, empowerment and community that are a part of peer support, and each approach has unique advantages.

The values, principles of practice, and skills and abilities of peer support workers apply to all types of peer support and all types of organizations that offer peer support. At the initial stage of peer learning, it is important to match the bonds into groups. Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink (2002) distinguish groups in three categories: casual, collaborative, and team-based. Separation and composition of groups are affected by specific criteria. The learning objectives must be taken into account.

In our program it has been pre-decided that the groups will consist of native pupils and refugees. Before the start of team learning and the creation of the groups, the teacher should decide on the duration of the activities, the appropriate number of pupils per group and the desired result. The teacher, based on his / her communication with the pupils, will determine the composition of the groups according to the needs of each pupil and which couples feels that will work more effectively. Ideally, the teacher can also ask for the wishes of the students. The teacher should motivate the team



colleagues and give them clear instructions. To increase students' sense of responsibility, it is a good idea to clearly define the role of each member.

9. Supervision guidelines

Learning from counterparts is an educational strategy from the many available to teachers. To avoid misinterpretation, no one claims that peer learning replaces the teacher. Students continue to need teachers and teachers have to teach. In order to function effectively, the appropriate framework should be selected, carefully planned and the learning outcomes must be evaluated.

The role of teachers remains the same important as they structure the activities in which students work and use criteria to assess student interaction, creating the context in which learning occurs. In this way they direct both the generic content and the way to achieve the goals set. The design and management of learning experiences is not a reduced role or one for which teachers should feel guilty but instead requires sophisticated teaching experience.

These Guiding Values are designed to embody the main pillars of peer support and will inform the code of conduct and principles of practice. The Making the Case for Peer Support report notes that many peer support workers “are afraid that peer support values will be destroyed if peer support becomes too professionalized. On the other hand people recognized that peer support needs to grow and become more standardized, with nationally recognized training and standards that can be adapted at the provincial level.” As with any role, it is possible that, over time, the peer support being offered may slip into a type of interaction that no longer honors the original intent. This is one reason that these Guidelines have been created with guiding values. They may be used as a checkpoint to remind and encourage all members of a peer support program of the critical elements that must be honored. Making the Case for Peer Support identified three primary values as consistent across the literature review and survey of peer support workers:

- Self-determination and equality
- Mutuality and empathy
- Recovery and hope.

The following list of values best define peer support in the view of leaders:



- Hope and recovery – acknowledging the power of hope and the positive impact that comes from a recovery approach.
- Self-determination – having faith that each person intrinsically knows which path towards recovery is most suitable for them and their needs, noting that it is the peer’s choice whether to become involved in a peer support relationship
- Empathetic and equal relationships – noting that the peer support relationship and all involved can benefit from the reciprocity and better understanding that comes from a similar lived experience.
- Dignity, respect and social inclusion – acknowledging the intrinsic worth of all individuals, whatever their background, preferences or situation
- Integrity, authenticity and trust – noting that confidentiality, reliability and ethical behavior are honored in each and every interaction
- Health and wellness – acknowledging all aspects of a healthy and full life
- Lifelong learning and personal growth – acknowledging the value of learning, changing and developing new perspectives for all individuals. Each organization should create its own list of guiding values; it may choose to incorporate other attributes as it sees fit.

The principles of practice flow from the guiding values and further define the intent of the support being provided. They embody the character of the relationship and the philosophy of peer support work. The principles of practice are written from the perspective of the peer support worker, but also direct the principles of practice for a program or an organization. These principles should guide and inform program administrators in policy decisions. Principles of practice for the work of peer support:

- Recognize the importance of an individual approach to recovery, respect where each individual happens to be in their own journey of recovery, and recognize that the goals, personal values, beliefs and chosen path of the peer may not be the same as their own
- Honor and encourage self-determination by working with the peer to co-create and explore options rather than simply providing direction, and empower the peer to take steps forward on their own rather than “helping” by doing it for them.

Interact in a manner that keeps the focus on the peer rather than on themselves, and maintain a peer relationship that is open and flexible, making themselves available



as necessary to a reasonable extent• Use recovery-based language and interact in a manner that focuses on the peer’s journey to a more hopeful, healthy and full life, rather than focusing on symptoms, diagnosis, and/or an objective set by someone other than the peer• Share aspects of their lived experience in a manner that is helpful to the peer, demonstrating compassionate understanding and inspiring hope for recovery• Practice self-care, monitor their own wellbeing and be aware of their own needs for the sake of their mental health, recognizing the need for health, personal growth, and resiliency when working as a peer support worker• Use interpersonal communication skills and strategies to assist in the development of an open, honest, non-judgmental relationship that validates the peer’s feelings and perceptions in a manner that cultivates trust and openness.

Empower peers as they explore possibilities and find their path towards a healthier and happier outcome with the eventual objective of encouraging disengagement from the peer support relationship when the time is right for the peer• Respect the various positive interventions that can play a role in promoting recovery• Respect professional boundaries of all involved when exploring with the peer how they might interact with these other professionals when questions or concerns arise• Collaborate with community partners, service providers and other stakeholders, and facilitate connections and refer peers to other resources whenever appropriate• Know personal limits, especially in relation to dealing with crises, and call for assistance (in a collaborative manner) when appropriate• Maintain high ethics and personal boundaries in relation to gift giving, inappropriate relations with peers (e.g., romantic or sexual intimacy), and/or other interactions or activities that may result in harm to the peer or to the image of peer support• Participate in continuing education and personal development to learn or enhance skills and

Participate in continuing education and personal development to learn or enhance skills and strategies that will assist in their peer support works.

10. Gathering and analyzing the impact of the conducted peer support relationship

Most of the results regarding the impacts of tutoring on the academic achievement of the tutor announced salient success (e.g., Beasley, 1997; Boudouris, 2005; Colvin, 2007; Eggers, 1995; Johns and Kolko, 2005; & Sadovi, 2008). While peer-tutoring, the



peer tutors are revising and reviewing with their tutees the same content and concepts that they have been through in their own classes, which is very helpful to increase and crystallize their own mastery and understanding of the subject matter (Eggers, 1995; Boudouris; 2005; & Sadovi, 2008). In Beasley's attempt to find out the academic advantages of peer tutoring for tutors, she announced great success and improvement nearing 80% with some students (Beasley, 1997).

However, others (e.g. McKeachie, 1986) argue that peer tutoring does not have an effective impact on the tutors' academic performance. Most peer tutors follow shallow strategies in helping their peers like summarizing and highlighting. The peer tutors are already outstanding their tutees in their academic performance and excellence, so following strategies like highlighting only does not add noticeably to the tutors' academic gains (as cited in Landrum & Chastain, 1998).

Furthermore, some studies (e.g., Egger, 1995; Sadovi, 2008) claimed that peer-tutoring is helpful for expanding the tutors' knowledge about the subject as they will be investing a great deal of time in looking for the right materials and sources to offer a well-founded support for the tutees, in which they may encounter materials that are helpful for themselves, too. In order to be capable of teaching, tutors need to study the materials they are supposed to teach carefully, which requires them to spend more time revising and preparing (Sadovi, 2008).

In addition, tutors are more likely to go back and check some reference books and sources to achieve their tutoring mission professionally. Exchanging tips with the other peer tutors and teachers also helped improve the whole process of enhancing learning. Therefore, students' academic performance tends to be affected positively by being peer tutors. Learning by teaching is proved to be a success, especially if the program is "well organized and implemented with specific objectives" (Eggers, 1995). In their research, Johns and Kolko (2005) cited the results of a study done in 1989 by Dimeff, Fantuzzo and Fox to figure out the benefits of a reciprocal peertutoring program in a college abnormal psychology class. The researchers found that the peer-tutoring program resulted in "tutors' improvement in personal academic achievement, personal cognitive gains, and higher abilities than those who did not interact with peers" . All these findings confirm the already well-known notion that the best way to really



learn and understand a subject is to try to teach it to somebody else; or as Sadovi (2008) proposed, teaching could be the best teacher.

10.1 The social advantages of peer-tutoring

Besides the gains on the academic level, some studies showed social improvement as peer tutors gained and grew in desirable social and life skills from their experience with tutoring (e.g. Boudouris, 2005; Tong, 2004; & Beasley, 1997; Colvin, 2007; & Eggers, 1995). Tutoring requires punctuality; tutors need to be on time for their sessions and their appointments with their tutees, which makes them respect time and develop time management skills.

Tutors also learn to balance between the time spent studying and the time used in preparing for tutoring and tutoring itself (Tong, 2004; & Beasley, 1997). Peer tutors learn problem-solving skills as well; they encounter several areas of difficulty when dealing with the different personalities and problematic issues of the tutees, which requires them to be always alert to provide practical and systematic help to students (Eggers, 1995; & Boudouris, 2005).

Eggers (1995) stated that problem solving skills expanded with her students who volunteered to work as peer tutors as they attempted to find alternative ways for their peers in order to help them understand the mathematical problems and concepts. Furthermore, Beasley (1997) found that her students developed effective communication and listening skills from being involved in a peer-tutoring program. Socially, the peer tutors become popular among their peers, and they have the chance to develop ongoing friendships and build up positive relations with many other students (Beasley, 1997; & Tong, 2004).

In support of the latter proposition, Boudouris (2005) noticed that a special bond was formed between the partners. Moreover, in her attempt to shed light on the social gains of the peer tutors, Colvin (2007) indicated that the peer-tutoring experience positively affected the 'mentors' interpersonal relationships' with their tutees. A sense of being helpful and wanted in the campus life has developed in the tutors, which granted them positive feelings of comfort and satisfaction at college. However, Colvin noticed that "this interaction does not always occur smoothly and that tutors often spend an inordinate amount of time engaged in impression management" (p. 165). Also, she



stated that "the tutor/student relationship can be rife with misunderstanding and power struggle."

10.2 The personal advantages of peer-tutoring

Tutoring provides the peer tutors with the opportunity to sharpen their personalities; the tutors work as a bridge between teachers and students, which makes them open to the experience of both the former and latter party (Eggers, 1995; Johns & Kolko, 2005). They gain confidence and self-efficacy as they get immersed in the experience of peer tutoring.

Eggers (1995) concluded from her experiment of a successful peer tutoring and cross-age grouping program that "Both tutors and tutees grow in self-esteem" (p. 220). However, other researchers like Landrum and Chastain (1998) found out that "regardless of being tutored or being the tutor, there is a little to no effect on self-esteem" (p. 502), which contradicts the findings of the former researchers (e.g. Eggers, 1995).

Another advantage for the peer tutors is the direct contact between them and the teachers and lecturers, which trains them to be confident and competent for the task. Beasley (1997) stated that her students found the tutoring experience challenging yet motivating. According to Colvin's findings (2005), the peer tutors were close to noticing and recognizing the students' struggles at college, which inspired them with insights to assess and evaluate their own competence and capability. By interacting with their tutees and responding to their varied needs, the peer tutors ended up mastering other good qualities and virtues like responsibility and patience: "Through peer mentoring, tutors have become aware of their developing personal attributes," (Colvin, 2005, pp. 173).

The effectiveness of peer tutoring programs was carried over to homes as well; tutors in several studies admitted that they have developed more patience and positive attitude, not only when working with others, but when working alone too (e.g. Eggers, 1995; & Landrum & Chastain, 1998). Johns and Kolko (2005) cited a study conducted in 1997 by three researchers: Sawyer, Pinciario, and Bedwell, who concluded from their experiment that "participation in a peer mentoring program can be a developmental task challenging the ways in which intellectual competence, interpersonal relationships,



sense of purpose, and personal identity are perceived by the mentor" (p. 4) . Peer tutors, as a result, are more likely to develop leadership skills and be a source of influence upon their tutees. In many cases, tutors were discovered to be the role-models for their tutees (Beasley, 1997).

In order for the proposed intervention method to be effective and to correct any problems that may arise, feedback and evaluation should be made by collecting and analyzing data on its effects. The three main methods of collecting material are observation, discussion and questionnaire. All research tools and methods have advantages but also drawbacks. The researcher can use different research tools depending on the needs and requirements to interconnect the results.

In the peer learning intervention method we could implement a combined use of the observation and the questionnaire before, during and after the implementation of the method aiming to control the achievement of the desired goals and to make the necessary improvements in case of difficulties.

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