

# Peer Tutoring & Ability Grouping Guide

**Purpose:** Strategically grouping students can maximize learning by allowing them to teach, reinforce, and apply concepts in ways that build confidence and mastery. This guide provides two effective systems for organizing students:

**Peer Tutoring** – Pairing students of different proficiency levels to support and accelerate learning.

**Ability Grouping** – Placing students of similar proficiency levels together for targeted instruction.

Each system includes step-by-step instructions, implementation tips, and grouping strategies to help you get started immediately.

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## Peer Tutoring – Structured Student-to-Student Support

**Best For:** Students who have a solid grasp of some TSIA2 concepts but need reinforcement, while also supporting peers who need additional guidance.

### How to Implement Peer Tutoring

1. **Identify Tutors & Tutees**
  - a. Use a quick pre-test or diagnostic assessment to determine students' academic strengths.
  - b. Select tutors who have moderate to strong proficiency but still benefit from reinforcement.
  - c. Assign tutees who would benefit from additional practice.
2. **Pair Strategically**
  - a. Match students with no more than a 1–2 skill level gap for productive interaction.
  - b. Rotate pairings every 2–3 weeks to expose students to different perspectives.
3. **Set Clear Expectations**
  - a. Define roles: Tutors explain and guide; tutees ask questions and attempt solutions.
  - b. Ensure collaborative learning rather than just answer-giving.
4. **Provide Structured Activities**
  - a. Error Analysis: Tutors guide tutees through incorrect answers, explaining misconceptions.

- b. Think-Alouds: Tutors verbally explain their problem-solving steps.
  - c. Guided Practice: Tutors walk through a few problems, then the tutee solves independently.
5. **Monitor & Adjust**
- a. Observe interactions and adjust pairings if needed.
  - b. Use a reflection sheet where students note what they learned from their partner.

### Quick Start Checklist

- ☐ Conduct a pre-test to assess skill levels.
  - ☐ Match pairs with a manageable skill gap (not too wide).
  - ☐ Set up structured activities for peer interaction.
  - ☐ Observe and provide feedback to improve the tutoring process.
  - ☐ Rotate pairs every 2–3 weeks to prevent stagnation.
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### Ability Grouping – Targeted Learning with Like-Skilled Peers

**Best For:** Intensive practice with students at similar skill levels, ensuring content is neither too easy nor too hard.

### How to Implement Ability Grouping

1. **Sort Students into Groups**
  - a. Use a pre-test, previous assessments, or in-class observations to determine ability levels.
  - b. Form 3–5 groups, ranging from foundational skills to advanced problem-solving.
  - c. Adjust groups weekly or biweekly based on progress.
2. **Design Group-Specific Activities**
  - a. Struggling Learners: Focus on step-by-step guided practice, visuals, manipulatives, and fundamental skills.
  - b. Mid-Level Learners: Use real-world applications, collaborative problem-solving, and scaffolded challenges.
  - c. Advanced Learners: Assign higher-order problems, test-taking strategies, and peer coaching roles.
3. **Consider Using Rotational Stations**
  - a. Station 1: Direct Instruction (teacher-led for targeted mini-lessons).
  - b. Station 2: Collaborative Practice (students solve problems together).
  - c. Station 3: Independent Work & Peer Checking (students self-correct & discuss).

#### 4. Facilitate & Monitor

- a. Move between groups, ensuring all students are engaged and challenged.
- b. Provide exit tickets or mini-assessments to track progress and adjust groupings.

#### Quick Start Checklist

- ☐ Use **pre-test data** to create ability groups.
  - ☐ Plan **tiered activities** to match each group's skill level.
  - ☐ Implement **stations or group-specific tasks** to reinforce learning.
  - ☐ Monitor groups and **adjust placements as needed**.
  - ☐ Provide **targeted feedback** to keep students progressing.
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#### Additional Considerations

- Balance Both Systems: Use peer tutoring for skill reinforcement and ability grouping for targeted instruction.
- Keep Grouping Flexible: Allow movement between groups as students improve.
- Encourage a Growth Mindset: Reinforce that everyone is learning, regardless of their group placement.
- Make It Engaging: Gamify peer interactions, incorporate challenges, and celebrate progress.