

This document provides a summary of Recommendation 5 from the WWC practice guide *Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades*. Full reference at the bottom of this page.



## Schedule regular peer-assisted learning opportunities



English learners should be provided with 90 minutes a week to participate in peer learning. Pairs should include students who have different English proficiencies or ability levels. Peer learning should provide time for English learners to practice and extend their learning.



### How to carry out the recommendation

1. Develop plans that encourage teachers to schedule about 90 minutes a week with activities in reading and language arts that entail students working in structured pair activities.
2. Also consider the use of partnering for English language development instruction.

### Potential roadblocks

1. Some teachers may feel that the added time required by English learners may take instructional time away from other students.
2. Teachers may be concerned about the time it takes to teach students the routines.
3. Teachers may be concerned that this takes time away from instruction.

Reference: Gersten, R., Baker, S. K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades* (NCEE 2007-4011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/6>



How to carry out the recommendation

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**1. Develop plans that encourage teachers to schedule about 90 minutes a week with activities in reading and language arts that entail students working in structured pair activities.**

Students of all ages can support each other in learning by providing feedback, clarifying meaning, and discussing comprehension. Peer learning activities should align with areas identified as key targets through evaluation data. Districts should provide professional development opportunities where teachers review pair learning strategies. Training can be brief and facilitated by building coaches.

**2. Also consider the use of partnering for English language development instruction.**

During times allocated to English development, students should work together in a structured way. Activities can include reading short passages of text and then summarizing the information or generating statements about the text.

Potential roadblocks and how to address them

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Roadblock	Suggested Approach
<i>Some teachers may feel that the added time required by English learners may take instructional time away from other students.</i>	Peer-assisted instruction provides teachers with a way to structure learning opportunities around the unique needs of English learners. It also gives students a way to address the learning needs of other students. Peer-assisted learning can be used instead of independent seatwork to provide practice and in-depth learning opportunities that are valuable for all students.
<i>Teachers may be concerned about the time it takes to teach students the routines.</i>	Consistent routines, while initially taking time to teach, result in the development of predictable, time-saving instruction. Peer learning routines are relatively simple for students to implement and quickly become part of the classroom culture.
<i>Teachers may be concerned that this takes time away from instruction.</i>	Peer-assisted learning is intended to be used in place of other practice opportunities as it provides time for students to practice and work with new skills and concepts. In addition, peer learning allows students to receive feedback from others.



*For more information on the research evidence and references to support this recommendation, or for more detailed explanation from the What Works Clearinghouse committee who developed this recommendation, please refer to the practice guide cited at the bottom of the first page of this document.*