

Peer Tutoring Programme

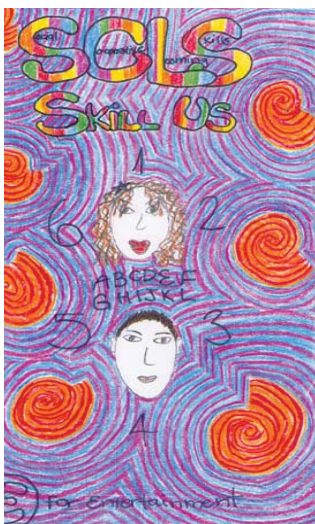
STEP UP

This is the name of the Peer Tutoring Programme which the Faculty of Computing, Health & Science at Edith Cowan University offers as a community service to schools in the Joondalup, Mt Lawley and Churchlands campus areas. An “everyone wins” programme, STEP UP! is operating in its seventh successful year in 2003.

High-achieving Faculty students, in 2nd, 3rd or Honours years, volunteer to tutor in classrooms in their particular skills and knowledge, for two hours a week for twenty-two weeks in the academic year. They enhance a range of their own competencies which are valued by employers, the younger students have direct relevant assistance, and the classroom teacher has “an intelligent pair of hands” to use as a resource.

Though this has proven particularly helpful in Computing, other areas where the willing services of a STEP UP! tutor have been appreciated are Aviation, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Education, Physics, Mathematics, Human Biology and Environmental Science. This programme is offered without cost to schools, the students are covered by the University insurance, and perhaps best of all, it is not a formal “practice” and there is no “formal” supervision paperwork involved!

A great success story was that encountered by Debra Parry at Sutherland Primary School in Dianella. Her class along with the help of the STEP UP tutor produced a wonderful video on Social Co-operative Learning Skills. Sutherland Dianella Primary School was the only primary school involved in the Edith Cowan University STEP UP! Programme.



The cover of the video produced by the students at Sutherland Primary School

Quoting Debra in her article submitted on behalf of the class - "The STEP UP! Peer tutoring proverb reflects Glasser's quoted statement: Tell me and I forget; Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I understand. Our project incorporated skills and knowledge that the Step-Up! Tutors were able to provide. This experience was able to enhance their communication and interpersonal skills.."

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Murdoch University's Pioneer STAR

This has been operating for ten years and was the model for ECU's STEP UP. Many schools located (generally) South of the River have experienced the mutually-beneficial relationship of having STAR tutors in their classrooms. But the STAR programme is not limited to the metropolitan area – benefits are felt through the STARnet, STARtrek Science Show, STARlink and ecoSTAR – from the Pilbara to Albany.

Through ecoSTAR, an environmental mentoring programme, help is given to school students with projects designed to address/redress environmental issues in their local community. Importantly, ecoSTAR is also a means of instilling a commitment to community volunteerism among today's youth.

STARnet enables tutoring and mentoring in country schools via desktop video conferencing. The STARtrek Science Show is a collection of hands-on science activities aimed at promoting science in regional high schools in WA during a university non-teaching week each semester.

The foundation aims of peer tutoring are: To provide school students with academic support, positive role models who demonstrate commitment, and practical first-hand advice that will help their younger peers make a successful transition to further study.

Information regarding the STAR programme can be obtained from

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Login Supplement No 2

Social Cooperative Learning Skills

by Debra Parry
Sutherland Dianella Primary School



Cooperative Learning is a powerful educational strategy in which Social Skills need to be explicitly taught. Teaching “Social Skills” (eg how to negotiate) is a challenge many teachers face in schools, especially as diversity increases in the student population. Therefore, both students and teachers need resources and strategies to help turn diversity into a positive force that will help to develop students as individuals as well as supporting the growth of others. With this in mind the idea of a resource that would benefit both teachers and students was born. This resource would be a video that would demonstrate 4 –5 Social Skills and explain the “do’s” and “do not’s” of each skill in a fun and imaginative way that would appeal to other children.