Examples of Peer Tutoring

From Nancy Falchikov’s *Learning Together: Peer tutoring in higher education*
Same-Level Peer Tutoring: Equal-Status Participants within a Dyad
Peer-tutoring techniques which require little preparation.

Example 1: **Co-operative note-taking pairs**

Students are assigned to pairs in order to compare notes taken after a lecture. Students should share the three main points they took from the lecture and the most surprising thing they heard or read about. Students should also take something from their partners to complement their notes.

*Rationale: improve student note-taking skills, encourage students to engage with new material* (Falchikov 2001, p. 10)

Example 2: **Three-step interview**

Students interview each other in pairs to learn the opinions and ideas of their peers based on the material the teacher has given. Students share their findings with the group, as in the exercise ‘introduce your partner’. This exercise can serve also as an ice-breaker.

*Rationale: improve academic achievement, encourage modeling of effective practice, provide opportunities for co-operation, improve social outcomes* (Falchikov 2001, p. 11)
Same-Level Peer Tutoring

More complex peer-tutoring techniques.

Example 1: Dyadic essay confrontations

Students are assigned two pieces of literature to read outside of class, preferably a textbook chapter and a primary source. They should compose essay questions by identifying important issues in the literature. Students should also prepare model answers, which should be no longer than one page, single-spaced. In class, students should answer each other’s questions in pairs, taking approximately 25 minutes to do so. After reading each other’s answers, ‘confrontations’ occur, comparing model and student answers. The instructor evaluates the answers using the same criteria as students.

Aimed desire/outcome: introduce conceptual conflict and motivation
(Falchikov 2001, p. 17)

Example 2: Reciprocal Peer Tutoring

This is a system that runs throughout an entire semester. Students are randomly assigned to pairs. Each student prepares 10 multiple-choice questions on course material and answer cards with a source or reference. Tests are administered to each partner. The students should then grade each other’s tests. Questions answered wrongly should be explained.

Rationale/objectives: lower stress and higher course satisfaction, higher academic achievement
(Falchikov 2001, p.22)
Same-Level Peer Tutoring: Unequal Status Introduced by Coordinator
Example 1: **Teacher-of-the-day**

Students who are the ‘teacher-of-the-day’ give lectures, lead discussions, perform demonstrations, run experiments, etc. This can be done within the whole class or divided into smaller groups. Students as teachers are encouraged to become an authority on their topic, identify and organize issues, and learn more by helping their peers learn.

*Rationale/objectives: develop students’ learning skills, address absenteeism, help students achieve the learning outcomes, develop group learning skills*

(Falchikov 2001, p. 35)
Cross-Level Peer Tutoring: Unequal Status Introduced built on existing differences
Example 1: **Supplemental Instruction (SI)**

More experienced students, who are SI-leaders, lead small groups of students using a question-based methodology. The process is student-centered, beginning where the students are in their learning process, and encouraging the group to together find and motivate answers from the learning material. This can require organization on the institutional level. Student SI-leaders should undergo a short training in leadership and pedagogy. Having a faculty mentor/supervisor is a huge benefit to the student SI-leaders.

*Rationale/objectives: facilitate student involvement, develop study skills, encourage empowerment of learners to become autonomous, provide a safe space for students to admit difficulties and get support, encourage cooperative learning* (Falchikov 2001, p. 39)
For many more examples as well as documented benefits and challenges of peer tutoring schemes see *Learning Together: Peer Tutoring in Higher Education* by Nancy Falchikov.