

## **The PEER model: A new framework for promoting collaborative problem-solving in young people**

PEERSolvers Research Group<sup>1</sup>

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The capacity to engage in constructive peer interaction and collaborative problem-solving (CPS) is one of the core (i.e., soft) skills that young people need to bring to their prospective professional and social environments. Research suggests, however, that this skill does not emerge spontaneously, but needs to be supported and scaffolded as part of the educational process. Thus, the aim of this paper is to present a viable, psychologically based framework to systematically promote adolescents' capacities for CPS. Specifically, a model for designing training programs is proposed, wherein several elements of effective CPS are drawn together and summed up by the acronym PEER. First, the model refers to the role of personality differences (the "P" element) in joint peer activities and highlights the need to teach young people to appreciate and benefit from the participation of different personalities in CPS. The model's second element points to the necessity to introduce adolescents to the rules and values of exchanging ideas in dialogue (the first "E" of the acronym), so as to raise the quality of their interactions and prevent these from turning into persuasion and conflict, or ending in disengagement and withdrawal. Third, the model assumes that—to be able to respect each other's different personalities and follow the rules of constructive dialogue—young people also need to develop their emotional intelligence (the second "E" of the acronym) and socioemotional competencies more generally. Finally, the PEER model proposes that effective CPS also depends on the availability of external resources (the "R" element), such as scaffolding provided by an experienced instructor and digital media. Compiling these four elements, the described model not only provides an original synthesis of available knowledge on the psychological factors

contributing to CPS but will serve as the groundwork for developing an evidence-based CPS training program in Project PEERSolvers.

**Keywords:** PEER model, collaborative problem-solving, dialogue, socio-emotional competencies

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