



PEER ASSESSMENT

WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT IN PRACTICE

WHAT IS IT?

In peer assessment activities, students read and evaluate their classmates' work based on instructions provided by their instructor. Peer assessment usually involves several stages: A creation stage, during which students create and submit their own work; an evaluation stage, during which students assess the work of one or more of their peers; and an optional feedback stage, where they provide feedback to their evaluators.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Peer assessment activities increase critical engagement with the course material and help students develop important metacognitive skills that help them improve their own work. Peer assessment activities are also a great way for students to receive feedback from various individuals within a short period of time, making them an ideal formative assessment in large courses.

HOW CAN INSTRUCTORS IMPLEMENT PEER ASSESSMENT IN THE CLASSROOM?

Instructors who want to incorporate peer assessment activities in their courses should consider the following:

1. **Think about the skills required to complete the different stages of an activity** (such as interpreting instructions, applying rubrics, as well as providing and responding to feedback) before incorporating a peer assessment activity, and **teach them explicitly**.
2. **Make sure to provide clear instructions and clarify expectations.** It can be helpful to do an informal calibration activity where the whole class reviews a sample assignment prepared by the instructor and discusses their thoughts and questions. Some platforms, such as Kritik, explicitly support these types of activities. Before the evaluation stage, model how to provide and respond to feedback. Consider asking students to reflect on what type of feedback they found particularly helpful and share a summary with the class.
3. **Provide adequate time to complete each stage of the peer assessment activity.** There should be at least a few days for each stage. Remember that there are a variety of reasons why students may not be able to complete one or more stages of an assessment within the anticipated time frame. Think about how you can accommodate these students and what types of alternative assessments you might be able to offer. If you use a tool to facilitate peer assessment, check into how the tool treats late and missing submissions.
4. **Give students an opportunity to incorporate their peers' feedback into future drafts or assignments.** Peer assessment activities are a great way to provide formative feedback and receive constructive criticism from a variety of diverse sources!
5. **If students assign grades to each other, set up mechanisms for students to bring concerns to your attention.** Depending on the class size and the goal of the activity, you may also want to (selectively) scan students' feedback before releasing it.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (Internal)

Teaching Commons (2022). Comparison of peer feedback tools available at York University. Google doc. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/149MgClvUhAm9WN5MqllxzY-69iYKLB3QzypvLiZy-M/edit>

SPARK at York University (2013). *Peer feedback guide*. York University Libraries. <https://www.library.yorku.ca/spark/Peer%20Feedback%20Guide%20IG.pdf>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (External)

Explore in 15-30 Minutes

Faculty of Arts Instructional Support & Information Technology (n.d.). Ideas and strategies for peer assessments. <https://isit.arts.ubc.ca/ideas-and-strategies-for-peer-assessments/>

McGill Teaching and Learning Services (n.d.). *Examples of PA assignments*. Peer assessment <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/assessment/peer/examples>

Tucker, C. (2021). *Peer feedback: Making it meaningful*. Blog. <https://catlintucker.com/2021/04/peer-feedback/>

Washington University St. Louis (n.d.). *Planning and guiding in-class peer review*. Teaching resources. <https://ctl.wustl.edu/resources/planning-and-guiding-in-class-peer-review/>

Explore in 30-60 minutes

McGill Teaching and Learning Services (2021). *Designing peer assessment assignments: A resource document for instructors*. Peer assessment of other student's assignments. https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/files/tls/tls_designing_peer_assessment_assignments_-_march_2021.pdf

Toronto Metropolitan University Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2021). *Best practices in peer assessment*. Teaching development.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11SitMPQa6DXW2sT1hSlSzbKmOc82yj3OoBV_UjbHK2Q/edit

UBC Faculty of Arts (n. d.). *Peer assessment training workshop*. Canvas.

<https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/25800>

Explore in 60+ minutes

Cartney, P. (2010). Exploring the use of peer assessment as a vehicle for closing the gap between feedback given and feedback used. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(5), 551-64.

Mulder, R. A., Pearce, J. M. & Baik, C. (2014). Peer review in higher education: Student perceptions before and after participation. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 15(2), 157-71.

Zundert, M., Sluijsmans, D. & Merriënboer, J. (2010). Effective peer assessment processes: Research findings and future directions. *Learning and Instruction*, 20(4), 270-279.

Would you like to learn more?

Contact us at Teaching Commons for additional resources, handouts, applications, courses, workshops, examples, advice, assistance, one-on-one consulting, and everything else related to teaching and learning. We are happy and eager to assist you!



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