

Peer and Self Assessment of Student Work

For more resources on assessment, see the LTO resources page:

“Peer assessment, in which students comment on and judge their colleagues’ work, has a vital role to play in formative assessment, but it can also be used as a component in a summative assessment package.

One of the desirable outcomes of education should be an increased ability in the learner to make independent judgments of their own and others' work. Peer and self-assessment exercises are seen as means by which these general skills can be developed and practiced. A peer rating format can encourage a greater sense of involvement and responsibility, establish a clearer framework and promote excellence, direct attention to skills and learning and provide increased feedback (Weaver and Cotrell, 1986).

In terms of summative assessment, studies have found student ratings of their colleagues to be both reliable and valid. Orpen (1982) found no difference between lecturer and student ratings of assignments in terms of average ratings, variations in ratings, agreement in ratings or relationship between ratings. Arnold et al. (1981) reported that peer ratings of medical students were internally consistent, unbiased and valid. Other studies suggest there is variation according to factors such as age of the student (Falchikov, 1986).”

(excerpted from University of Technology Sydney, Institute for Interactive Media & Learning)

Self and Peer Assessment – Advantages and Disadvantages

“Group work can be more successful when students are involved in developing the assessment process. This may include establishing their own assessment criteria through consultation with teaching staff. Alternatively you can provide students with sample self and/or peer assessment criteria.

The main aims of self and peer assessment are to:

- Increase student responsibility and autonomy
- Strive for a more advanced and deeper understanding of the subject matter, skills and processes
- Lift the role and status of the student from passive learner to active learner and assessor (this also encourages a deeper approach to learning)
- Involve students in critical reflection
- Develop in students a better understanding of their own subjectivity and judgment.

Peer assessment

Students individually assess each other's contribution using a predetermined list of criteria. Grading is based on a predetermined process, but most commonly it is an average of the marks awarded by members of the group.

Advantages:

- Agreed marking criteria means there can be little confusion about assignment outcomes and expectations.
- Encourages student involvement and responsibility.
- Encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the group work.
- Focuses on the development of student's judgment skills.
- Students are involved in the process and are encouraged to take part ownership of this process.
- Provides more relevant feedback to students as it is generated by their peers.
- It is considered fair by some students, because each student is judged on their own contribution.
- When operating successfully can reduce a lecturer's marking load.
- Can help reduce the 'free rider' problem as students are aware that their contribution will be graded by their peers.

Disadvantages:

- Additional briefing time can increase a lecturer's workload.
- The process has a degree of risk with respect to reliability of grades as peer pressure to apply elevated grades or friendships may influence the assessment, though this can be reduced if students can submit their assessments independent of the group.
- Students will have a tendency to award everyone the same mark.
- Students feel ill equipped to undertake the assessment.
- Students may be reluctant to make judgements regarding their peers.
- At the other extreme students may be discriminated against if students 'gang up' against one group member.

Self assessment

This is similar to peer evaluation but students assess their own contribution as well as their peers using an established set of criteria.

Advantages:

- Encourages student involvement and responsibility.
- Encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the group work.
- Allows students to see and reflect on their peers' assessment of their contribution.
- Focuses on the development of student's judgment skills.

Disadvantages:

- Potentially increases lecturer workload by needing to brief students on the process as well as on-going guidance on performing self-evaluation.
- Self evaluation has a risk of being perceived as a process of presenting inflated grades and being unreliable.
- Students feel ill equipped to undertake the assessment.

Preparing students for self or peer assessment

“Students may have little exposure to different forms of assessment and so may lack the necessary skills and judgments to effectively manage self and peer assessments. There may also be a perception amongst students that the academic is ‘shirking’ their responsibilities by having students undertaking peer assessments. In this situation students may be reminded of the Graduate Student Attributes. This also highlights the need to fully prepare and equip students for their own assessment and for the assessment of others.

It is helpful to introduce students to the concepts and elements of assessment against specified criteria in the first weeks of class when you explain the unit of study outline. This requires taking time at the outset of the group activity or unit of study to discuss what is required, and to provide guidance on how to judge their own and others’ contributions. Students will need to be assisted to develop criteria that match the learning outcomes with regards to the output and process of the group work. If assessment criteria for each element are set up and clearly communicated, your role will also change to one of facilitator.”

(excerpted from “Self and peer assessment – advantages and disadvantages”)

What works in peer assessment?

“There is much advice about peer-assessment procedures, for example Race (1999) suggests that the following types of assessment lend themselves to peer-assessment; presentations, reports, essay plans, calculations, annotated bibliographies, practical work, poster displays, portfolios and exhibitions. There is good reason to use highly objective assessments, with straightforward answers (e.g. calculations) rather than assessments with low objectivity, such as essays. Even apparently ‘obvious’ answers can generate useful debate, particularly when results have to be interpreted. For example, a mean value from a data set may be presented to four decimal places, yet the accuracy of the equipment may be only one decimal place, leading to debate about the both equipment and the use of means (in the context of the study involved).

The success of peer-assessment schemes depends greatly on how the process is set-up and subsequently managed. Several authors have provided guidelines for best practice for the management of peer-assessment (e.g. Race 1999; Magin & Helmore 2001; Stefani 1994). In brief, these authorities suggest that peer-assessment systems should include: keeping everybody in the picture (e.g. about how the marks are allocated and why); a simple assessment system (i.e. of high objectivity); negotiating assessment criteria with classes in advance (although this is not always possible); having a moderation system by tutors (for example 10% of the assessments

being second marked by tutors); a complaints or review procedure so that peer awarded marks can be discussed/challenged; allowing plenty of time in peer-assessment sessions; and, some form of feedback to students to confirm that peer marks are valid and similar to that of their tutors. Perhaps these guidelines have contributed to the growing evidence that students are able to assess each other (e.g. Hughes 2001). Any tutor implementing such a scheme, needs to have confidence in the marks that are generated (as do the students) and how well student marks correspond to tutor marks.”

(Excerpted from “Can students assess students effectively? Some insights into peer-assessment.”)

Implementing Peer Assessment

“One of the ways in which students internalize the characteristics of quality work is by evaluating the work of their peers. However, if they are to offer helpful feedback, students must have a clear understanding of what they are to look for in their peers' work. The instructor must explain expectations clearly to them before they begin.

One way to make sure students understand this type of evaluation is to give students a practice session with it. The instructor provides a sample writing or speaking assignment. As a group, students determine what should be assessed and how criteria for successful completion of the communication task should be defined. Then the instructor gives students a sample completed assignment. Students assess this using the criteria they have developed, and determine how to convey feedback clearly to the fictitious student.

Students can also benefit from using rubrics or checklists to guide their assessments. At first these can be provided by the instructor; once the students have more experience, they can develop them themselves. An example of a peer-editing checklist for a writing assignment is given in the popup window. Notice that the checklist asks the peer evaluator to comment primarily on the content and organization of the essay. It helps the peer evaluator focus on these areas by asking questions about specific points, such as the presence of examples to support the ideas discussed.

For peer evaluation to work effectively, the learning environment in the classroom must be supportive. Students must feel comfortable and trust one another in order to provide honest and constructive feedback. Instructors who use group work and peer assessment frequently can help students develop trust by forming them into small groups early in the semester and having them work in the same groups throughout the term. This allows them to become more comfortable with each other and leads to better peer feedback.

Implementing Self-Assessment

Students can become better language learners when they engage in deliberate thought about what they are learning and how they are learning it. In this kind of reflection, students step back from the learning process to think about their language learning strategies and their progress as language learners. Such self-assessment encourages students to become independent learners and can increase their motivation.

Goal setting

Goal setting is essential because students can evaluate their progress more clearly when they have targets against which to measure their performance. In addition, students' motivation to learn increases when they have self-defined, and therefore relevant, learning goals.

At first, students tend to create lofty long-range goals (“to speak Russian”) that do not lend themselves to self-assessment. To help students develop realistic, short-term, attainable goals, instructors can use a framework like SMART goals outline (see attached).

One way to begin the process of introducing students to self-assessment is to create student-teacher contracts. Contracts are written agreements between students and instructors, which commonly involve determining the number and type of assignments that are required for particular grades. For example, a student may agree to work toward the grade of "B" by completing a specific number of assignments at a level of quality described by the instructor.

Contracts can serve as a good way of helping students to begin to consider establishing goals for themselves as language learners.

Guided practice with assessment tools

Students do not learn to monitor or assess their learning on their own; they need to be taught strategies for self-monitoring and self-assessment. The instructor models the technique (use of a checklist or rubric, for example); students then try the technique themselves; finally, students discuss whether and how well the technique worked and what to do differently next time.

In addition to checklists and rubrics for specific communication tasks, students can also use broader self-assessment tools to reflect on topics they have studied, skills they have learned, their study habits, and their sense of their overall strengths and weaknesses.

Students can share their self-assessments with a peer or in a small group, with instructions that they compare their impressions with other criteria such as test scores, teacher evaluations, and peers' opinions. This kind of practice helps students to be aware of their learning. It also informs the teacher about students' thoughts on their progress, and gives the teacher feedback about course content and instruction.”

(excerpted from “Peer and Self Assessment,” National Capital Language Resource Center)

Sample Assessment Criteria for an Oral Presentation

The following is a list of ideas for criteria for assessment of an oral presentation. The criteria may require more description in order to be better and more consistently understood by markers and in order to meet the expectations of the achievement at different levels. Alongside criteria it can be useful to ask for identification of strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement.

- Does the content relate to the title and/or purpose of the presentation?
- Is the breadth of the content sufficient?
- Is the depth of the content sufficient?
- Is the message clear?
- Is the argument consistent?
- Is sufficient evidence given to support arguments?
- Is there evidence of appropriate critical thinking?
- Are conclusions drawn appropriately?
- Is the focus sharp?
- Does the presenter put forward her/his own point of view?
- Is the class engaged - is their attention maintained?
- Is the response to questions and comment competent?
- Organisation and management:
 - Timekeeping
 - Management of questions or comments
 - General management of whole presentation
- Presentation:
 - Audibility
 - Clarity of articulation
 - Presence
 - Posture, eye contact, etc.
 - Management of notes or props
 - Pace
 - Confidence
- Use of resources (quality, fitness for purpose, etc.):
 - Overhead transparencies
 - PowerPoint
 - Handouts
 - Use of board or flipchart, etc.
 - Use of other resources
- Overall structure:
 - Coherency, appropriateness of structure
 - Identity of beginning (summary), middle and end (conclusion)
 - 'Signposting' of structure
- Creativity:
 - Use of imagination in content or presentation
 - Originality

Sample Criteria for Assessment of Team Functioning

The actual criteria picked for team or group work will depend on the purpose of the assessment. Sometimes the reason for assessment is to check that all of those involved in the group are contributing to the project in hand. Sometimes the focus is the ability of individuals to operate within a team as a specific skill.

The student:

- is engaged in the group and with the group
- can show qualities of leadership
- is able to provide direction for group activity (e.g. project planning)
- is involved in the execution of the project work
- can play a supporting role of others in group activity
- can suggest solutions
- is involved in the presentation of the group's work
- demonstrates interest in the maintenance of the group functioning as well as the project

(excerpted from “Peer and Self Assessment in Student Work”)

What is student self-assessment?

Student self-assessment describes the process in which each student evaluates his or her own progress or performance. This can take the form of “I can” statements, learner contracts, reflections, portfolio reviews, and recording oneself. Research has shown that using self-assessment with students can positively effect self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation levels in students (Rolheiser & Ross).

Let’s look at the example of “I can” statements:

“I can” statements are a type of self-assessment. At the end of a class, chapter, unit, theme, etc., students are asked to complete a certain number of “I can” statements that explain what they feel they are able to do. For example, after a grammar lesson on the past tense, some possible “I can” statements might be:

- I can recognize the past tense in written work
- I can conjugate the past tense with all the personal pronouns
- I can verbally express a sentence about something I did in the past tense

“I can” statements can be used by the teacher as a type of ‘exit slip’ at the end of a lesson; before students can leave the classroom, they must complete their “I can” statements and give them to the teacher. This process allows the teacher to review the statements made by all of the students, and see if the “I can” statements correspond with the lesson objectives of the teacher, or if there is a need for review, more practice, or a re-framing of the content.

(excerpted from Student Self-Assessment, University of Alberta)

Examples of peer rating forms (Kane and Crawford, 1989)

**PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
PEER RATING FORM**

This form would be used to RATE THE PROJECT PRESENTATION YOU WILL BE HEARING.

Please try to rate honestly. The student giving the presentation will not see this form, but will receive a tally of all the responses to their presentation.

For all categories, please CIRCLE the number that is the nearest approximation to your opinion. Please do not circle more than one response for each item, or place marking between the numbers on the scale.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THIS PRESENTATION IN TERMS OF:

		Weak	Fair	Good	Very Good
1.	Providing a brief summary of the project (purpose, methods, results, conclusions, etc)?	1	2	3	4
2.	Explaining and illustrating the important points?	1	2	3	4
3.	The knowledge shown by the presenter?	1	2	3	4
4.	Provoking and controlling discussion?	1	2	3	4
5.	The extent to which the issues were new to you?	1	2	3	4
6.	Presentation style?	1	2	3	4
7.	Timing?	1	2	3	4
8.	Gaining and holding your interest?	1	2	3	4
9.	The extent to which you learned something from it?	1	2	3	4
10.	The likely usefulness of this learning to you?	1	2	3	4

Considering all of the above, I would rate this presentation overall as:

(circle one number)

- 1
- 2 Inadequate
- 3
- 4
- 5 Passable
- 6 Reasonably good
- 7 Good
- 8 Very good
- 9 Outstanding in every respect
- 10 Perfect in every respect

Examples of Peer Rating Forms (Securities Markets Regulation)

PEER EVALUATION	
Name _____ Group _____	
<p>Please try to assign scores that reflect how you really feel about the extent to which the other members of your group contributed to your learning and/or your group's performance. This will be your only opportunity to reward the members of your group who actually worked hard on your behalf. If you give everyone pretty much the same score you will be hurting those who did the most and helping those who did the least.</p> <p>Instructions: In the space below please rate each of the other members of your group. Each member's peer evaluation score will be the average of the points they receive after the highest and lowest scores have been deleted and the scores have been standardised so that the average peer evaluation score for all groups is identical. To complete the evaluation you should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. List the name of each of the members of your group in the alphabetical order of their last names.2. Assign an average of ten points to the other members of your group. (Thus, for example, you should assign a total of 50 points in a six member group; 60 points in a seven member group; etc.)3. Differentiate some in your ratings, eg. you must give at least one score of 11 or higher (maximum = 15) and one score of 9 or lower.	
Group Members	Scores
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
<p>Additional Feedback: In the space below would you also briefly describe your reasons for your highest and lowest ratings. These comments - but not information about who provided them - will be used to provide feedback to students who would like to receive it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reason(s) for your highest rating(s). (Use back if necessary)2. Reason(s) for your lowest rating(s). (Use back if necessary)	

Source: Extracts and examples from: Kane, R.L. and Crawford, J. (1989). Peer ratings of oral presentations by students: some preliminary data. UTS Faculty of Business Working Paper.

IUSM Peer/Self Assessment Program

Self Assessment

Carolyn Hayes

- Complete the following assessment on **yourself**, as you see yourself at this particular point in your medical education.
- **You must complete all items below in order to submit the form.**
- **Scale: 1 is the lowest rating and 9 is the highest rating for each characteristic. Select UA for "Unable to Assess."**

Rating Scale:

Unsatisfactory			Satisfactory			Exceptional		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

	Unsatisfactory		Exceptional	Comment	
1.	Consistently unprepared for sessions; present minimal amount of material; seldom support statements with appropriate references.	**Select one**	Consistently well-prepared for sessions; present extra material; support statements with appropriate references.		
2.	Overlook important data and fail to identify or solve problems correctly.	**Select one**	Identify and solve problems using intelligent interpretation of data.		
3.	Unable to explain clearly my reasoning process with regard to solving a problem, basic mechanisms, concepts, etc.	**Select one**	Able to explain clearly my reasoning process with regard to solving problems, basic mechanisms, concepts, etc.		
4.	Lack appropriate respect, compassion and empathy.	**Select one**	Always demonstrate respect, compassion and empathy.		
5.	Display insensitivity and lack of understanding for others' views.	**Select one**	Seek to understand others' views.		
6.	Lack initiative or leadership qualities.	**Select one**	Take initiative and provide leadership.		
7.	Do not share information or resources; impatient when others are slow to learn; hinder group process; tend to dominate the group.	**Select one**	Share information or resources; truly help others learn; contribute to the group process; able to defer to the group's needs.		
8.	Only assume responsibility when forced to or stimulated for personal reasons; fail to follow through consistently.	**Select one**	Seek appropriate responsibility. Consistently identify tasks and complete them efficiently and thoroughly.		
9.	Do not seek feedback; defensive or fail to respond to feedback.	**Select one**	Ask classmates and professors for feedback and then put suggestions to good use.		
10.	Please superiors while undermining peers; untrustworthy.	**Select one**	Present myself consistently to superiors and peers; trustworthy.		
11.	Hide my own mistakes; deceptive.	**Select one**	Admit and correct my own mistakes; truthful.		

12.	Dress and appearance are often inappropriate for the situation.	**Select one**	Dress and appearance are always appropriate for the situation.		
13.	Behavior is frequently inappropriate.	**Select one**	Behavior is always appropriate.		
14.	Dependent upon others for direction with regard to my learning agenda.	**Select one**	Direct my own learning agenda; able to think and work independently.		
15.	Not very expressive, do not show emotions.	**Select one**	Very expressive, show emotions easily.		
16.	Do not respond sensitively to others' feelings.	**Select one**	Respond very sensitively to others' feelings.		
17.	Do not seem very attuned to others' feelings and nonverbal cues.	**Select one**	Very attuned to others' feelings and nonverbal cues.		
18.	I have concerns for my future patients.	**Select one**	I feel confident that I will be the kind of physician that I would refer my own family or patients to or that I would want as my own doctor.		

19. IUSM is interested in tracking your growth as a person and a professional in medicine. Please think of a person or a situation that contributed significantly to your continued growth in this past year. Briefly describe this person or event and elaborate on the significance this person or event has had on your personal or professional development.

Check all you answers before submitting, once submitted you cannot change.

Assessment form adapted from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry "Peer Assessment Program".

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