

PEER ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

A team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Although student teams may not satisfy all the requirements of the definition, the degree to which they do often determines their effectiveness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Instructors who use teams commonly assign projects or other tasks to team outside of class. In Foundation Coalition (FC) workshop on teams, one of the more frequently asked questions about teams is how team assignment can be graded. One approach to grading team assignments is to give the same grade to every team member. However, giving every individual the same grade for a team assignment runs counter to the principle of individual accountability in cooperative learning. Further, it may reward and even encourage “hitchhiking” by some members of a team. However, determining individual grades for work products submitted by a team is challenging task. One approach to obtain information that may be helpful in determining individual grades is peer assessment. To help faculty members in using peer assessment and/or peer evaluation in their classes, the following issues are addressed:

II. WHAT IS PEER ASSESSMENT

Peer assessment or peer evaluation can mean many things-a means of raising the bar by exposing students to exceptionally good(or bad) solutions; peer grading of home work, quizzes, etc; and an aid to improving team performance or determining individual effort and individual grades on team projects. For the purpose of the present discussion, peer assessment or peer evaluation is a process in which faculty members adjust individual grades for team assignments by using data collected by asking team members to evaluate each team member. Peer assessment or peer evaluation is not the same as peer grading. Some references to peer grading are provided below.

III. CONSIDERATION IN USING PEER ASSESMENT?

1. Tell them early Announce rules and format on the first day Many instructors hand out copies of the forms used for assessment and evaluation with (or as a part of) the syllabus.
2. Give them practice Do assessment before (it counts) evaluation Students usually have no experience with assessing or evaluating the work of peers(or often even their own work). Provide opportunities for them to assess other team members in situations in which their assessments do not effect projects grades.
3. Include feedback Allow improvement Most students (given honest feedback from peers) will improve performance and are more willing to give honest feedback to peers as they gain experience with assessment.

What are considerations for team grading? Many tools are available when grading team assignments

- Signature blocks indicate who contributed to the assignment
- Workload/Percent-effort tables allow grade adjustment and tracking of a team member's workload.
- Peer assessments give students feedback and opportunities to improve performance before grading.
- Peer evaluations provide peer rating of each team member that may serve as a multiplier on the team grade or can determine the team grade.
- Bonus points are given to other team members by each member Combinations of these tools are possible and sometimes desirable.

As a general rule instructions may use signature blocks on individual assignments to either give the same grade or a zero. Use other methods to adjust semester or project average for individual performance.

IV. WHY USE PEER ASSESMENT?

- Falchikov (2007)reminds us that peer learning builds on a process that is part of out development from the earliest years of life(it is the practice of formal education and they centrality of the teacher that makes us lose sight of this). Peer feedback can encourage collaborative.
- Learning through interchange about what constitutes good work. If the course wants to promote peer learning.
- And collaboration in other ways, then the assessment tasks need to align with this. It is also important to recognize the extra work that peer learning activities may requires from students through the assessment. Bound, Cohen & Sampson (1999) observe that “ if students are expected to put more effort into a course through their engagement in peer learning activities, then it may be necessary to have this effort recognized through a commensurate shift in assessment focus” Peer learning draws on the cognitive
- Apprenticeship model” (Kvale, 2006). Students can help each other to make sense of
- The gaps in their learning and understanding and to get a more sophisticated gaps of the learning process. The conversation around the assessment
- Process is enhances. Research evidence indicates that peer feedback can be used very effectively in the development of students writing skills. Students engaged in commentary on the work
- Of others can heighten their own capacity for judgment and making intellectual choices. Students receiving feedback from their peer

- Can get a wider range of ideas about their work to promote development and improvement. Peer evaluation helps to lessen the power
- Imbalance between teachers and students and can enhance the students status in the learning process. The focus of peer feedback can be on process.
- Encouraging students to clarify, review and edit their ideas. It is possible to give immediate feedback, so
- Formative learning can be enhanced. Peer assessment processes can help students learn how to receive and give feedback which is an important part of most work contexts. Peer assessment aligns with the notion that an
- Important part of the learning process is gradually understanding and articulating the values and standards of a "community of practice"

Drawing on Wenger's ideas, Falchikov suggest that " learning involves active participation in a community of practice in which members of the community determine and structure their own practices, and construct identities in relation to these communities". Peer commentary in the assessment process, helps initiates into the community to hear, experiment with and gradually internalize the norms of the community.

How to implement peer assessment The evidence suggest that students become better at peer assessment with practice Students need practice to gain confidence in peer assessment and to become more competent at it. Other classroom practices can also help to prepare students for peer assessment, such as exchange and discussion of lecture notes.

V. MAKE SURE THE CRITERIA FOR ANY PIECE OF PEER

- assessment are clear and fully discussed with students (negotiated with them if circumstances are appropriate). Spend time establishing an environment of
- trust in the classroom. Try to ensure that your learning environment
- incorporate peer learning and collaboration in a range of ways. Be aware that introducing marks creates a
- further set of complex issues, but if you do decide to get peers to award marks these marks should be only one of a number of different marks awarded to a specific product or process. Generally, as the most valuable aspects of peer assessment is its potential to enhance learning , marks can cloudy matters as they tend to preoccupy people at the expense of everything else.
- Students individually assesses 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.

VI. ADVANTAGES PEER ASSESSMENT

- Agreed marking criteria means there can be little confusion about assessment outcomes and expectations.
- Encourage students involvement and responsibility.
- Encourages students to reflect on their role and contribution to the process of the process 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.

VII. DISADVANTAGES PEER ASSESSMENT

Additional briefing time can increase a lecturer's workload,

- The process has a degree of risk 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 judgments regarding their peers.
 - At the other extreme students may be discriminated against if students 'gang up' against one group member.
- Peer assessment to support future learning Thus, I see as beneficial to promote peer involvement in assessment where particular characteristics are present. These include features which: Are designed to enhance learning
- Require learners to take responsibility for
 - their actions Encourage a reflective approach to learning
 - Require student to identify and apply
 - Standards and criteria Provide some degree of modeling and/or
 - Scaffolding Involve learner in judging their performance
 - or than of their peers—developing and using Sadlers's (1989 and 2005) evaluative expertise , providing, seeking and utilizing feedback; Allowing learners to practice peer and self assessment
 - skills in a variety of contexts; Allow of support so that learner may
 - move nearer toward assessment autonomy.

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