Academy Forum 4: Creating Peer Feedback Opportunities

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UKPSF Mapping: A1, A3, A4, K2, K4, V3

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## What is Peer Feedback?

Opportunities for students to give one another feedback on:

* An output
* A process
* Contributions towards group assessment

“It's a process where students review other students' work and provide feedback on it. Usually this involves students producing feedback reviews for peers and receiving feedback reviews from others.”

JISC, 2015

Peer assessment and peer feedback … enables students to take an active role in the management of their own learning.

Liu & Carless, 2006: 280

Peer feedback has been used widely within group assessment work, for example, when it comes to ascertaining student participation, and factoring in group contributions. For an example of a group peer marksheet, see [this sample template](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/tools/PeerEvaluations/PeerEval-GroupWork-formsample1.docx) from Carnegie Mellon University.

There are several [LinkedIn Learning courses](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/search?keywords=peer%20feedback&u=107524890) dedicated to Peer Feedback that you or your students may want to look at.

### Further Reading

Liu, N.-F. & Carless, D. (2006) Peer feedback: the learning element of peer assessment. Teaching in higher education. [Online] 11 (3), 279–290.

Lynch, R., Mannix McNamara, P. & Seery, N. (2012) Promoting deep learning in a teacher education programme through self- and peer-assessment and feedback, European Journal of Teacher Education, 35:2, 179-197, DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2011.643396

Zhu, Q. & Carless, D. (2018) Dialogue within peer feedback processes: clarification and negotiation of meaning. Higher education research and development. [Online] 37 (4), 883–897.

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| Benefits of Peer Feedback:  * Allow students to invest in and manage their own learning * Shared learning experiences * Reflect on learning * Consider communication * Develop conversation and collaboration skills * Improve academic achievement * Share responsibility for learning * In group scenarios, identify participants’ contributions * Quick feedback * Building a learning community * Skills required in the workplace |

# Questions in the design of Peer Feedback:

1. Formative or Summative?
   1. How does the assessment work in relation to the rest of the module?
2. Marked or feedback only?
   1. Are students providing a mark or feedback only?
      1. Peer feedback can be useful in the design of group work and group assessments but some consideration needs to be paid to whether this contribution has a mark associated with it.
3. Synchronously or Asynchronously?
   1. Is the feedback being produced in the students’ own time? Or is it something that they are doing with you present in class?
4. Group assessment or solo effort?
   1. Are you asking students to provide feedback based on a group assignment or something that they’ve produced? If you are providing it based on the group assignment, is it in relation to the functioning of the group or the product they produce?
5. How are students giving their feedback?
   1. Think about whether they are given spoken feedback or written feedback. There are benefits to both approaches. Spoken feedback can really equip students with the necessary skills for delivering quick feedback in the workplace and everyday scenarios. This also helps to build informal feedback practices. Whereas with written feedback allows students to spend time crafting their response and this can be retained for future reference.
6. What guidance are you providing to students?
   1. Think about the guidelines that you are providing to student. How much feedback are they expected to leave? Is there something that you would like them to pay particular attention to?
7. Have you given them criteria?
   1. Just like regular assignment work, students need to be providing feedback based on criteria. Make sure that students have access to the criteria and they understand it before undertaking the activity.
8. How are you creating a culture of peer feedback?
   1. How are you encouraging this in your Department from the start of the students’ experience? How regularly do you do peer assessment? Embed peer feedback into the ethos across the course.

# Examples of good practice at Aberystwyth University

English and Creative Writing: creative practice workshops – students are asked to provide one positive piece of feedback and one constructive criticism.

Computer Science: provide feedback based on an industry example – direct links to industry.

IBERS DL: Discussion board posts are used and assessed to provide feedback to students. Mini Conference presentation given with feedback given. Digital story – a narrative around the topic. Undertake this as a PowerPoint presentation. Involve them more in providing feedback on the stories. Making sure that there is clear criticism – varied from student to student.

Scriptwriting – strategies to encourage more critical discussion.

# Strategies

* Frame your feedback as a rebuttal – offer a different perspective or position.
* Ask the person giving feedback to adopt a role – for example, ask them to be a copy editor - it will help to distance the individuals from the feedback.
* Give the students actions to do in order to avoid critique
* Think about your use of terms such as ‘criticism’, ‘critique’ etc. Which might be off putting for some students
* Be specific in the feedback that you provide. Ask the student questions, such as what worked well? What functioned? Build on the positives.
* Give sufficient set up time and build up to the peer feedback activity. Also, if you’re asking peers to provide written feedback, make sure that they’ve got enough time.
* If you’re doing any team teaching or you want to develop an ethos of peer feedback in the department, make sure you liaise with your colleagues and share strategies that can be used across the Department.
* Choose an authentic activity. For example, you might want the person giving feedback to take on a specific role. In the context of science, ask the student to explain the choices that they’ve made over a specific experiment.
* Consider the timing of the activity – when in the term is it going to happen? When will you communicate with students about it?
* If the students are presenting a draft or something in process, ask them what they specifically want feedback on.
* Consider making peer feedback activities asynchronous so that responses are more considered and staff naturally moderate with less agency.

# Challenges

* Consistency across peer feedback and making sure that feedback is fair. IBERS DL report that in the asynchronous set up of peer feedback with Discussion Boards and explicit engagement guidelines has helped with this.
* Establishing the quality of feedback is also a little bit tricky. Some strategies include providing students with examples or templates of what good feedback engagement is.
* There have been some issues with getting constructively critical feedback, with a preference for feedback to be positive. Teach students how to give feedback.
* Students could find receiving feedback problematic or challenging and might be difficult for them to understand. Lead by example and be specific in the feedback that you offer students informally, and in front of other students.
* In some disciplines, a culture of peer feedback is not necessarily prevalent
* Assessment types involving talks can be anxiety inducing for students. With an added dimension of peer feedback, this can also add to this.