

Peer and Self assessment

Developed by Deakin Learning Futures, Deakin University.

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WHAT ARE PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT?

- Peer assessment is an arrangement when students make assessment decisions on other students' work
- Self assessment occurs when a student assesses and makes judgements about his/her own work.
- Peer and self assessment are linked to **reflective practice** as it involves self development and as such, is an important skill for career development and management.

Students can make peer and self assessment decisions on various assessment forms including essays, reports, presentations, performances, projects, dissertations and exams. Peer and self assessment can play a vital role in formative assessment and can also be used as a component for summative assessment, helping to provide the following outcomes:

- a desire to want to learn (intrinsic motivation)
- a need to learn (extrinsic motivation)
- learning by doing (practice, trial and error)
- learning through feedback (praise, constructive criticism)
- making sense or 'digesting' what has been learned.

WHY ARE PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

Some key points about peer and self assessment are¹

- they are valuable when the evidence to be assessed is intrinsically personal in nature
- sometimes students themselves know how well the evidence meets the purposes or criteria designed to specify it
- the feedback/assessment can be anonymous, allowing students a comfortable 'space' to give constructive feedback and receive feedback
- consistency in understanding key concepts can be demonstrated (or lack of consistency can alert tutors to problems)
- each can be adopted to provide formative (i.e., assessment 'for' learning) and/or summative (i.e., assessment 'of' learning) assessment
- peer and self assessment can potentially save time and classroom work, because a teacher can receive a clearer or indepth perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of a student's learning experience and can then hone in on the problem areas
- peer and self assessment can assist in deepening the student's own perception of their learning style and experience, facilitating ammelioration
- peer assessment can help steer students towards understanding the assessment process, helping students take control of their own learning and assessment and become more independent learners
- peer assessment can help students acquire a range of transferable key skills such as self-reflection, time management, organisational and team skills which are highly valued in the workplace and underpin career progression.

¹ UNSW Australia, retrieved 28 May 2013, <<http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/self-assessment>>.

TEACHING PEER ASSESSMENT

General points for peer assessment

- academics should explicitly discuss with, and inform, students about peer assessment expectations and objectives
- academics should explicitly encourage students, and provide them with the tools to give their peers positive and constructive feedback that is productive and professional
- academics should stress to students to be sensitive when giving feedback to their peers- illustrating good practice examples of what constitutes a negative peer assessment and a positive one
- peer assessment can facilitate student's personal coping skills and strategies for self regulating learning, providing motivation and recognising progress
- academics should be aware that giving students too little responsibility may mean that students may feel lost and unclear about what to do.

How to implement peer assessment effectively

When developing a peer assessment task:

- construct a clear and accurate rubric to establish proper criteria and standards for the assessment piece
- engage the students in practice opportunities (formative assessment) before employing peer assessment as a assessment
- where peer assessment is used to give feedback on a fellow student's contribution to the team, explain to students that contribution to **teamwork** can occur in either premium located situations or in CloudDeakin contexts. Therefore, it should be the content and extent of a student's contribution, not just the number of meetings that they attend that is assessed.

Examples of peer assessment activities (formative and summative)

Table 1. Tools and resources for peer assessment

Name of resource	What it is used for	Where to find it
Development of a peer assessment tool for engineering students	Problem based learning	http://www.aeee.com.au/conferences/papers/2007/paper_63.pdf
National Capital Language Resource Centre (NCLRC) – Assessing Learning	The use of peer assessment in language teaching	http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/assessing/peereval.htm
Learning and Teaching Support Network	An overall explanation and discussion regarding peer assessment	http://www.swap.ac.uk/docs/ltsnbrief09selfpeergroup.pdf
WebPA	This is an open source online peer assessment tool being used extensively in the UK and at University of Queensland and University of New South Wales in Australia	http://webpaproject.lboro.ac.uk/
SPARK ^{Plus}	This is a web-based self and peer assessment kit provided by the University of Technology, Sydney.	http://spark.uts.edu.au/
PeerMark™	PeerMark is a peer assessment tool available as part of the Turnitin suite	http://turnitin.com/en_us/products/peermark
ePortfolio within Cloud Deakin	ePortfolio within CloudDeakin has the ability to allow students to share and comment on each other's work	http://www.deakin.edu.au/teaching-learning/dso/what-is/eportfolio/index.php
real life practice	Students could be asked to peer review (as well as self-assess) resumes and performance at mock interviews/ interview simulations	Led by academic

TEACHING SELF ASSESSMENT

General points for self assessment

- explaining the rules and process of the self assessment activity and why it is important to both learning and real world environments, as well as, important for establishing realistic expectations
- providing a rubric or outline for the students to follow in order to authentically self assess their work is crucial in providing students with motivation to complete the task
- allowing for prior formative self assessment activities to help scaffold the self assessment activity is important for establishing self-directed learners.

How to implement self assessment effectively

Academics should consider the following:

- provide students with thorough and accurate self-assessment processes
- provide and explain self assessment activities that are self-critical and realistic and include effective monitoring and improvement of performance through on-going self assessment
- avoid insufficient teacher-involvement in self-assessment processes
- avoid inadequate use of self-assessment feedback to support improvement in student learning.

Examples of self assessment activities (formative and summative assessment)

Table 2. Tools for self assessment

Name of resource	What it is used for	Where to find it
Mediawiki	A web-based learning tool for group activity (or individuals) that allows users to upload artefacts on set topics and projects. The process and product can then undergo self and/or peer assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a link to wikis on CloudDeakin: https://www.deakin.edu.au/dso/index.php • a conference presentation on wikis: http://dro.deakin.edu.au/view/DU:30005482 • how to implement and use mediawikis: http://www.deakin.edu.au/teaching-learning/dso/guides/mediawiki-admin.php
Forms	A web-based form that teachers can create in CloudDeakin that allows teachers and students to peer and self assess. Once students have filled in the form they can submit the assessment via CloudDeakin's Dropbox.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CloudDeakin: https://www.deakin.edu.au/dso/index.php
SPARK^{Plus}	This is a web-based self and peer assessment kit provided by the University of Technology, Sydney.	http://spark.uts.edu.au/
PeerMark™	PeerMark is a peer assessment tool available as part of the Turnitin suite	http://turnitin.com/en_us/products/peermark
MBTI	Personality typing and assessment instrument. Deakin Careers Consultants can administer. See also some free online versions	http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics http://www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html
Holland's Self Directed Search	Instrument to measure and articulate interests (available from Jobshop staff and website)	http://www.self-directed-search.com/
Skills audit and Career Action Plan	To set goals, identify skills and deficits and plan actions to address these.	http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/assets/resources/services/careers/ident-skills.pdf http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/international/deakin/final-trimester/career.php#job-search_action_plan__89_4

TEACHING PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT ACROSS A COURSE

Development of self and peer assessment skills should be scaffolded across a course, beginning in the first year of a course where foundation level skills are developed. Successive years should build on the foundation skills developed, progressively challenging the student.

Table 3 sets out some examples of self and peer assessment activities for novice (e.g., Year 1 students) and more experienced students.

Table 3. An example of Peer and Self assessment for novice and experienced students

Level	Peer	Self
Novice	<p>Students assess other's assignments using a teacher designed rubric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student writes identify three aspects that were completed well • students provides feedback on three aspects where the peer needs to improve • academic provides formative feedback, picking up on the themes in the 	<p>Academic provides examples of reflective practice and details a framework of how to undertake reflection (examples from previous student cohorts may be useful). Student identified good and bad examples.</p>
Intermediate	<p>Reflection pre- and post task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student A and B each complete individual assignments • Students A and B provide each other with feedback (formative assessment) • Students A and B submit their individual assignment incorporating peer feedback and submit the peer feedback that they provided on the original assignment for the academic to assess as part of summative assessment • Students A and B receive an individual mark on the assignment and a mark on peer feedback by the academic (summative assessment) 	<p>Students attempt a reflection on their own work and obtain feedback from a peer or teacher about their self reflection (e.g., via e-portfolios), thereby helping the student calibrate their own judgements about their own work.</p>
Expert	<p>Students construct their own marking rubric and evaluate peer's work using this rubric</p>	<p>Students complete a reflective piece incorporating theories, learning outcomes, and solutions to real world problems that forms a core part of the summative assessment process.</p>

ASSESSING PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT

General points

Race (2001) notes that, ‘in both self and peer assessment students must be made aware and taught the set of criteria to use when assessing their own work and other students work. They need to know the following:

- what constitutes a “good” attempt and what makes it a “good” attempt’ (p. 15).
- what the marking criteria is
- what is expected such as word count and/or peer and self assessment areas to concentrate on.

How to assess peer assessment

The following assessment criteria (Table 4) is useful for academics when providing students with a marking expectation. Students can use this to assess their peers on contribution within a group activity.

Table 4. Peer assessment criteria

Peer Assessment Collaboration Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Participation	Group member participated fully and was always on task in class.	Group member participated most of the time and was on task most of the time.	Group member participated but wasted time regularly or was rarely on task.	Group member did not participate, wasted time, or worked on unrelated material.
Leadership	Group member assumed leadership in an appropriate way when necessary by helping the group stay on track, encouraging group participation, posing solutions to problems, and having a positive attitude.	Group member sometimes assumed leadership in an appropriate way.	Group member usually allowed others to assume leadership, alternatively, or often dominated the group.	Group member did not assume leadership or assumed it in a nonproductive manner.
Listening	Group member listened carefully to others’ ideas.	Group member usually listened to others’ ideas.	Group member sometimes did not listen to others’ ideas.	Group member did not listen to others and often interrupted them.

Feedback	Group member offered detailed, constructive feedback when appropriate.	Group member offered constructive feedback when appropriate.	Group member occasionally offered constructive feedback, but sometimes the comments were inappropriate or not useful.	Group member did not offer constructive or useful feedback.
Cooperation	Group member treated others respectfully and shared the workload fairly.	Group member usually treated others respectfully and shared the workload fairly.	Group member sometimes treated others disrespectfully or did not share the workload fairly.	Group member often treated others disrespectfully or did not share the workload fairly.
Time Management	Group member completed assigned tasks on time.	Group member usually completed assigned tasks on time and did not hold up progress on the projects because of incomplete work.	Group member often did not complete assigned tasks on time, and held up completion of project work.	Group member did not complete most of the assigned tasks on time and often forced the group to make last-minute adjustments and changes to accommodate missing work.

The student notes the proficiency level from the rubric above. Students Include their name in the list.

Group Member	Participation	Leadership	Listening	Feedback	Cooperation	Time Management

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Some tips for peer assessment

Reflective logs, diaries, journals: Students use diaries to reflect and check the structure and what they have learnt. This gives students an insight into the process.

Presentations: A student can reflect back on their presentation and reflect on the process, the context, as well as think about the weakness and strengths of their approach and performance. Students are, often, more critical of their own work than others.

Questionnaires: Students complete an assessment questionnaire in regards to their work and submit it with the assignment. Make sure the questionnaire is specific to that piece of work and different for each one.

Questions to consider might be:

- What do you think is a fair score or grade for the work you have handed in?
- What was the task you consider you (or your fellow student) did best in this assignment and why?
- What was the task that you think you (or your fellow student) undertook well well in this assignment? Why?
- What did you find the hardest part of this assignment? Why?
- What was the most important aspect you learned in doing this assignment? Why?²

Build-in back-feedback: Make sure students receive feedback on how they assessed themselves and others so that they can learn from this and improve their skills for next time.

Provide feedback: Encourage students to take their peers and the teacher's feedback very seriously. Be gentle though, so students don't lose faith.

² Race 2001, pp. 13–14.

How to assess self assessment

Self-assessment can take many forms, including writing 'I' experiences, group discussions (whole-class or small-group), ePortfolio entries, weekly self-evaluations, self-assessment checklists and teacher-student interviews. These types of self-assessment share a common theme, because they ask students to review their work to determine what they have learned, how they have learnt it and if clarification is still required. Table 5 provides some examples of self assessment criteria.

Table 5. Self assessment criteria

Description	Resource
e-portfolios to develop reflection and assessment on social work degree programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.swap.ac.uk/docs/eltep_helpsheet3.pdf • http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Yr-BHVhPrU
Assessing Learning: peer and self assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://nclrc.org/essentials/assessing/peereval.htm
Teamwork skills toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/290870/Teamwork-skills.pdf
Peer and self assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.deakin.edu.au/itl/pd/tl-modules/teaching-approach/group-assignments/topic12.php • http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/52947134/Peer%20assessment%20and%20review • http://www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/peer-and-self-assessment/self-assessment/eia-self-assessment.aspx • http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/peer-assessment • http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/self-assessment

Examples of peer and self assessment rubrics

Table 6. Examples of peer and self assessment rubrics and resources

Description	Case studies
This example of a peer rating rubric form is useful for students and teachers, and can be adapted to suit your activity or area of discipline (University of New South Wales Australia, Student peer assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/assessment/students/Peer_Rating_Form.pdf • http://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-rubrics
The following link provides an example of involving students in peer review. It has case studies and practical strategies for university teaching (University of Melbourne).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/resources_teach/teaching_in_practice/docs/Student_Peer_Review.pdf
This case study features Tam Nguyen from The University of New South Wales, describing how a blog was used in one particular teaching context to promote peer-to-peer interaction, feedback and discussion. Nguyen's students also integrate YouTube and Flickr into their blogs, maximising the potential of both social media and a learning management system. While the following case study does examine one particular teaching application of a blog, the principles discussed can just as easily be applied to any teaching situation where the ability for individuals to chronologically record a learning process, collate different learning resources such as text, video and audio, and increased peer feedback or discussion between students is desired. This episode examines the context, planning and teaching within the case study, highlights any issues that were encountered, as well as benefits that make this type of online teaching worthwhile.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://online.cofa.unsw.edu.au/learning-to-teach-online/ltto-episodes?view=video&video=173
General rubric resource from Cornell University to guide academics in the production of their own rubrics including for student use in peer assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/assessing-student-learning/using-rubrics.html

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

How to guide students to capitalise on diverse backgrounds

Peer assessment may be a new concept for those familiar with Australian schooling, however it may be even more foreign to those who have a different academic and cultural framework. Students may be grappling with their own linguistic, academic discourse and study skill issues – to be asked to assess their own work or undertake peer assessment can be particularly daunting. Some considerations include:

- speak openly and honestly with students as a group to validate that they might not be familiar with the practice of individual or peer assessment but outline the benefits – or better still, ask students to come up with a list of benefits to share with the class. This is an ideal online discussion list activity that also helps break the ice.
- devise the assessment criteria for a task with the students (this can be done through informal peer discussion then whole of group discussion). This way students have time to reflect critically on the assessment criteria and the task requirements.
- provide an exemplar as a practice task and scaffold students through the activity requirements. This way, students become familiar with the criteria, the methodology of peer/self-assessment, and, importantly, the standards expected against each criteria.
- ensure the rubric is clearly written and students are familiar with terms and concepts used.
- peer assessment works well when trust in giving constructive feedback is established.
- establish peer groups and the culture of peer work early in a unit and course.
- ask students to evaluate how the activity went as part of each practice task. This will provide constructive feedback to the group, the whole class – and yourself as a reflective practitioner. It also helps establish the notions of constructive reflection, feedback and shared trust. Portfolio's are ideal tools for self and peer assessment activities
- if you have a high representation of students unfamiliar to the concept of self/peer assessment, provide scope to practise necessary skills to assess written, visual or aural work (presentations etc...). Devise these as activities as part of the formative tasks for your unit/course to give students time to develop understandings and skills required.

An upfront investment of planning peer and self assessment activities will ensure your students engage in these types of assessment activities and benefit from the deep learning they provide – rather than just 'do' the assessment activity.

How to ensure all students, are supported and included

Reflecting on inclusive teaching practices will assist in working in an equitable way with all students.

Consider any accommodations that should be made for students, for instance, with disabilities. These adjustments should form part of a **Learning Access Plan** (that sets out the required formal adjustments to learning) between yourself and the student and is recorded by **Disability Services** at Deakin.

The most effective way of ensuring that all students feel comfortable and understand how to engage each individual within the class is to model appropriate inclusive teaching practices (located and in CloudDeakin). This will assist in establishing a culture for robust peer work to flourish. Some practical inclusive strategies include:

- be aware of student needs. For instance, if the physical space is such that a student is forced to sit next to the door or at the back of the classroom in a wheelchair, this probably would not facilitate an atmosphere of inclusivity. Ensure there is adequate physical space and proximity to services, equipment etc. so that peers can work together as required
- students might find reading aloud difficult eg. if they find it embarrassing or distressing. They may have an impairment or condition, or experience anxiety. Model patience and empathy and give students options to read aloud in groups or pairs
- ensure students and their peer groups are provided with the reading early so that there is more time to work with the information
- guide students to share their resources prior to the session perhaps using google docs etc. This will permit all students, including those with a visual or a learning disability to access the materials prior to class and participate in peer activities effectively
- allow students to video tape and provide their assessments at an appropriate time, for instance, of a presentation undertaken at a located learning environment. This will permit all students, including those with learning difficulties time to consider and respond adequately
- set up peer groups via CloudDeakin so that students might have easy access to any specialised equipment, e.g. software or hardware for visual impairments etc.
- book a room that is easily accessible for all students including those with mobility issues or students who may use learning assistants (e.g. carers, Auslan interpreters or note takers). This will allow students to hear and see for instance, a presentation or compose text comfortably
- use e-portfolios to gather work captured in a range of formats (visual, audio, written etc.) and student reflections on the process (if appropriate); also,
- some students, including those with a visual impairment might find it easier to provide aural feedback rather than written.

Consider carefully how you will ensure that your inclusive practices are employed as this will guide students in working with their peers. Ensure that you establish a culture of positive learning and comfort for all students to thrive as part of their learning experience. There are a number of resources in a variety of media to support learning through the implementation of **Universal Design for Learning strategies**.

FURTHER READINGS & OTHER RESOURCES

Articles

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEER AND SELF ASSESSMENT TEACHING RESOURCE

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