

Peer Review in Online Learning

Summary

Peer Review, or simply stated the process by which students provide one another evaluative and constructive feedback, can be a powerful tool for instructors to employ authentic, engaging assessment in online learning. When implemented effectively, peer review can teach your students the valuable skills of evaluation and assessment. These skills, when fostered in your online classroom, can enable students to better their own work based on the feedback of their peers.

Best Practices

This short guide will outline the best practices associated with peer review. For additional resources, see the *Research and Further Reading* list below and [our toolbox](#). For instructional design consultation and recommendations on how to implement this in your course, please make an appointment with an Instructional Designer.

- Purpose, Process and Expectations
 - Assume that your students *don't* know how to peer review. Explain the key benefits, the purpose, the process and all of your expectations up front.
- Resources
 - Ensure that your students have the tools they need to succeed. Provide students with technical resources for any technology used, and provide a point of contact for any technical support. You may even want to provide them with a low stakes assignment to practice and master the peer review process.
- Timing

- Allow enough time for the peer review process and remember that one module may not be enough time to complete the activity. Consider breaking your peer review assignment into multiple parts or drafts over the course of the semester. This allows your students to benefit from their peers' feedback early on, and it gives them the opportunity to improve their work based on this feedback.
- Feedback
 - Model the respectful, informative and helpful commentary that you expect of your students. Discuss the difference between helpful and unhelpful commentary with them. If you are worried that your students may not buy into the process or take it seriously, consider asking them to verbalize how they will use the feedback they gain to improve their work.
- Rubrics
 - No successful peer review assignment is complete without a quality rubric to guide students through the peer review process. Providing a rubric for your student breaks the assignment up into the most important component parts, and it teaches your students not only how to assess their peers, but also how to assess and improve their own work.

Example Assignments

- [case studies](#)
- argument synthesis from provided source
- newspaper article
- lab reports
- technical reports
- grant proposal
- policy brief

- short story
- video presentation or media project

Research and Further Reading

Research

- Cho, K. & MacArthur, C. (2010). Student revision with peer and expert reviewing. *Learning and Instruction*, 20, 328-338. doi: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2009.08.006
- Cho, K., Schunn, C., & Wilson, R. (2006). Validity and Reliability of Scaffolded Peer Assessment of Writing from Instructor and Student Perspectives. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(4), 891-901
- Falchikov, N, and Goldfinch, J. (2000). Student Peer Assessment in Higher Education: A Meta-Analysis Comparing Peer and Teacher Marks. *Review of Educational Research*, 70: 287 (<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/70/3/287>)
- Kollar, I. & Fischer, F. (2010). Peer assessment as collaborative learning: A cognitive perspective. *Learning and Instruction*, 20, 344-348. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2009.08.005
- Van Zundert, M., Sluijsmans, D., van Merriënboer, J. (2010). Effective peer assessment processes: Research findings and future directions. *Learning and Instruction*, 20, 270-279. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2009.08.004

Online Resources

- [Cornell University, Center for Teaching Excellence: The what, why and how of peer assessment](http://web.archive.org/web/20200229043716/http://citt.ufl.edu/online-teaching-resources/assessments/peer-review-in-online-learning/)
- [Washington University in St. Louis, Teaching Center: Using Peer Review to Help Students Improve Writing](http://web.archive.org/web/20200229043716/http://citt.ufl.edu/online-teaching-resources/assessments/peer-review-in-online-learning/)

