

Peer Assessment

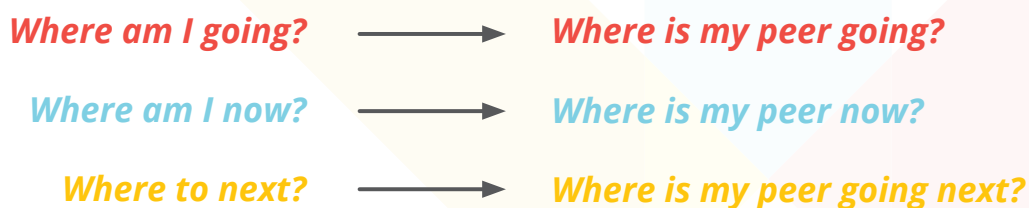
Activity 5.9

“The research shows that the person providing the feedback benefits just as much as the recipient, because they are forced to internalize the learning intentions and success criteria in the context of someone else’s work, which is less emotionally charged than one’s own work.” (William, 2006, p. 5).

Peer assessment is a process in which students provide feedback to other students. The purpose of this feedback is to help classmates improve their learning. Feedback is a learning activity and student learning benefits when students receive feedback from, and give feedback to, their peers. By giving feedback to peers, students strengthen their understanding of the lesson Learning Goals and Success Criteria, which in turn, helps them to assess their own learning.

Peer assessment requires a classroom culture characterized by supportive, collaborative relationships that lead to feelings of mutual trust among the students. In such a classroom culture, students understand that they share responsibility for their own and their peers’ learning and that part of this joint responsibility is to provide constructive, respectful, and non-judgmental feedback. Teacher modeling plays an important role in establishing a culture for peer assessment, as do the structures, opportunities, and expectations for collaboration that the teacher provides and sustains through constant monitoring.

Peer assessment and feedback is grounded in the three questions that frame the Feedback Loop:



In order to answer these questions, students need a clear understanding of the lesson Learning Goals and Success Criteria. They also need to learn how to use this information to provide effective feedback to their peers.

There is no single way to teach students how to give effective feedback and you will surely develop your own. But to get started, below are five strategies that teachers have found helpful in supporting students to give peer feedback.

#1 Model Providing Feedback

Students come to understand the purpose and value of feedback when they receive quality feedback from their teachers, so one of the primary ways that students learn how to give effective feedback is through teacher modeling. When teachers provide oral feedback to the class or to small groups, students are listening to what quality feedback sounds like. When teachers provide written feedback, students also gain insights about feedback that helps learning.

Another way that teachers can model feedback for students is to take samples of student work (preferably from a student in another class), review the learning and criteria with the whole class, consider the work in light of the criteria, and discuss what feedback to provide and why. While examining a student work sample with the class, a teacher might also comment on what he/she is noticing about the work in relation to the Success Criteria and ask the students to make suggestions about what feedback would help this particular student.

Teachers can also model for the class with one of the students what peer feedback looks like and sounds like. For example, on a frequent basis a first-grade teacher explicitly modeled behaviors for providing oral feedback that she had posted on a classroom chart (below).

Working with a Partner	
Looks like... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turning towards partner• Maintaining eye contact when talking• Staying on task• Sitting close	Sounds like... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliments• 6-inch voice• Asking questions• Pleasant voice

#2 Use Feedback Prompts and Protocols

When students are first starting the process of peer feedback, for example, in the early grades, conversation prompts can be a good way to support them to give feedback. Here are some that teachers have found useful:

- I wonder why...
- I would like to suggest...
- I am confused because...
- Have you thought about...?
- Maybe you could...?
- I did not understand what you meant when you said...
- I understand what you mean, but have you considered...?
- A strength I see in your work is...
- I notice that...
- You could improve this by...

An example of a protocol that teachers can use to engage students in providing written feedback is the RISE model (Wray, 2013). Students consider four prompts when writing a response that provides a structure for feedback.

<p>Reflect <i>Recall, ponder, and communicate</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I relate/concur/disagree with X because... • I like what you did with X because...
<p>Inquire <i>Seek information and/or provide ideas through questioning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered looking at X from Y perspective?
<p>Suggest <i>Introduce ideas for improvement of current iteration</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might think about including some information from another resource. Here is a link.
<p>Elevate <i>Raise a higher degree or purpose in future iterations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps you could expand this section on X to further analyze this section Y.

#3 Analyze Strong and Weak Feedback

Students at any grade level can also benefit from discussing examples of strong and weak feedback, both oral and written. As with any other feedback, it will be essential to clarify the Learning Goal and Success Criteria against which the feedback was given, before examining the samples of student work (these could be students' oral responses as well as what students write or make) and the peer feedback provided. Students can be guided to consider the feedback with questions such as: do you understand the feedback, does the feedback match the Learning Goal and Success Criteria, is the feedback specific, would this student know what to do with the feedback to move forward, and how might you improve this feedback? Creating a list of what makes strong and weak feedback after these analyses, or reviewing existing lists to make sure they include specific items from the analyses, are also useful strategies.

#4 Provide Feedback on Feedback

As students practice peer assessment and feedback, teachers will need to monitor the process to determine how to support students. Teachers will want to give feedback and assistance to individual students, as well as feedback to the class as a whole. It is also helpful to involve students in monitoring and reflecting on the process. For example, teachers might ask the class to reflect on how peer assessment is working:

- What is working well?
- What do we need to improve?
- What help do you think you need?

#5 Practice Giving Feedback

The adage “practice makes perfect” applies just as much to developing skills in peer feedback as much as it does to acquiring any other skills. When feedback becomes a routine part of formative assessment, students will have opportunities to practice giving feedback to their peers. With reflection on the process, teachers model and monitor how well students are doing so they can continue to be supported, and students’ skills will increase.



Sentence Stems – Wall Chart

It can be helpful to have sentence stems posted in the classroom in order to prompt students to use the language of peer and self-assessment.

Peer assessment stems:

What was done well	What can be improved	Next steps in learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This part _____ is very clear. • This part _____ meets this Success Criterion _____. • The most interesting thing in this work is _____. • This _____ helped me understand what you meant by _____. • You are getting better at _____. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I notice that you seem to be having trouble with _____. • The Success Criteria you have not met yet are _____. • This part _____ could be clearer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you consider changing _____? • A next step for you could be _____. • Do you think you could _____? • Would you consider adding _____? • During revision you might consider _____.

Self-assessment stems:

What was done well	What can be improved	Next steps in learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am getting much better at _____. • This part _____ meets this Success Criterion _____. • The most interesting thing in this work is _____. • An area of this work that I found easy was _____. • When the assignment got hard, I used this strategy _____ to help me figure it out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am still not sure how to _____. • The part I found most difficult was _____. • This part _____ could be clearer. • I do not yet understand _____. • I have the following question about _____. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A question I want to have answered is _____. • I would like to meet with someone who is able to explain _____ to me. • A next step for me is _____. • During revision I will change _____ in order to improve _____. • As I look at the progression, I see I have met _____ but need to work on _____ next.

An alternative approach is to have students develop the stems to post in the classroom. Once students have practiced both giving and receiving feedback, students can identify the stems that are most comfortable for them to use. The charts can then become a permanent classroom display.

References

William, D. (July, 2006). *Does assessment hinder learning?* Paper presented at ETS Invitational Seminar at the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, UK.

Wray, E. (2013). *RISE model for meaningful feedback*. Retrieved from <http://www.risemodel.com>