

How to Engage Students in Peer Feedback

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Students across many disciplines can provide great benefits to one another through effective peer feedback, but engaging students can be difficult. Our research suggests 3 major factors influencing students' willingness to participate. Educators should consider these when designing learning around peer feedback.

	Expected Educational Gain	Social Reward	Social Risk	A real example: Peer Practice
Definition	Whether students expect material educational benefit	Students' desire to build social relations and help peers succeed	Risks of harm to reputation and social relationships	<p>We implemented a programme called Peer Practice where students practise clinical skills in pairs in hospital settings. The Peer Practice mobile app aligns to summative assessment criteria (Expected Educational Gain). Groups know each other well and work together over a whole year (Social Reward). To reduce Social Risk the app provides 'safe' methods of critique through simple checklists and participation is routine / formative. Initial data found Peer Practice was highly valued by students, increased enthusiasm for peer learning and benefited performance.</p>
Effect on Peer feedback	Promotes participation	Promotes participation	Limits participation	
An example	Students believe paired lab work will help prepare for practical assessments	Students in study groups know one another well and are not in direct competition	Students presenting papers are afraid of embarrassment in front of colleagues	
Influence on learning design	Focus on learning that is <i>seen</i> to be beneficial e.g. directly helpful for summative assessments. Advertise the benefits heavily, and consider approaches that make peer feedback immediately rewarding. Let students participate in designing activities	Encourage repeated group contact to help build friendly relations. Consider making individual success dependent on group success. Use social activities to promote group bonds. Limit direct competition / peers awarding marks to other group members based on effort	Start with low-stakes / formative activities and encourage longitudinally stable groups to build trust. Provide training on how to avoid awkward critique e.g. ground rules for feedback conversations, objective marking schemes	

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