



# Learning **WITH** Others

## Peer Feedback

### *What is it?*

*Peer feedback* is exactly what it sounds like: student interactions based on giving and receiving feedback about their work on an assignment or project. Peer feedback is usually used with open-ended performance assessments, such as papers or final projects. Commonly, students are given a rubric that is similar or identical to the one that will be used to assess the final product, and they use it to assess a partner or group members' work. Peer feedback is most often implemented prior to the final due date so that students can make changes before turning in the final product.

### *Why should I use it?*

Peer feedback can be beneficial in many ways. First, it can lead to improved performance because students receive preliminary feedback that is used to revise their work. Second, viewing one's own work from the perspective of an evaluator it is an important skill that must be practiced, and assessing a peer's work can help build this skill because students are required to view work from the instructor's perspective. Third, in many classes students do not see their peers' work. For open-ended activities that can be completed many ways, peer assessment makes the variety of possible solutions concrete because students are able to see examples of how others completed the activity. Finally, having students give peer feedback increases the amount of feedback students get on their work without increasing the instructor's workload much.

### *How do I implement it in my engineering course?*

- Have students work in groups of 2 or 3.
- Give students guidelines on how to provide feedback.
  - Rubrics are great! But be sure to explain how a rubric is used.
  - Should their comments be written or spoken?
  - What aspects of the work should they focus on? Organization and structure? The foundational ideas? Aspects of visual presentation? Vague instructions like, "Give your partner feedback," will result in generic comments like, "I thought it was pretty good."
- Specify how the feedback they receive is to be used.
  - Do you want them to incorporate comments into their revisions?
  - Do you want them to document their revisions?
- If peer feedback is to be given outside of class time, tie it to a completion grade, either as a separate assignment or as a small portion (< 5%) of the assignment being assessed.

***Additional readings***

- Imam, B., Imran Rafiq, M., & Kumar, P. (2011). Improving student learning in engineering discipline using student-and lecturer-led assessment approaches. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 1(2-3), 233-248. doi:10.1080/21568235.2011.601932.
- Willey, K., & Gardner, A. (2010). Investigating the capacity of self and peer assessment activities to engage students and promote learning. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 35(4), 429-443.