Improving assessment practice

Peer assessment and feedback
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Peer assessment and feedback involves learners in judging the work of their colleagues against set criteria and making suggestions for improvement.

Reasons for using peer assessment and feedback

- Builds learners’ work related knowledge by requiring them to explain and justify their actions and decisions.
- Develops the ability of learners to make independent judgements of their own and others’ work.
- Encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Helps learners develop skills in self-assessment.
- Treats assessment as part of learning so mistakes become opportunities for learning rather than failures.
- Assists learners to improve their personal performance by receiving feedback from their peers and also through reviewing and discussing the work of others.
- Gives students a wider range of feedback.
- Provides opportunities for learners to practice transferable skills required at work, especially evaluation skills.
- Helps ensure that assessor time is used efficiently.

The three step approach for improving peer assessment and feedback

1. Find out about the experience and skills that learners have in peer assessment and feedback.
2. Plan a peer assessment and feedback activity.
3. Implement the peer assessment and feedback activity.
...how to do it.

1. **Find out about the experience and skills that learners have in peer assessment and feedback.**
   - Ask learners about their views on and experience with peer assessment and feedback. Explain that learners can improve both their personal performance and skills in self assessment by reviewing and discussing each others’ work.
   - Ask the learners to identify the rules that apply to assessing each others’ work and giving and receiving feedback through a discussion of what they found helpful or unhelpful in the past.
   - Conduct the following activity to give learners practice in assessing and providing feedback.
     - Give the learners an outline of an assessment task and the relevant assessment criteria.
     - Show the learners a sample of the completed assessment task. This may be a model, a piece of written work or a demonstration.
     - Ask the learners to assess the sample using the assessment criteria and agree on the feedback that they would provide on the completed assessment task.
     - Ask them to role play providing feedback to the person who completed the assessment task.
     - Debrief the activity by asking the following questions:
       - How did you feel when you received the feedback?
       - How did you feel providing the feedback?
       - What aspect of the feedback was most important / useful?
       - Why should you focus on improvement when providing feedback?

2. **Plan a peer assessment and feedback activity.**
   Use the following procedure to plan a peer assessment and feedback activity.
   - Select an assessment task. This may involve the learners in preparing a short written report, demonstrating a skill or producing a model.
• Work out how you will explain the assessment task to the learners and engage them in developing the assessment criteria for the task.
• Structure the assessment and feedback by:
  o forming peer assessment groups of at least three people.
  o setting out the roles of the members of the peer assessment group. Each member of the peer group should review the work completed by the other members of the group. The reviewers should discuss and agree on their feedback and provide the candidate with a description of the positive features of the work and at least one suggestion for improving the work. The candidate should evaluate the suggestions and consider whether and how these should be implemented.

3 **Implement the peer assessment and feedback activity.**

• Actively facilitate the peer assessment and feedback activity using the procedure described in step 2.
• Ask the learners to comment on the usefulness of the feedback they received and whether they implemented the suggestions made by their peers.
• Review the peer assessment and feedback activity by asking the learners what they learned from the activity.