Transforming Your Course With Student Peer Assessment

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Why would an instructor re-design their course?

Problem:
Under-emphasized program learning outcomes

Graduates will be able to:
- communicate clearly & professionally
- give, receive and utilize constructive feedback
- assess & reflect upon their work and skills

Solution:
Student peer assessment including feedback

Student Peer Assessment

"the quantitative or qualitative evaluation of a learner's performance by another learner of the same status"

(Patchan & Schunn, 2015, p.592)

Your experience with Student Peer Assessment

What are we trying to achieve by having students assess & provide feedback on one another's work?

Peer assessment can:

- ❑ increase active engagement with the assignment

- ❑ provide feedback quickly

- ❑ improve learning

- ❑ improve reflection

- ❑ make writing or other projects in large classes feasible

- ❑ increase student responsibility

- ❑ improve feedback skills

Why do students "hate" student peer assessment?

What might students think is "wrong" with peer assessment?

Students may think peer assessment:

1. is teacher's way of lightening their marking load

2. takes too much time

3. results in unfair grades & less valuable feedback: peers are ill-equipped to assess the work

4. results in unfair grades & less valuable feedback: peers differ in their motivation and effort-level

A. When peer assessment requires significant student time & effort, what should we consider for the course overall?

B. How can we support & motivate students to accurately assess the work of peers and give helpful feedback to peers? How could we further address fairness?

Changes to my Course:

1. Incorporated peer assessment into 2 assignments

2. Re-prioritized course content & revised outcomes

3. Removed 1 assignment

4. Delivered some content via Pre-readings & added submissions, quizzes

5. Revised allocation of course grades

Supporting & Motivating Students

- Teach students how to provide feedback
- Teach students how to use the rubric
- Use modest weighting of peer grades
- Award marks for quality of peer assessment
- Use multiple reviewers to reduce bias
- Consider an appeals process

CASE STUDY

Bachelor of Med Lab Sci Program

4th year course – Intro to Research & Job Skills
One semester; 14-24 students
Tool: peerScholar

Student surveys, focus groups
Quality of work (marks changes)

Student Supports:

- Assignment instructions ⎤ tested: clear &
- Rubrics* ⎦ doable
- Video on student peer assessment & the tool
- Peer assessment process simple → complex
- In-class practice using rubrics
- In-class activities on written constructive feedback

*Ref: Nilson, L.B. (2010) Improving Student Peer Feedback. *College Teaching*, 51:1, 34-38.

Assignment - Overview of Educational Program Peer Assessment Outcomes:

You will be able to:

- Evaluate peers' program overviews using a rubric
- Provide and receive constructive peer feedback
- Navigate the peer review process

Peer Assessment Process

Create & Submit → Assess & Provide Feedback → Review
Rate Usefulness of peers' feedback & explain
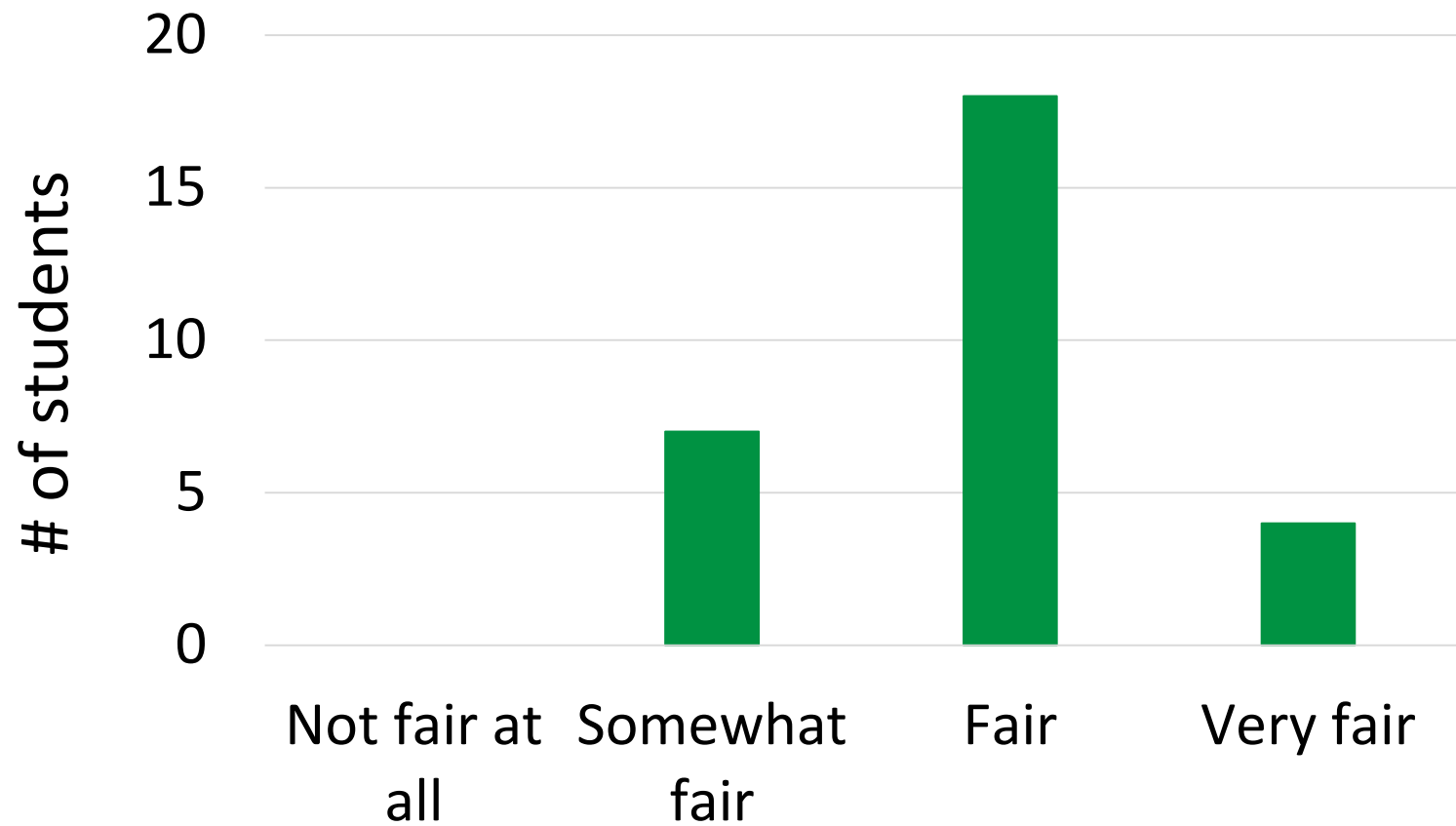
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Review final grades
Appeal?

How useful was this feedback?

Very Useful   3
Useful   2
Somewhat useful   1
Not useful   0

Students' View of Fairness of Report Marks Determined by Peers

Comparing Student Peer & Project Assistant Derived Marks

GRADES	PEER	PROJECT ASSISTANT
RANGE	12 - 20	12 - 20
AVERAGE	18	17

Appeal Process Tips

- Time limits (e.g. within 2 weeks)

- Student responsibility: determine possible grade change, E.g.

  If < 4 points, do not submit

  If 4 or > points, submit

- Specify how & what they should submit, E.g. state which rubric category(ies) was /were not appropriately applied & provide rationale
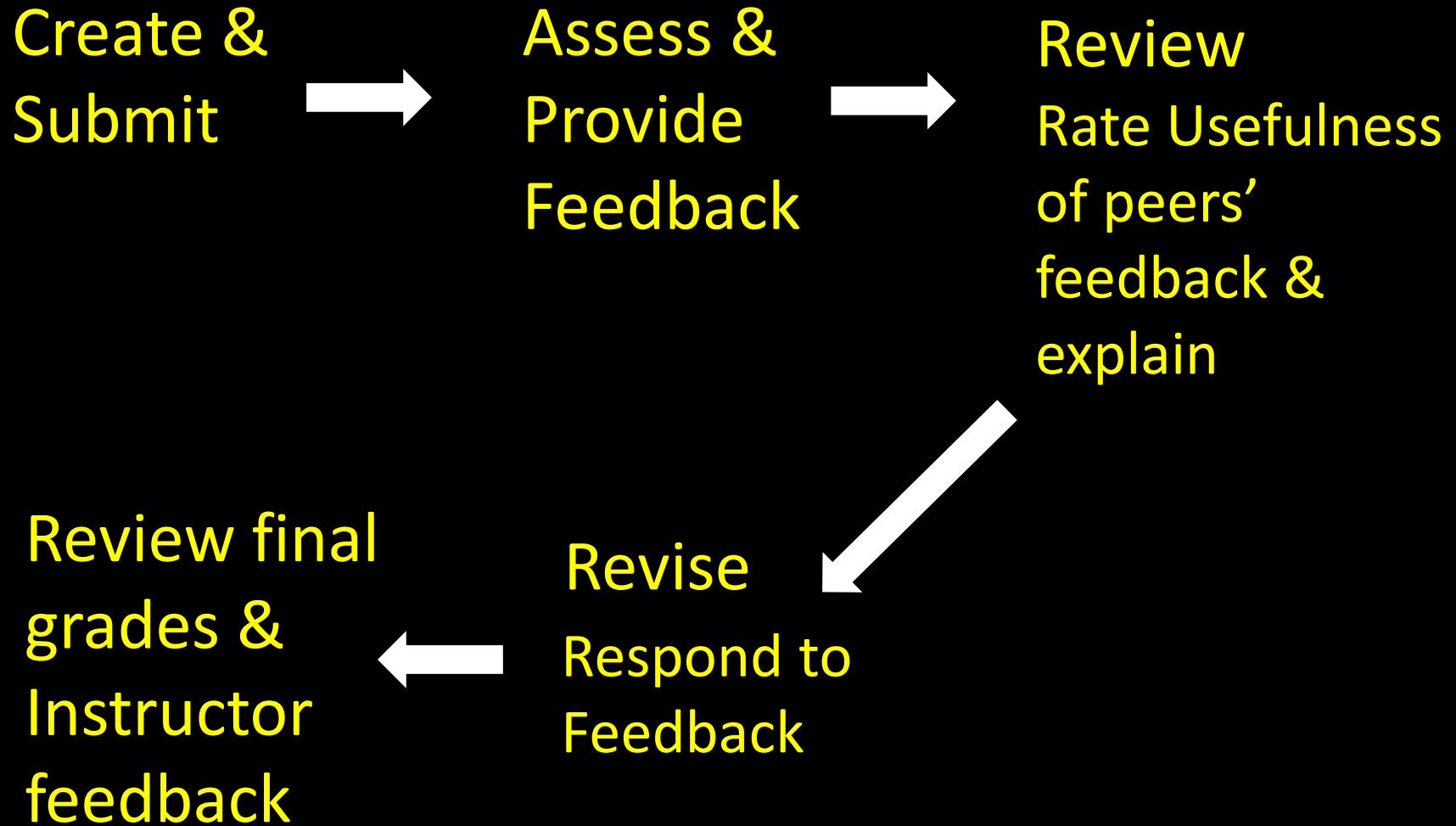
Scientific Abstract – Peer Assessment Outcomes:

You will be able to:

- Evaluate scientific abstracts according to a rubric

- Provide clear, constructive written feedback to peers

- Consider peer feedback in order to improve & revise your abstract

Peer Assessment Process

Create & Submit → **Assess & Provide Feedback** → **Review** Rate Usefulness of peers' feedback & explain

Review final grades & Instructor feedback ← **Revise** Respond to Feedback

Tool: peerScholar

Scientific Abstract – Rubric

Structure to limit interpretations
Categories & criteria

Variable student abilities - writing

- "The following 1-2 points were the most confusing/least clear to me (copy & paste)"

- "The following 1-2 points were particularly strong or effective (copy & paste)"

Assignment Grading

Final scientific abstract marked by instructor   60%

Peer review process (completion)   30%

Quality of feedback provided to peers
(average rating by peers)   10%

Quality of Scientific Abstracts Improved After Peer-Review

GRADES	DRAFT	FINAL
RANGE	12 - 30	18 - 30
AVERAGE	23	26

Students	Improved	Remained Same	Decreased
Number	16	4*	1

What helped students improve their work?

- reading peer submissions

- reading peer assessment & feedback on their draft

- revising their submission

Students' View of Value of Peer Assessment
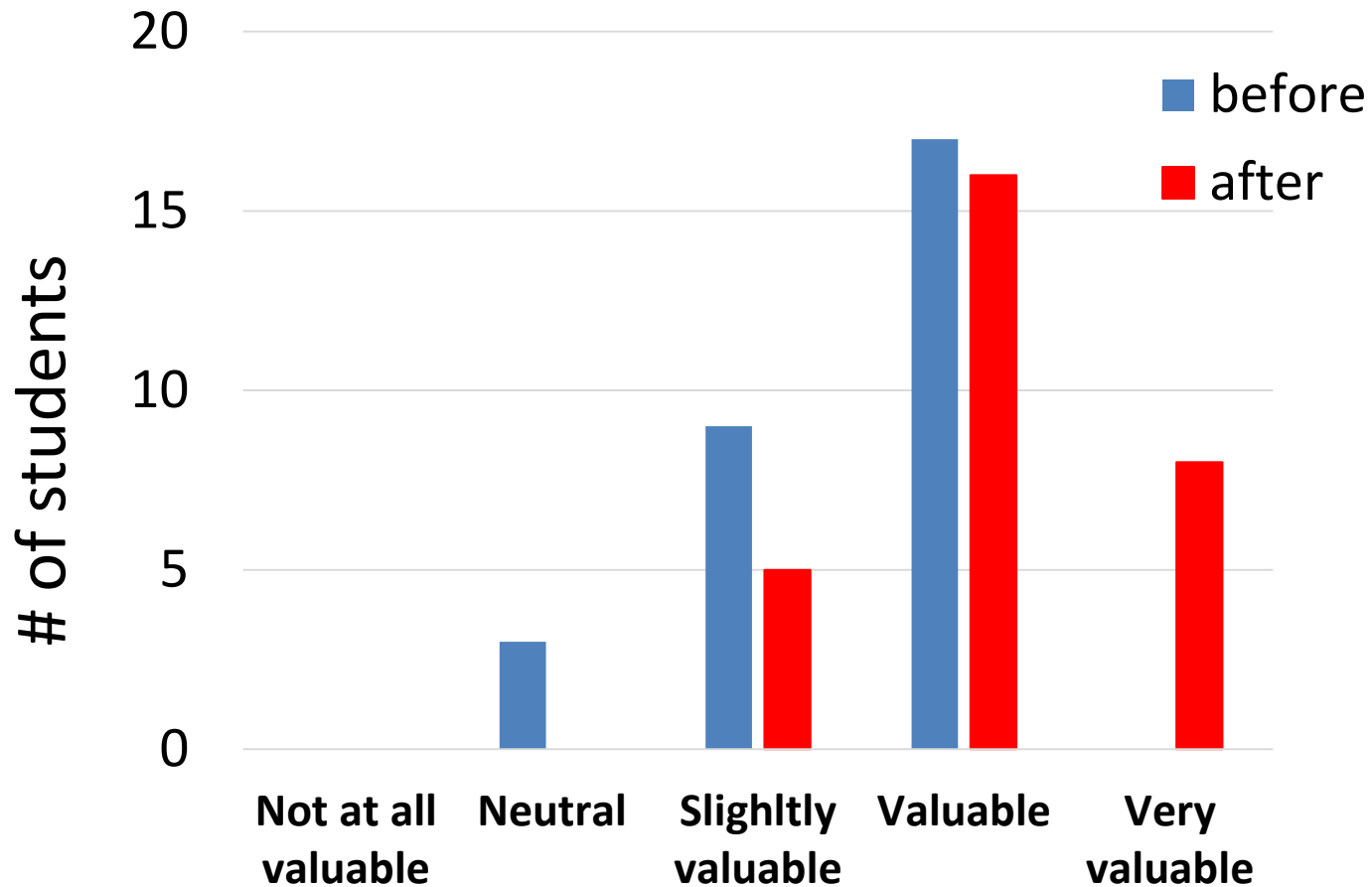
Summary

- Intentions
- Acknowledge student hesitance
- Assignment & Process design
- Choose tool
- Student supports
- Balance in the course

Which 1 or 2 ideas will you focus on when you implement or refresh student peer assessment in your course?

Acknowledgements

Thank you!

Responses to Feedback

Write a ½ page to 1 page reflection/response on how you used peer feedback to improve your draft.

- List 2 or more revisions to your abstract based on peer feedback; explain your rationale.

- If you chose not to use some of the feedback you received, list 1 or 2 of these items and provide a rationale for why you did not incorporate that feedback.

Designing Peer Assessment Assignments – To do:

- Provide clear peer assessment outcomes

- Link assignment, course & program outcomes

- Choose process steps

- Choose best tool to support outcomes

- Determine student time-line required

- Decide on marks allocations