

Loughborough University Teaching Innovation Awards

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Project title

Development of guidelines and tools for peer review assessment in group coursework (Interim report)

N.B. Expand the text boxes as necessary. It is perfectly acceptable to use bullet pointed lists of outcomes, issues, activities, etc. if preferred

Abstract (200-250 words)

Currently there is no consistent policy or guidelines for academics using peer review assessment of group work. The aim of the project is to develop mutually derived peer review assessment criteria for group work; develop guidelines to assist academics to adopt a consistent approach to assessment; and to enable students to make informed peer assessments using the most appropriate method. The initial objectives have been completed, which identify current practice across campus; the next stage is to conduct focus groups with students and academics before developing and evaluating a toolkit. Discussions with academics were completed initially to inform a staff survey. The survey was developed and piloted before being distributed to all academics on campus via the Associate Deans (Teaching) within individual Schools. Notably there was a very low response rate of 48 academics across campus. Findings indicate there is variation in how peer review is conducted for group work and also 'how much' of the marks are adjusted to provide a final mark. Mixed reviews were provided for the use of Web-PA which was considered to be 'useful', 'better than nothing' but 'clunky' to use. The next phase is to discuss the use of peer assessment with students to determine what they want from this type of assessment and then meet with academics to generate and evaluate a toolkit.

Issue(s) addressed by project

Currently within the Design School (LDS) no consistent policy or guidelines exist for how peer review assessment of group work should be carried out. Discussing this with academic staff teaching on the Masters Programme in Human Factors and Ergonomics in particular, it is apparent that there are different methods in use for peer reviews of group work. The options include Web-PA, signed agreements on paper and completing a derived form. These methods are either anonymous reviews (Web-PA) or transparent ratings, whereby students can see if anyone has been assessed as not fully contributing to the group work. The idea of transparency is good, as it allows for some peer discussion about individual contribution to the group. However this can cause problems particularly if agreement cannot be reached within the group, leading to the academic having to negotiate a solution. In contrast, this method may also inhibit students from giving a truthful assessment of a group member because they will not want them to know that was their opinion. Web-PA is an anonymous online assessment tool whereby marks can be affected based on the students' perceived input to the group. If this is introduced at the end of the group work, without students knowing that their input will be peer reviewed, then further problems can arise. It would seem that there are benefits to both of these approaches but currently it is personal choice of the academic and not student driven. This project was discussed with the Centre for Academic Practice (Dr Nick Allsopp) and was considered to have potential and applicability across other schools and so a broader sample was explored.

Aims

To develop mutually derived peer review assessment criteria for group to work; develop guidelines to assist academics to adopt a consistent approach to assessment; to enable students to make informed peer assessments using the most appropriate method.

Specific objectives

- Identify the current methods in use for peer review assessment of group work in LDS.
- Consult academics from other Schools to explore peer review assessment in a wider context.
- Identify and collate the types of questions used to assess peer group members.
- Identify key criteria against which students would like to be assessed.
- Develop guidelines to be used in the Design School.
- Develop and evaluate a Toolkit accessible on the VLE.

Activities/methodology

Phase 1:

- Initial discussions were held with Dr Keith Pond and Dr Nick Allsopp to garner opinion and current processes related to peer review processes and Web-PA.
- Interviews with colleagues in the following Departments were held to inform the online survey; Design School; Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering; School of Arts, English and Drama and School of Sports Exercise and Health Sciences. These interviews identified variation in practice and potential areas that needed to be explored in the survey.
- An online survey was developed from the interviews and built using Google forms. Following a pilot of the survey with colleagues from across campus some amendments were made prior to going live. The survey was distributed via ADTs in all Schools across campus during the out of semester period between semesters 1 and 2 in 2018. It was anticipated that this method would reach the academics and may improve the response rate. A reminder was sent after 2 weeks to close the survey before the start of semester 2 teaching. The aim of the survey was to identify methods used for peer review of coursework across campus and establish the types of questions / key criteria the academics like to use for assessment.
- We are in the process of organising two focus groups with students across the undergraduate degree programmes parts A through to C and similarly for the postgraduate Masters programmes. This will allow students to consider the types of methods, their drawbacks and benefits and also identify what key criteria they think are important for group work and how this can be assessed by peers. Based on the survey findings we have amended our methods to include an additional focus group with academic staff to generate the toolkit to meet the needs of academics and students as part of the next objective.
- Evaluate and collate the student and academic needs against graduate criteria and intended group work learning outcomes.

Phase 2:

- On completion of the above Phase (which is slightly delayed) the aim is to develop guidelines for use and present to the Learning and Teaching Committee in the Design School. Furthermore this will lead to the next objective.
- Develop a toolkit of the agreed methods within the School guidelines; it is proposed this will contain PowerPoint slides for insertion into lectures at the point when group work is set to highlight the peer review assessment, what potential qualities will be assessed and the impact of this on the students' marks.

Phase 3:

- Evaluation of the toolkit with a cohort of students and academics.

Project outcomes/findings

Initial interviews with academics helped develop a survey which was distributed on line via the ADTs for each School. These results are informing the focus groups to be held within semester with groups of students and a group of academics. This is different to the proposed schedule whereby we have added academics to a focus group to inform what a toolkit would look like for them.

The survey was completed by 48 academics across campus with 29 (60%) involved in setting group work for students. Most of these were module leaders and 10 out of the 29 had not used Web-PA

previously. From the 19 who had used it before, 11 considered it good or excellent and 4 poor or very poor with 4 considering 'OK' as a tool. The questions set were predominantly created by lecturers (n=22), with only 6 stating the questions were a combination of student / academic input. However only 10 people said they linked the questions to the intended learning outcomes for the module. A full analysis of the survey results will be presented in the final report.

One of the aims of the survey was to establish what types of questions were included in the peer group assessment. A few of the main themes were intellectual contribution to the group, attendance at meetings and contribution to the written assessment. These themes will be explored further to develop the focus group schedules.

Project outputs/deliverables

To date a poster was developed for the Teaching and Learning Conference (2017) and is displayed in the Design School.

A 5 minute presentation at the Teaching and Learning Conference is planned for June 2018.

Impact on teaching and learning (for your students, your School and including links to University strategy) [This will be the longest and most significant section]

This is an interim report and the impact for students cannot be presented at this time. Anecdotally staff that have been involved in the preliminary discussions and piloting of the study are all keen to be involved in the project in any way as this is an area where there is little support for academic staff.

Dissemination plans including location of developed resources for Loughborough colleagues to access (resources can be attached to this document or linked to – in which case please provide an accessible location of resources)

A poster was designed for use at CAP events and within the Design School to help circulate the projects goals.

The project results and toolkit will enhance any of the teaching and assessment workshops delivered by CAP particularly for new lecturers where the pitfalls and benefits of particular peer group assessments can be demonstrated at first hand.

The guidelines and Toolkit will be available on the VLE with an internal dissemination event to implement the use within the Design School (from October 2018)

It is proposed to submit a journal paper to publish the results – in The Journal of Further and Higher Education.

Use of award money (outline breakdown)

Current expenditure to set up the survey and analyse the results (24 hours @15.13 = £363.12)

Please submit the completed documentation by **30 April 2018** to:

Deena Ingham, *Teaching Innovation Awards Panel*
Centre for Academic Practice

cap@lboro.ac.uk