

Why use peer review?

Peer review:

- enables learners to improve their work products
- develops skills in giving and receiving feedback
- helps learners understand quality standards and assessment criteria
- builds learners' confidence to present their ideas and answer questions about them
- helps learners value interpersonal skills
- helps learners to become expert in their own learning
- increases learners' motivation and persistence.

Peer review forms a useful part of assessment for learning as it enables learners to recognise how to improve their work and where to focus their efforts.

Peer review is an active learning approach and an important element of co-operative learning.

Research has shown that learners at all levels can provide valid and accurate reviews of each other's work, providing they are well prepared.

“Feedback was well thought through and substantiated. It often stimulated constructive debate, and sessions should be planned to allow space for this. Learners responded well to peer feedback, accepting it as formative.”

Piers Ching, West Notts College

Peer review and equality and diversity

Peer review must be built on mutual respect and fairness. It provides an ideal opportunity for discussions about how assumptions and prejudices can affect how we might see another's work. Agreeing ground rules at the outset should provide a framework for learners to challenge any discriminatory behaviour or attitudes and safeguard the principle of fairness that forms the bedrock of this approach.

See **Annex 1.1** for a transcript of **Why use peer review – multimedia presentation**.

Annex 1.1. Annex 1.1: Why use peer review – multimedia presentation transcript

Male voice over: Peer review forms a useful part of assessment for learning as it enables learners to recognise how to improve their work and where to focus their efforts. It's an important part of professional practice in IT.

IT professionals often review each other's work. They rely on their colleagues to spot mistakes and suggest improvements. Meet Tim Allott one of the web team at the Met Office.

Tim Allott: Any time we design a new page it is given to another person in the team to check because there's web standards that you have to meet in terms of code quality for the HTML and things like that. And accessibility, because there are lots of different users out there, they might be vision impaired, or whose first language might not be English. So there are lots of quality checks we do on a page before making it live.

Male voice over: Nikki Thew who runs a team that supports over 130 IT applications at the Met Office relies on team members to review each other's work.

Nikki Thew: What we try and do is appoint one of the team members to be a champion of a particular service or system. See whether it's been recorded correctly; see whether the process has been followed correctly and that it's been assigned to the correct teams. So there is sort of peer review, if you like, going on all the time by using these champions.

Male voice over: Dawn Harrison who is part of the radar development team at the Met Office works closely with colleagues to review work.

Dawn Harrison: When we write a new piece of software which encodes a new algorithm we usually – after completing it, get a colleague to run through the programme to check for mistakes or look for ways in which it can be improved.

The way we give feedback is generally through looking through a print out maybe of the code that has been written and just pointing out areas which could be maybe improved and explaining how that could be done.

Male voice over: So here's what some learners liked about peer review.

Learner voice over:

- If you don't understand something, someone else might.
- It helped me to improve my work and to speak in a public situation. It widened my perspective because I picked up ideas from others.
- I was actively involved so I remember better.

Male voice over: If you want to be successful in IT as a learner or as an employee you must be able to:

- respond positively when a colleague asks you to review their work
- give their work your full attention and treat it with respect
- make sure you understand what they are trying to achieve so that you can evaluate the work against relevant criteria
- give specific feedback on both the positives and the negatives, generalisations are not much use
- give the feedback at the right time, in the right place and in an open honest, professional way.

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