

# **The place of peer assessing in Higher Education: Participation, Purpose, Perceptions**

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Peer assessment can incorporate formative and summative processes aimed at both improving learning and evidencing competency (Bloxham & West, 2004; Davies, 2006; Vickerman, 2009). This project investigated the perspectives of a cohort of final year Clinical Exercise Physiology University students (n=24) prior to and following participation in peer assessment.

Students completed a survey detailing experience, purpose and perceptions before participating in a peer assessment task. The task required students to assess and provide feedback on a peer's assignment using a standardised rubric and detailed instructions. Students then completed another survey reflecting on their perceptions and experience of peer assessment. The surveys included a combination of quantitative Likert-scale and qualitative open-ended responses. Prior participation in peer assessing was limited. The most commonly reported purposes of peer assessment were 1) to learn another topic/ greater understanding of a topic/widening knowledge and 2) assess ability to recognise important/relevant information and identify flaws. Most students used the marking rubric when completing their assignment and agreed that peer assessing was a positive and worthwhile experience. The most common challenges identified when peer assessing were providing an actual mark or knowing how much to penalise, difficulty with assessing a different style/layout and not being objective. When being peer assessed, students reported concern about assessor effort, being judged or embarrassed, and having inadequate training. Students identified 'correctness' as the most important factor to consider when peer assessing. Student reflections should be considered when implementing future peer assessment opportunities as a place for learning.