Peer assessed group work

In this post, we will look at how to give and use feedback to get the most value from it.

# Introduction

A vitally important aspect of group work is evaluation and feedback. Evaluation will help you:

### Identify what went well and why

### Consider what could have been done differently

### Gain insight into aspects of the project you were not involved in

### Understand the experience of your peers and learn from them

### All of this information will help you to improve your performance in your next group work project.

## What is peer assessed group work?

**Peer assessed group work** involves you assessing each other’s work and giving feedback. It is therefore important you do this fairly and objectively. It is also important to learn how to receive feedback in order to learn from it.

## **How should I give feedback?**

When giving feedback, it is important to be constructive. Giving too much feedback or making comments that are vague, or overly personal, is not helpful and will likely cause conflict. Try to reflect on what feedback you wish to give carefully beforehand, and ensure it is useful to the receiver.

Here are some questions you can use to help you provide useful feedback:

* Is it focused on the task or behaviour that has been observed?
* Does it refer to a specific example?
* Will this feedback help the person receiving it? Can it be applied to their future work?
* Is it concise, fair and accurate?

**Remember:** feedback should always be helpful to the recipient and there should be an opportunity to discuss it for it to be most useful.

When giving feedback, you should ensure it does not make assumptions about behaviour that you have not observed.

# **Receiving feedback**

Receiving feedback on your work can be an uncomfortable experience for everyone involved if it is not done well. However, it can also be a great opportunity to help you improve. **Here are some ways of making the process easier as the recipient.**

## **Listen and take notes**

Do not dismiss things you don’t immediately recognise or agree with. You can ask further questions to clarify what is meant, such as asking for specific examples.

## **Ask for feedback where it isn’t volunteered**

It may be that you are expecting to receive feedback on something specific but this isn’t mentioned. If you feel this is something you would benefit from, you can ask.

## **Decide how you can apply it**

If you are clear on what the feedback means, you will need to consider how you can use it. Listening but not taking action is a waste of time for the giver and receiver.

Learning to be open to feedback and viewing it objectively will make the process more comfortable for everyone.

## **Reflecting on feedback**

When reflecting on your group project, it is important to think about more than just the end result of the report, presentation or other piece of work.

If we want to be part of more successful and efficient teams in future projects, we need to think about how we worked with the group as a whole and with the individuals in the team. This is particularly important if we are working on a peer assessed project.

We have created a [template](https://education.library.manchester.ac.uk/mle/group-work/story_content/external_files/reflecting-on-group-work.pdf) to help you identify what went well and how you might work differently in future. It will also allow you to reflect on what you brought to the team and how each individual contributed to the end result.

## Peer feedback checklist

We asked academic [Jennifer Rose](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/jennifer.rose.html) what she recommends to students when advising on how to give peer feedback, and she gave us this useful guide which you can use as a checklist, using ‘Feedback’ as a mnemonic:

* **F for Forward looking:** statements which enable something to happen differently next time.
* **E for Evidence-based**: on what you actually experienced.
* **E for Expressive**: describe how things made you feel and what the outcome was for you.
* **D for Descriptive**: rather than judgmental, rather than something being ‘good’ or ‘bad’, explain what worked or didn’t work for you.
* **B for Behaviour-based**: rather than based on the person, try to use adverbs which describe action, rather than adjectives which describe qualities.
* **A for Action:** provide guidance about the action which should be taken either now or for next time.
* **C for Constructive**: giving helpful guidance, not mindless dismissal.
* **K for Kind**: consider how the person giving feedback might feel or react when receiving the feedback.