

Scenario 2

You are module manager for a first-year 'Practicals' module. The introductory module consists of 11 laboratory classes which allows students to practise using equipment and different techniques. The course illustrates theoretical knowledge and aims to consolidate learning and develop student's report writing, data presentation and processing skills. As part of your responsibilities you are allocated 6 of these 3hr practical classes. Previously students have been expected to write an individual report for each of the practical classes on the course. However, the school has decided to move over to a common first year and so student numbers have jumped from 80 to 190, more than doubling your potential marking load. You've heard good reports about peer assessment – that it not only promotes student learning but can also save you time. Therefore you decide to implement peer assessment of the laboratory reports. What methodologies would you use and data you collect to convince your sceptical colleges that this change has been beneficial to student learning?

This represents a 'forced' changed of practice and teaching intervention so it is important to show that there has been at least no harm to learning, and preferably some benefit. The scenario is based on

Hughes I E (1995) Peer assessment of student practical reports and its influence on learning and skill acquisition. *Capability* **1** 39-43

which uses quantitative data to present the case for an improvement in learning.

For further information on Self and Peer Assessment see:

Orsmond P (2004) *Self and Peer Assessment: Guidance on Practice in the Biosciences*. Centre for Bioscience: Leeds (ISBN-13: 978-0954875107)

Topping K (1998) Peer Assessment between Students in Colleges and Universities *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. **68**, No. 3, pp. 249-276
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