

The Aropā Project: A Study of Peer Assessment and Student Learning

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Focus of workshop/discussion

Peer assessment, which has been employed on an occasional and ad-hoc basis in tertiary institutions for many years, is generally acknowledged to promote students' higher cognitive skills, as students must use their disciplinary knowledge and skills to interpret, analyze and evaluate each others' work in order to clarify and correct it. Other benefits include:

- Reduction in marking workloads, thus allowing resources to be diverted to other activities such as tutoring;
- Exposure of students to their peers' work, thus providing an opportunity for them to study a variety of responses and to reflect on their own relative performance; and
- Fostering of a learning community in which students support and receive support from other students.

Context and significance of focus

This workshop will report on an ongoing research study into the impact and implications of peer assessment on undergraduate student learning.

Outline of process

John Hamer will introduce *Aropā*, a sophisticated software tool he has developed to manage a range of on-line peer assessment activities. Helen Sword will report on the experiences of both students and teachers in various disciplines who have adopted peer assessment activities for the first time. We will then engage workshop participants in a focused discussion of the pros and cons of peer assessment, with particular attention to our research methodology and ways in which it might be expanded, refined and/or improved.