

PEER REVIEW AS A LEARNING TOOL

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KEYWORDS: peer review, feedback, learning

ABSTRACT

In recent years it has become quite common to use a routine research practice within our classrooms: that of peer review. Involving students in peer review is often regarded as an effective way to help students improve the quality of their assignment work before it is submitted. The peer review process offers many other benefits to students: an opportunity to reflect on their work in the light of the work of others; to observe the quality and scope of other students' work; to critically evaluate a piece of work and construct appropriate and constructive feedback; and to develop critical thinking, higher-order cognitive, negotiation and diplomacy skills. However, one benefit less often acknowledged is the impact that the peer review process can have on students' conceptual learning. In this presentation we will report on two case studies that illustrate how peer review improved the conceptual understanding of students. One was a formal research study that assessed the effect of peer review on the performance of third year zoology students. The other, less formal study, describes students' self-reported conceptual gains in a first year physics subject.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, Australian National University, Sept 19th to Sept 21st, 2013, page 58, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-2-2.