Peer feedback on lab reports in a molecular biology course

Henrik Sjöström, Maja Lindgren and Tomás Ruiz

Course development report
03/09/2025

Background

Lab reports take a long time to mark, and students get feedback only after the course is over. A pilot at another department reported that peer feedback improved report grades by a full grade step. We tried peer feedback in our own course in spring 2025 and write this report in the first week of the autumn term, before the next run of the course.

Method

Students in two of the four lab groups (48 students) gave each other written feedback on a draft, using a short checklist. The other two groups (46 students) handed in their reports without peer feedback. All reports were marked by the same two teachers on a 5-point scale.

Synthetic example for the course Introduction to agentic AI. Not a real report.

Results

We found no clear difference in the final report grades: the mean grade was 3.9 with peer feedback and 3.8 without. In the course evaluation, most students in the peer feedback groups said that reading other students' reports helped them see what a good report looks like.

Conclusions

Peer feedback did not change grades in our course, but students valued it and it cost little teacher time. We will keep it as an optional step.

Synthetic example for the course Introduction to agentic AI. Not a real report.