

# Peer and Self-Assessment

**Definition:** *Peer and self-assessment (PASA)* is when students assess each other and themselves against set assessment criteria provided by the teacher and or with their own input in order to evaluate own performance and of their peers. Through this, students can learn from previous mistakes, identify strengths and weaknesses and learn to target their learning accordingly.



**Description:** *PASA* can be used either formatively or summatively, or both. Use as formative assessment is more common. However, even when not used directly in summative assessment, peer and self-assessment can inform summative marking. Getting students actively involved in their assessment can make the assessment process a means to learn and develop. Assessment criteria must be clearly and fully described so students understand exactly what is expected of them. Allowing students to contribute to the assessment criteria can transfer ownership to them, fostering deeper engagement with assessment and learning. Self-assessment helps students become self-regulated learners.

**Benefits:** *PASA* can encourage students to take greater responsibility for their learning, for example, by encouraging engagement with assessment criteria and reflection of their own performance and that of their peers. This can help to change students' perception of learning as being a passive process to an engaging and self-constructing process. If students are participants rather than receivers they are more likely to engage with their learning. *PASA* can increase motivation and engagement encouraging students to learn more deeply, building up their understanding, not just their

knowledge of facts. They also gain insight into their own approach to an assessment task in comparison to their peers and set criteria. This makes *peer and self-assessment* an important component of Assessment for Learning rather than just a means of measuring performance. *Peer and Self-assessment* can support students to develop judgement skills, critiquing abilities and self-awareness.

**Challenges:** The validity and reliability of students having responsibility for awarding summative grades to their peers has been a concern. Self-assessment does not come naturally to many but can be taught. Teacher feedback and self-assessment are related activities. Using rubrics is a helpful strategy.

**Applied to entrepreneurial education:** *PASA* can be effective in supporting the development of generic or transversal skills. The ADEPTT rubric<sup>1</sup> (and adaptations) is an example of a self-assessment rubric used for students of different ages (pg. 14) The assessment rubric provides a number of descriptions of achievement for the different learning outcomes; these are not meant to be judgemental but a measure of participants' confidence to generate novel ideas.

Reference: 1. Moss, C.M., & Brookhart, S.M. (2009) *Advancing Formative Assessment in Every Classroom: A Guide for Instructional Leaders*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 2. University of Reading. (N.d.). *Peer and self-assessment. Engage in Assessment*. Retrieved from <https://www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/peer-and-self-assessment/eia-peer-and-self-assessment-main.aspx> 3. Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & William, D. (2003). *Assesment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

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# Ipsative Assessment

**Definition:** An *ipsative assessment* compares a learner's current performance with previous performance either in the same field through time or in comparison with other fields, resulting in a descriptor expressed in terms of their 'personal best'.<sup>1</sup>



**Description:** You are surely familiar with the term “personal best” in athletics. That’s a good example of *ipsative assessment*. It is typically used in informal and practical learning such as sports, music teaching and more recently in online gaming. It works as an iterative process where teachers and students work together to diagnose particular individual strengths and weaknesses, set some achievable goals or targets against which progress will be assessed in the short or medium-term and articulate a clear actionable plan to make them happen.

**Benefits:** By definition, it’s a highly personalized form of assessment where progress is measured against the needs and goals of the individual, not in comparison to external standards or performance of peers. Thus, it improves self-esteem and confidence, particularly for those who do not achieve high grades or put off by competitive environments. Continued dialogue between learner and teacher secure better engagement with feedback It does also give tutor and students a longer- term view of assessment.

**Challenges:** *Ipsative assessment* is inevitably subjective and not amenable to comparisons (low validity) or standardisation. From a teacher’s perspective, it may feel like an additional

burden to teachers' workload and it requires extra-effort to get familiar with it. On the other hand, students may be reluctant to quit a longstanding habit of comparing their performance with others. At some point a standard is needed for an award so perhaps a "blend" of ipsative and criteria-referenced approaches will be more realistic.

**Applied to entrepreneurial education:** *Ipsative assessment* may be a good way to facilitate feedback on development of generic or transversal skills<sup>2</sup>. *Ipsative assessment* may contribute to a more coherent assessment particularly at a time when clear models of progression or standards on the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills are largely missing. Discussion of progress will be greatly enriched if it takes place across subjects. Again this requires establishing a clear sense of direction and greater coordination among teaching teams. The good news is that the idea of *ipsative assessment* is already implicit in some pedagogic techniques that are becoming common currency in Entrepreneurial Education such as learning journals, reflection on practice and coaching. This is a relatively radical and new approach that holds promise for a more inclusive assessment. Further practice and research will be needed to determine its full potential.

1 Isaacs, T., Zara, C., Herbert, G., Coombs, S. J. & Smith, C. 2013. Key concepts in educational assessment, London, UK, Sage Publications.

2 Hughes, G. (2011). Towards a personal best: A case for introducing ipsative assessment in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 36(3), 353-367.