

Case Study:

**Peer Learning For Research-Based, Equitable
Assessment In Introductory Psychology Courses**



University of
Pittsburgh

**Dr. Schunn Sets Equitable
Standards in Cognitive Psychology**



Dr. Christian Schunn has been a strong advocate for peer learning for two decades. His research on the benefits and best practices of peer assessment is a part of the backbone of Peerceptiv. With over 250 students in his Cognitive Psychology course, he turned to peer learning as an alternative to multiple choice- an assessment method allowing students to deeply apply discipline-specific knowledge, receive feedback and practice professional competencies.



CHRISTIAN SCHUNN, PhD

PhD, Carnegie Mellon University

Professor of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh

Research-based learning

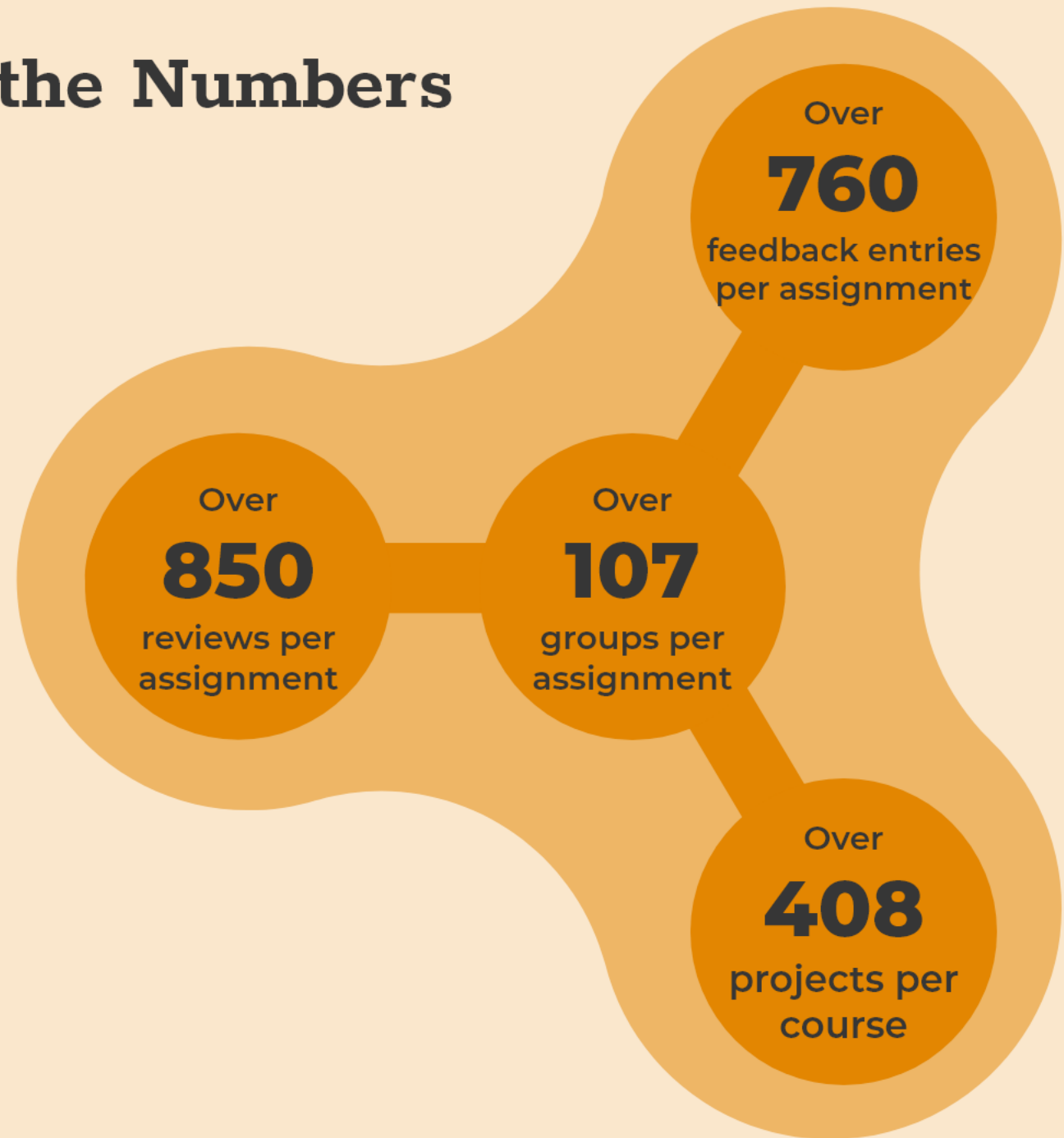
For each of four assignments, students choose a project topic from a number of possible applications of a discipline-specific knowledge area. By allowing choice, Schunn enables students to build upon their strengths and knowledge, creating a more equitable learning environment. Students apply research practices and science-based standards learned in class to create an interesting project poster that explains research implications to their peers. Students are also given a choice to either participate in a group or work on the assignments as individuals.

"Peer assessment really works across STEM- all the things in the next generation of science and psychology standards involve complex performances. Asking students to think about their peers performance on those dimensions of importance is a great learning opportunity. It really helps focus their attention on which particular aspects of these more complex overarching psychology standards are the things they need to work on."



Chris Schunn's Class by the Numbers

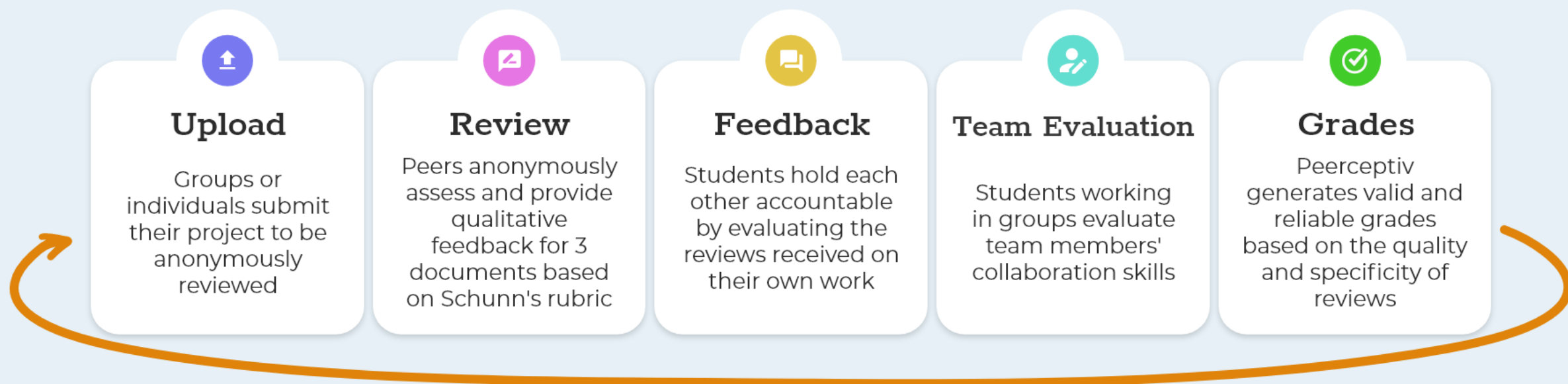
Groups set up in Canvas sync to Peerceptiv to easily facilitate group submission for projects. Students individually review the work of their peers on submissions made by students in different groups. Students in groups complete a team member evaluation, in which they anonymously provide quantitative scoring and qualitative feedback to group members. Peers are scored on how they contributed to the team, developing vital teamwork and collaboration skills.



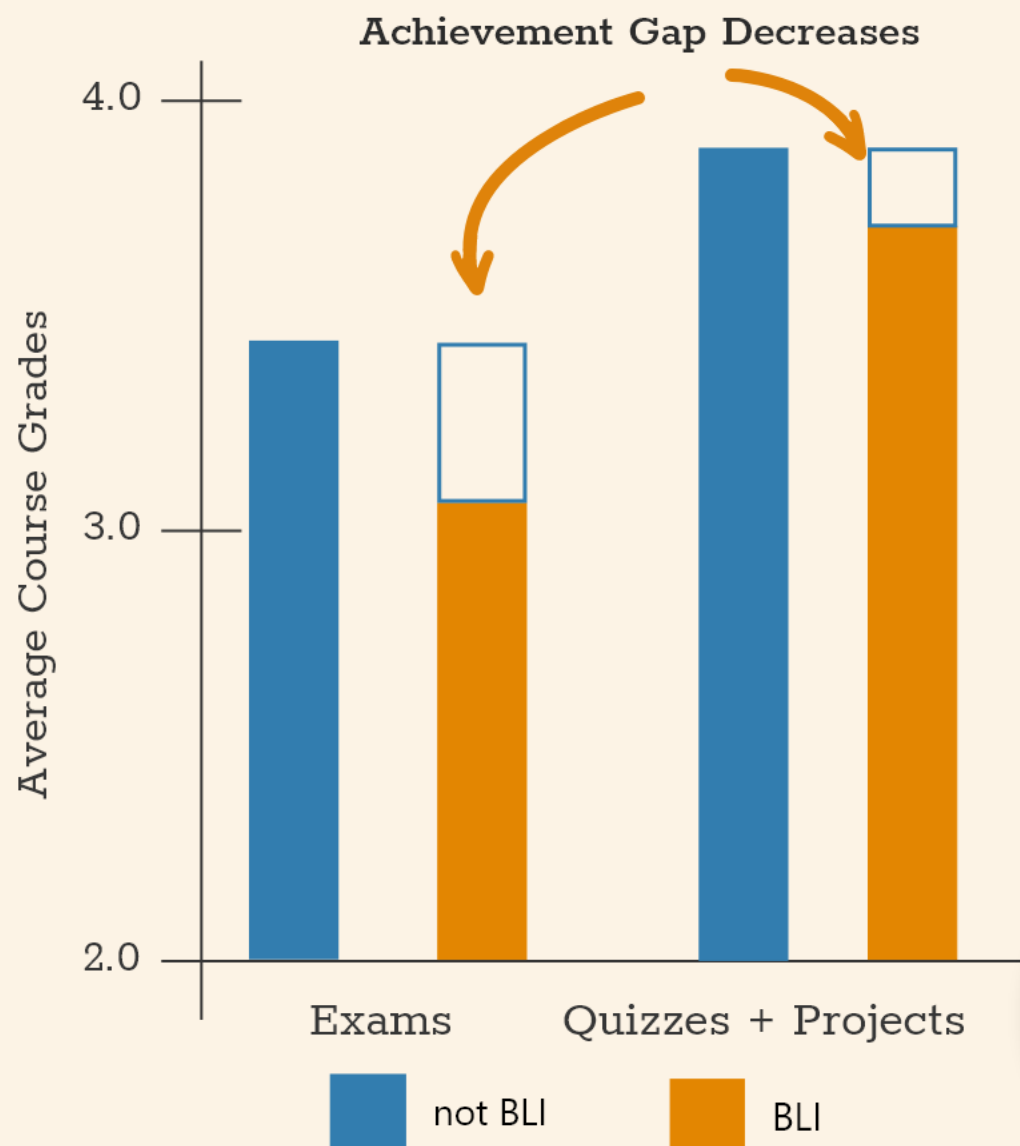
Assignment Process Overview

Individuals or groups complete 4 assignments per semester on:

1. Perception + attention
2. Memory Accuracy + Retention
3. Working Memory + Expertise
4. Language Structure + Comprehension



Peer Learning as an Equitable Alternative



A growing body of research demonstrates that structured approaches to active learning strategies, such as peer assessment are particularly useful for students from disadvantaged or diverse backgrounds. By leveraging peer assessment, Dr. Schunn is able to incorporate more authentic learning tasks, while decreasing inequitable achievement gaps for minority groups.



"Over the years, roughly 13% of my students have been Black, Latinx or Indigenous (BLI). In the old course format, BLI students consistently received lower grades, typically below a B, compared with the B+ non-BLI students received. In the new format, there are no longer meaningful differences."

Equity and Authenticity



"Equity is a huge concern in education. Peer assessment is critical to achieving equity. By using peer assessment, each and every learner can experience rich performance tasks and get timely feedback."

Students receive more feedback than Dr. Schunn and his TAs could ever possibly offer themselves. Years of Dr. Schunn's own research validate the learning opportunity of engaging with classmates on the giving side of the feedback loop and the outcome improvement in evaluating the work of one's peers. Actively engaging as reviewers using a well-designed rubric, helps students internalize key course concepts. **Not only do peers' projects spark interest in psychological concepts, but they also offer successful models to emulate and strategies they might not have otherwise considered.**

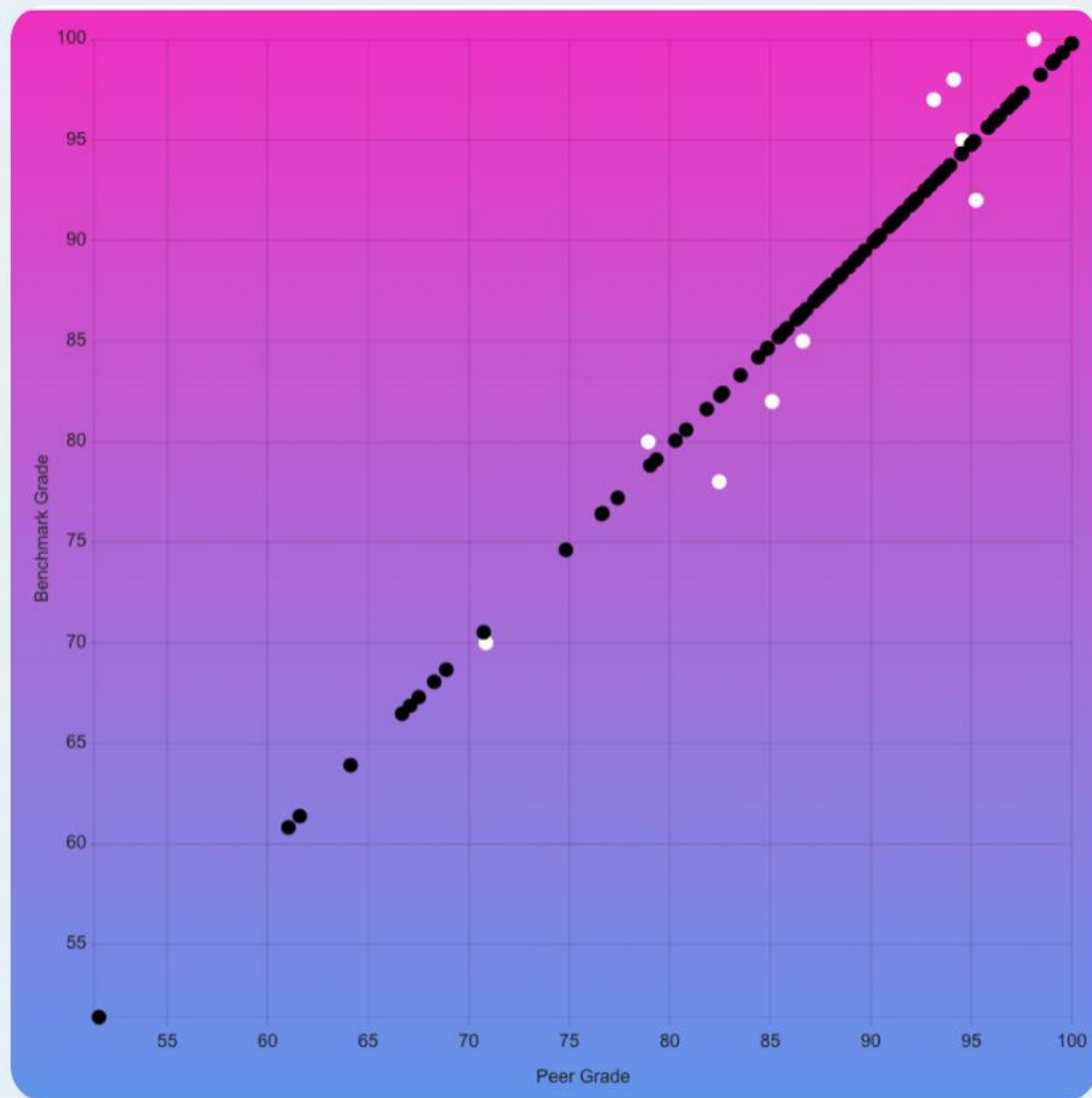
In his own words...



"Peer assessment is just a no-brainer. Involving the students directly in making sense of the performance standards and where they and others fit relative to those performance standards is just such a great way of learning. From a summative perspective, it turns out that it is just as valid and reliable- even more reliable- than expert assessment."

Benchmark Grading

The “Benchmark Grading” feature in Peerceptiv provides a mechanism for the instructor or TA to grade a portion of the papers and then uses the results from the peer scoring to distribute the remaining grades in relation to the Benchmarks. In Dr. Schunn’s course, the TA applies the assessment rubric (the same one peers use) to 10 randomly selected projects. The grade for these is points obtained divided by points possible, and then the rest of the project grades are adjusted automatically to account for any systematic high or low evaluation tendency by the peers. Across assignments, consistent and transparent grading standards are applied, and it is possible (and often happens) that almost all students demonstrate mastery by the third and fourth projects. Students are not competing for the rare top grade and success for all is possible.



● Curved Grades ● Benchmarked Grades

"I love using benchmark grading. Students trust the system much more and benchmark grading is more intellectually defensible than curving. **Here all students get a grade directly aligned with the rubric and it is possible for all students to succeed-** and indeed, most do, as you can see the tight clustering of points in the range of 85 to 95."



Give your students the feedback they need to improve with Peerceptiv. Peerceptiv streamlines the implementation process making it possible for instructors to add peer assessment to any existing assignment. Using the instructor's rubric, Peerceptiv guides students through the peer learning process, ensuring a thorough and engaging experience. The result? More feedback, faster than an instructor could possibly provide. Embrace the proven benefits of peer assessment with Peerceptiv. Contact **info@peerceptiv.com** to add an assignment today.