



Louise, evaluation and feedback at The U

How do you define peer-to-peer-education and learning?

There are 2 principles that define peer-to-peer learning for me: a fluid relationship between the role of the 'teacher' and the role of the 'learner', and a shared identity or experience that is recognised (amongst the people who are exchanging information or skills).

I think that peer-to-peer learning can happen formally or informally and in many different ways or situations, whereas peer-to-peer education is a more structured process.

What are your experiences with p2p education?

My main experience of peer-to-peer education is through The U, a community learning project. The U shares practical skills (such as basic first aid, managing everyday conflict or maintaining personal wellbeing) in a way that builds on participants' own knowledge and experience. People take part in a series of activities that are driven by exchange and conversation between those who are participating. The activities are guided by a volunteer facilitator who has been trained in delivering the session, but who isn't a 'teacher' in any formal sense - the learning comes collectively from everybody in the room. The facilitator of the session is also a member of the same community as the others who are participating (this might be a geographical community, or a community of interest). I've taken part in The U both as a participant in the sessions and also as a facilitator.

What would you say is the biggest benefit/advantage of p2p-education?

Peer-to-peer education can break down traditional preconceptions about who has valuable information, skills or experience that is worth sharing. It values the insights and experience that we all have, but also recognises that these have been shaped by our identities and the communities we belong to. In this way, peer-to-peer education challenges the teacher/learner power dynamic that exists in traditional education environments, and can open up opportunities for learning that are more collaborative and holistic. I think that peer-to-peer education also has the potential to offer a more meaningful learning experience because it is based on relatability and mutual exchange.

What are the limits of p2p-education?

Currently - recognition and validation. There are few formal education environments where peer-to-peer models are genuinely developed or integrated alongside other types of learning.

I also think that a challenge (more than a limit) for peer-to-peer education is how it can be developed in a way that also values and accommodates diversity of perspectives, and difference.

What, in your opinion, are the requirements of individual learners and teachers for p2p-education and learning to be successful? (this question is focused on what the facilitators, teachers and enablers of p2p-education need to make p2p-learning processes possible)

I think that there needs to be a 'safe space' for the learning to happen – that the environment and the situation must enable participants to feel confident and able to contribute (this might include physical factors like where the learning is taking place, as well as the atmosphere or the expectations that are set by people who are 'teaching'/facilitating.) I also think that 'teachers' or facilitators of peer-to-peer education must be open-minded about their role, and not try to maintain total control over the exchange between participants.