



Writer's Camp

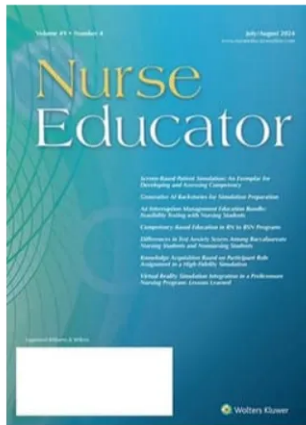


Trail Pack: From One Minute to Five: Designing a Collaborative Writing Assessment That Works

Andrew J. Richards, PhD, RN, CNE

Writer's Camp Guest Counselor

Welcome to our second **Trail Pack**! A **Trail Pack** is a multi-faceted learning experience: we bring together an original research report, a podcast, and a concise article written exclusively for Writer's Camp that summarizes the study and highlights its key insights. Begin with the short article, and when your curiosity is sparked, follow the trail to the full research report. The accompanying podcast offers a personal touch and shares the story behind how the study developed. If you would like to receive 2 contact hours for reading and listening, you can! Scroll all the way to the bottom of the page for details. I hope you find this format both engaging and valuable. I would love to hear your feedback; please share in the comments below. — **Leslie H. Nicoll**, *Camp Director*



Click [here](#) to read the original article by Andrew Richards and Zachary Hall on the *Nurse Educator* website. The article is open access—no fee to read.

Citation: Richards, Andrew J. PhD, RN; Hall, Zachary BS. Student and Educator Evaluation of the Five-Minute Peer Writing Activity. *Nurse Educator* 50(4):p 207-210, July/August 2025. | DOI: 10.1097/NNE.0000000000001830

Listen to the *Nurse Educator* podcast with Andrew and Zach. They present an overview and discussion of the Five Minute Peer Review Writing Activity, with suggestions of how to use this technique in your classroom. Hosted and interviewed by Kelly Moseley DHSc, MSN, RN, CNE, Regional Dean, Odessa, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

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I transformed the traditional one-minute paper into a collaborative five-minute peer writing activity that enhanced student engagement, satisfaction, and learning in my classroom.

How It Started

One day, standing in front of my senior-level BSN students, I found myself wondering: *How prepared are they for class today?* This course had recently been redesigned as a modified flipped classroom. Students completed readings and short video lectures before class and then applied what they learned through in-class activities.

To assess preparation, I turned to a familiar classroom assessment technique: the one-minute paper. I asked students to write everything they could recall about the day's topic in 60 seconds. When I reviewed the papers later, I was struck by how sparse many of the responses were. Large sections of blank paper suggested not only limited recall, but limited opportunity for students to build on what they knew.

What stood out most was the disconnect between the collaborative nature of nursing practice and the isolated way students completed this assessment. Nursing is inherently relational, yet this activity positioned students as solitary performers rather than learners in

community. Drawing on the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development developed by Vygotsky and colleagues,¹ I began to question whether this assessment could be redesigned to better support learning through collaboration.

This reframing aligned with social constructivist learning theories, particularly the Zone of Proximal Development,¹ which emphasizes learning through interaction with others who bring different levels of understanding. By allowing students to encounter multiple representations of the same concept within a short time frame, the activity created opportunities for scaffolding, clarification, and meaning-making that were not present in the traditional one-minute paper.

That question led to the development of the Five-Minute Peer Writing Activity (FMPWA).

The First Iteration

My initial attempt to modify the one-minute paper took place in an undergraduate research course. Students first completed a one-minute paper comparing qualitative and quantitative research. Then, instead of submitting their work immediately, they exchanged papers with a peer, reviewed what was written, and added content their classmate might have missed.

As I watched the activity unfold, new questions emerged. What if one student received especially strong feedback while another did not? What if a paper needed more than one perspective? To address these concerns, I added a second peer exchange, followed by time for the original author to review all feedback and refine their response. Students then self-graded their work using provided criteria.

The change was striking. The five-minute papers were more detailed, more accurate, and more reflective of shared understanding than the original one-minute papers. Students appeared engaged, and no one expressed dissatisfaction. This informal observation prompted a more systematic question: *Was the difference meaningful?*

What the Research Showed

To explore this question, I designed a study comparing the one-minute paper and the FMPWA across two cohorts of nursing students. Both activities used the same prompt and were worth the same number of points. Students rated their engagement and satisfaction after completing each activity, and grades were verified after class.



The results were clear. The FMPWA produced statistically significant increases in student scores, engagement, and satisfaction compared with the one-minute paper. When the activity was later shared with nurse educators at professional conferences, educators likewise reported greater engagement, satisfaction, and likelihood of adopting the FMPWA in their own teaching.

Designing and studying the FMPWA also shifted my own perspective as an educator. What began as a simple modification of a classroom assessment became an opportunity to reconsider how formative assessments function—not just as measurement tools, but as learning experiences in their own right. The process reinforced the idea that small, intentional changes in assessment design can influence not only student outcomes, but also classroom culture and educator satisfaction.

The full study appears in *Nurse Educator* and provides detailed analysis of these findings. What follows here focuses on what the experience suggests for teaching practice.

Using the FMPWA in Your Classroom

The FMPWA is intentionally low-tech and flexible. It works best with content that requires both recall and application and can be adapted across topics and course levels. Prompts should be concise and clearly worded so students can focus on thinking rather than interpretation.

In practice, the activity is highly adaptable. I have used the FMPWA with content ranging from foundational concepts to more complex applications, adjusting prompts and timing as needed. Class size, student familiarity with peer feedback, and course level all influence how much structure is required. In smaller classes, students may benefit from more deliberate pairing, while in larger classes, random exchanges help maintain momentum and reduce logistical complexity.

Grading is intentionally simple. Points are awarded for accuracy, completeness, and engagement with peer feedback. The activity remains low stakes, reinforcing its role as a formative assessment rather than a performance evaluation.

A Practical Implementation Sequence

In my classroom, the activity unfolds as follows:

1. Students individually respond to a prompt for one minute, without notes or assistance.

2. Papers are exchanged with a peer, who reviews and adds content for one minute.
3. Papers are exchanged again with a second peer for an additional minute of review.
4. The original author receives the paper back and has two minutes to integrate peer feedback.
5. Students self-grade their work using provided criteria.

This structure encourages active recall, peer learning, and metacognition while maintaining focus and momentum.

Why This Approach Works

Several features contribute to the effectiveness of the FMPWA. The timed structure creates productive urgency. Peer review introduces multiple perspectives while reducing the noise and distraction common in large-group discussions. Most importantly, students engage in collaboration without relinquishing ownership of their work.

Because the activity is formative and low stakes, it supports learning rather than performance anxiety. Students gain insight not only into course content but also into how peers approach the same material.

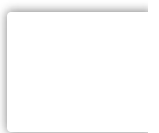
Addressing Student Resistance

Some students may initially feel uncomfortable sharing unfinished work or worry about time constraints. These concerns can be addressed by emphasizing the learning-focused nature of the activity and reassuring students that partial knowledge is an expected—and useful—starting point. Encouragement and careful framing help students view feedback as support rather than judgment.

Why It Matters

Beyond a single classroom strategy, the FMPWA offers students an early, structured experience with peer review, collaboration, and reflective revision—skills essential to professional nursing practice. Many educators who have encountered the FMPWA have adapted it to fit their own contexts, confirming its flexibility and relevance.

Conclusion



I encourage you to consider where a collaborative writing activity like this might fit in your teaching. Small changes in assessment design can have meaningful effects on engagement, learning, and confidence—for students and educators alike.

Reference

1. Vygotsky LS, Cole M, Stein S, Sekula A. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press; 1978.

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Trail Pack CE: Five Minute Peer Review

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Learning Objectives: After completing this Trail Pack, the learner will be able to:

- 1. Describe how to use the Five Minute Peer Review activity with students in the classroom.
- 2. Discuss learning competencies that may be achieved by students when using the Five Minute Peer Review Activity.

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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
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The podcast was interesting and informative.	<div><input type="radio"/>1</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>2</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>3</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>4</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>5</div>
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I have met the Trail Pack objectives through the learning activities.	<div><input type="radio"/>1</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>2</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>3</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>4</div>	<div><input type="radio"/>5</div>
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