

## Using Rubrics in Differentiating the Quality of Student Learning

Teachers commonly use rubrics to display criteria, and to make criteria explicit to students. Grade reports can include student performance displayed on the rubric. A department seeking information about a particular program's effectiveness can use the results from application of evaluative criteria; or, they may select a small number of criteria that are most critical to evaluating program effectiveness.

Assessment tools are designed to reveal factors that assist or hinder student learning. Students therefore need to know what constitutes good performance in the course and in the adult and professional world. Rubrics sometimes help the professor communicate criteria for learning and what constitutes performance at different levels.

### Six Considerations in Constructing a Rubric

1. What criteria must be satisfied in student work to ensure acceptable quality? In other words, what distinguishes good work from poor work? Focus on criteria that relate to quality and avoid those that are simply easy to evaluate. Include these criteria as rows in your rubric. (If a student is able to get a high score on all the criteria and yet still not give evidence of performing well at the task, the criteria are inadequate or dealing with the wrong thing. How is quality work or response defined in the discipline, by colleagues in the same field, or in the literature? Your colleagues, review samples of good work and derive criteria from conversation about what makes this work good.
2. Select the number of levels of achievement for the rubric. Include these levels as columns in the rubric. The range of levels will be from excellent to unacceptable but different descriptors may be used such as sophisticated, competent, not yet competent; exemplary, mostly capable, marginal, unacceptable; advanced, intermediate, novice. Most often three levels of achievement of satisfactory but other may be needed if fine distinctions of performance or understanding are desired.
3. For each criterion, state a clear description of performance at each level of achievement. These descriptions are included in the cells in the rubric.
4. What consequences follow for each level in the rubric? Note these consequences with each level of achievement.
5. What grading scheme will I use in the rubric?
6. Following use of the rubric, note what worked well and revise that which needs improvement.

### **Online Journal Articles on Rubric Assessment (subscriptions not required)**

Mertler, Craig A. (2001). Designing scoring rubrics for your classroom. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(25).

Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=25>.

Moskal, Barbara M. (2000). Scoring rubrics: what, when and how? *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(3).

Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=3>.

Moskal, Barbara M. & Jon A. Leydens (2000). Scoring rubric development: validity and reliability. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*. 7(10). Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=10>.

Moskal, Barbara M. (2003). Recommendations for developing classroom performance assessments and scoring rubrics. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*. 8(14). Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=8&n=14>.

Simon, Marielle & Renée Forgette-Giroux (2001). A rubric for scoring postsecondary academic skills. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*. 7(18). Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=18>.

Tierney, Robin & Marielle Simon (2004). What's still wrong with rubrics: focusing on the consistency of performance criteria across scale levels. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*. 9(2). Retrieved March 9, 2004 from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=9&n=2>.

### **Annotated Links to Assessment Rubrics Information and to Open Source Rubric Generation Resources**

#### **Bowling Green State University Student Achievement Assessment Committee**

This is a site hosted by BGSU which provide templates to help instructors develop their own specific rubrics to assess student learning and to align learning activities with institutional graduate outcomes in the areas of investigating, connecting, writing, presentation, participation and leadership. The rubrics provided are designed to assess student progress through different levels in the six stated university outcomes. The four levels are: Level 1 (Beginner), Level 2 (Novice), Level 3 (Proficient), Level 4 (Advanced).

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/provost/Assessment/Rubrics.htm>

In addition, the BGSU website also has a link to a student self-assessment rubric.

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/provost/Assessment/Self.htm>

#### **Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, California State University, Fresno**

At this website, under “General Education Scoring Guides,” there is a link “Recommendations for using scoring guides (rubrics)” which allows one to download a PDF file “Using Scoring Rubrics.pdf” This is a useful short 2 page document which provides good insights into the use of assessment rubrics.

<http://www.csufresno.edu/cetl/assessment/assmnt.html>

#### **RubiStar: Create Rubrics for your project-based-learning activities**

While many teachers want to use rubrics or are experimenting with writing rubrics, they can be quite time-consuming to develop. RubiStar is a tool to help the teacher who wants to use rubrics but does not have the time to develop them from scratch. RubiStar provides generic rubrics that can simply be printed and used for many typical projects and research assignments. The unique thing about RubiStar, however, is that it provides these generic rubrics in a format that can be customized. Teachers can change almost all suggested text in the rubric to make it fit their own

project. RubiStar also does away with the tedious typing of similar content across all the various quality ratings. When you choose a category to evaluate, all the quality ratings are filled in and are ready to customize. <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

**Teach-nology, the Web Portal for Educators** offers free rubric generation tools mainly for K-12 levels. The site provides a limited number of assessment rubrics which can be expanded with Gold and Platinum membership. The rubric generators below will allow you to make grading rubrics by filling out a simple form. The materials are made instantly and can be printed directly from your computer.

[http://www.teach-nology.com/web\\_tools/rubrics/](http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/)

[http://www.teach-nology.com/currenttrends/alternative\\_assessment/rubrics/](http://www.teach-nology.com/currenttrends/alternative_assessment/rubrics/)

**The Landmark Project** provides “Rubric Builder” as a free service that enables teachers to build effective assessment rubrics and make them available over the Internet.

[http://www.landmark-project.com/classweb/tools/rubric\\_builder.php3](http://www.landmark-project.com/classweb/tools/rubric_builder.php3)

**The University of Wisconsin School of Education** offers a library of rubrics created by teachers that can be adapted for our use. Samples of rubrics for cooperative learning, writing research reports, PowerPoint/oral presentations, multimedia, video, and web projects are provided. It is a rich resource for those of us who want to use rubrics in our assessments and need to see good examples in use.

<http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml>

**Assessment and Evaluation Center** at the Washington State University provides links who give useful information about assessments in general and more specifically rubrics

[http://www.educ.wsu.edu/AEC/links.htm#assessment\\_rubrics](http://www.educ.wsu.edu/AEC/links.htm#assessment_rubrics)

**Doug Johnson** provides an example of an analytical rubric for computer literacy

<http://www.doug-johnson.com//dougwri/rubrics2002.html#beg>

**The Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas** site provides an example of how electronic portfolios can be assessed using an assessment rubric

<http://www.essdack.org/port/rubric.html>

**San Diego State University** has a useful website which provides guidelines for creating a rubric for a given task

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/rubrics/rubrics.html>

**The American Association for Higher Education** has a webpage with several links that provide useful information about rubrics assessment.

[www.aahe.org/assessment/web.htm#Rubrics](http://www.aahe.org/assessment/web.htm#Rubrics)