

EVIDENCE: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

November 2015

Help Your Students Help Themselves

By: Marcia Fiedler, Ed.D.

Don't you wish there was a magic button on the computer that could help your students analyze their work and determine if it matches up with your standards? Believe it or not, that magic button is only a few clicks away. This magic button is located on Blackboard and found in the assignment forum; it is called a RUBRIC. There are pre-made rubrics available, or with a little creativity, you can create your own rubric. A good rubric outlines the expectations and components of the assignment and offers students the opportunity to analyze their own criteria and identify what is "good." Exposing the discrepancy between student self-assessment and instructor assessment can also help students develop better self-assessment skills by giving students the time and support needed to revise their work. Rubrics help students to improve their metacognition (thinking about thinking) and create an awareness of one's thinking process, self-monitoring, and the application of information. Another added bonus to using rubrics is that you are helping your students develop a higher-level of thinking. Good rubrics can help students apply and reorganize thinking, and they are not even aware that they are doing it!!

Are you looking for ways to help your students help themselves, and to

stop from repeatedly asking for the directions, due dates or grading policies? You can get a bit closer to that dream simply by utilizing the rubric section on Blackboard. Students have access, 24/7, to all of that valuable information plus concrete feedback that displays the areas of strength and the areas in need of improvement.

Providing rubric information about desired outcomes can reduce ambiguity and confusion and help your students to operate independently. You will probably have to repeat over and over that all the information is located on Blackboard, but eventually you will say, "Help yourself and look at the rubric".

Online Rubric Resources on Page 2



Marcia Fiedler

ASSESSMENT
measurement
GOALS
AFFECTIVE
Rubrics
Cognitive
Direct
Curriculum map
summative
Program
test
Valid
objectives
FORMATIVE
Portfolio
focus
group
performance
Reliable

"Good rubrics can help students apply and reorganize thinking and they are not even aware that they are doing it !!"

- Marcia Fiedler





"Rubrics support the development of skill and understanding."

- ANDRADE, H.G. (2000)
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Online Rubric Resources

- ◆ [RubiStar Website](#), an online tool to help instructors create rubrics.
- ◆ [Guide to Rating Critical & Integrative Thinking](#),  *Washington State University*
- ◆ [Artwork Assessment Form](#), *Marvin Bartel, Goshen College Art Rubric for Assessment of the Discussion & Writing on Art History, Aesthetics and Art Criticism - an Assessment Form.*
- ◆ [EPortfolio \(Digital Portfolio\) Rubric](#), *Joan Vandervelde, University of Wisconsin - Stout E-Portfolio Rubric used for self-assessment and peer feedback.*
- ◆ [Rubric for Online Instruction](#),  *California State University, Chico Process for assessing online course design and delivery.*
- ◆ [Assessment Rubrics](#), *Kathleen Schrock, Discovery Education A collection of assessment rubrics and graphic organizers.*
- ◆ [Science Rubrics](#) 
Rubric templates for Assessing Research Paper, Portfolio, Reflective Essay, Lab Report, Oral Presentation and Backboard.
- ◆ [Poetry Speaking and Performance Rubric](#),  *International Reading Association Guide for evaluating students' speaking and performance skills when reading and performing poetry.*
- ◆ [Institutional Assessment and Compliance](#), *University of South Carolina Links to seven general education rubrics for assessing electronic, humanities/cultural, math, oral communication, science, social/behavioral sciences, and writing outcomes.*
- ◆ [Rubrics for Assessment](#), *University of Wisconsin-Stout*
- ◆ [Educational Resources about Rubrics](#), *Indiana University Kokomo*
- ◆ [Rubrics Resources](#), *University of Delaware*
- ◆ [Online Instructional Resources on Assessment and Rubrics](#), *Michigan State University Assorted links to rubrics & related resources.*
- ◆ [Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education \(VALUE\) Rubrics](#), *Association of American Colleges and Universities*



“Using rubrics to assess student achievement of program outcomes provides concrete evidence to accreditors that students are learning what the program outcomes say they are learning.”

- Mary Padden



Using Rubrics for Curriculum and Program Assessment

By: Mary L. Padden, PhD, APN-C

If you are reading this newsletter, you probably already know what a rubric is, so I will not bore you with a definition. If you use rubrics in your courses, you already know how useful they are in evaluating students' work. In addition to assessment of student achievement of course outcomes, rubrics can also be used to assess student achievement of program outcomes. For those of us with externally accredited programs, on going assessment is a must. Using rubrics to assess student achievement of program outcomes provides concrete evidence to accreditors that students are learning what the program outcomes say they are learning. Rubrics can also be used for program and curriculum assessment. Program and curriculum assessment can be streamlined when a well-developed rubric is used with a well-developed structured assessment plan (Bresciani, 2002; Meek, Runshee, Young, Embree, Riner, 2015).

Rubrics for program assessment begin with an evaluation of the program's student learning outcomes (SLOs) to determine if they are consistent with the program's philosophy and the mission and vision of the institution. SLOs are evaluated for clarity, breadth, relevance, and specificity. SLOs should be broad, clearly stated, and relate to accreditation organization's standards as well as the program's purpose, yet be specific enough to be measurable. A rubric created for program assessment also evaluates categories such as outcomes, assessment methods, and evidence used to make decisions on curricular changes (Bresicani, 2002).

Rubrics for curriculum assessment are created after carefully mapping the curriculum to the accrediting organization's standards. Meek et al., (2015) created such a rubric and over two years, assessed a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) curriculum for consistency with all eight of the American Association of Collegiate Nursing's (AACN) Essentials (standards) for DNP education. Meek et al's., method of assessment involved evaluating two of AACN's DNP Essentials per semester. Assignments were chosen that addressed the two Essentials to be assessed each semester. After achieving inter rater reliability, faculty met for less than three hours a semester, read, and electronically scored three or four student assignments per Essential. Each assignment was given a summative score and scores for assignments relating to each Essential assessed were tallied for an overall curriculum achievement score on that Essential. Scores were then evaluated and discussed to determine if curriculum revision was necessary. Meek et al., found that using a rubric for curriculum assessment was expedient and effective. More importantly, the use of the rubric allowed this faculty to recognize that some assignments were not allowing students to achieve opportunities for synthesis and integrative thinking, thereby creating opportunities for curriculum improvement.

Continued on pg. 4

Using Rubrics Contin.

Well-developed rubrics based upon thorough curriculum mapping can identify the strengths and weaknesses in a program or curriculum. Although the creation of an effective program or curriculum assessment rubric may take time and talent, once created, such an instrument can save time, energy, and expedite this evaluation process while providing ongoing opportunities for program and curriculum improvement. Bresciani, M. J. (2002). Development of a rubric to evaluate academic program assessment plans at North Carolina State University. *Assessment Update*, 14 (6), 14-15. Meek, J. A., Runshe, D., Young, J., Embree, J. & Riner, M.B. (2015). Creating a faculty community that values curricular assessment and improvement: One DNP program's experience. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 31(1), 11-17.

Assessing Student's Views on Rubrics

By: Rose M. Scaffidi DrNP CNM

As a fairly new faculty member in the nursing program, I have been fortunate to be able to use rubrics that previous professors developed for the courses that I now teach. These rubrics supply me with a tool to grade students work but they also serve as a blueprint of what is expected of me as the teacher. I value the use of a rubric for most of my assignments but would like to know the value that students place on rubrics. To satisfy my curiosity, I asked students in my graduate nursing research class to write down on a 3 X 5 card how they felt about the use of a rubric in this course and any other prior courses. Not surprisingly, student responses were mostly in support of the use of a rubric. Here are some of their comments:

"Rubrics are a great guide to students preparing an assignment. They also provide feedback when graded"

"Rubrics allow the student to have a specific guide to what the professor expects. Personally, I feel the rubric is helpful when I am organizing my thoughts. I

check off as I go along."

"A rubric lets me know where and what I need to focus on in order to get a good grade (for example different amount of points earned for different parts of an assignment)".

Some of the concerns I have had regarding rubrics were echoed by several of the student's comments:

"Rubrics need to be given out at the time of an assignment, need to measure content appropriately, and be somewhat customized to each assignment."

"I do not like when the rubric does not match up to the assignment"

"I feel that rubrics can be restrictive without allowing points for going beyond boundaries"

"It's a guide for students to understand how they are being graded but can be too restrictive and not always measuring what it's supposed to measure."

Overall, rubrics are viewed as a valuable tool by both this professor and the students. The student's comments about rubrics reinforce the importance and need to include a rubric with each assignment. Rubrics should be assessed for appropriateness each time they are utilized and be available prior to the assignment so students can approach their work with an understanding of what is expected of

them. Rubrics should also be assessed regularly to be sure they accurately measure what they are intended to measure. Professors who use a rubric should incorporate ways in which students can be awarded additional credit for work that goes beyond what is expected.

"Rubrics should also be assessed regularly to be sure they accurately measure what they are intended to measure."

- Rose Scaffidi



Rose Scaffidi

On the Road to Becoming a Grading Ninja from a Noob – Under Construction!

Using Rubrics for Effective Assessment

By: Manish Madan

One of the advantages of teaching at an institution like Stockton is that I have had opportunities to work closely with not only colleagues in my program but also colleagues outside of my discipline who are able to offer another perspective on enhancing my teaching and assessment strategies. Using rubrics to assess students' work was the focus of the 2015 Summer Assessment Institute. The Institute opened with the basics of rubrics and associated outcomes that can range from simple to complex depending on the nature of assignment.

Although some might argue that a rubric can limit a teacher, I learned that rubrics can be tools for effective and consistent grading. In the October 2015 issue of *Evidence*, Dr. Marc Richard explained the value of using rubrics to unpack complex ideas. They can also provide a guiding framework for assessment. As an example, those of us who attended the Institute, participated in an exercise grading a 2-page-writing assignment worth 10 points, and quite interestingly, our scores varied from 2 to 8 on a 10-point scale. We argued, reasoned for our individual assessments, and each of us had 'very valid' reasons for our scores. This further reinforced the reasons for using rubrics as a guiding framework, while retaining your intellectual reading of the

content.

I teach a course titled "Research & Evaluation in Criminal Justice." In this course, students are expected to write an original research proposal on a socially relevant topic (e.g., drunk driving, cyberbullying, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, etc.). I focused on creating some specific dimensions, namely, 'organization', 'level of content & development of ideas', and 'format & style' in my rubric to assess students' writing. Each of the dimensions ranged from 'missing' (yes, it happens!) to 'exemplary' (what we all pray for!).

As I conclude, a disclaimer: creating a rubric is a challenging process. The first draft leads to a second, and over time, an individual rubric can undergo further refinement. But having worked with other Institute participants on rubrics and assessments, it is evident that using rubrics is a critical aid to consistent grading, offers a structural format for assessment, and communicates a clear idea of what a teacher expects from students. Furthermore, rubrics also allow teachers to effectively manage their time, eliminating 'never-ending grading' of writing assignments that vary widely in quality. Finally, like with any good assessment instrument, fine-tuning rubrics remains a work in progress. Happy Rubricking!



Manish Madan

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"No, I can't explain my D in math. That class teaches us about numbers, not letters!"

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"Why is an A or B better than a C or D? Aren't all letters equal in the eyes of God?"

How to Conduct a Grade-Norming Session

By: Priti Haria , Ph.D.



"Professor, you gave me 80 points on this writing assignment, whereas the other student received 85 points. I followed the rubric and wrote exactly the same response as the other student."

Despite being equipped with a rubric, subjectivity is a major issue in grading process. This raises a question, how do we address this subjectivity? One way to address this issue is by norming grades for written assignments.

Norming simply means that two or more graders come to a consensus based on pre-determined scoring criteria (e.g., rubric). If you want to conduct a grade-norming session, then consider the following steps:

Step 1: Gather materials (i.e., analytical rubric, assignment guidelines, papers to be scored, and anchor papers, if possible). Anchor papers are sample papers that represent different levels of grades.

Step 2: Together, review the rubric, assignment guidelines, and anchor papers. Clarify any questions the graders may have.

Step 3: Read the papers and assign a grade based on the rubric.

Step 4: After scoring the papers, the grades assigned by graders are written up on the board. Note the difference in grades. If the grades differ by more than one point, have the high graders and the low graders support their decisions.

Step 5: Discuss the discrepancy amongst grades. The discussion must focus on clearly articulating the criteria for each score that helps graders maintain consistency and objectivity with the paper and one another.

Step 6: Then, re-score the questioned papers and check to ensure the grades are within the range of one-point difference.

Step 7: Continue the process until the graders are grading the papers fairly consistently.

Norming grades may not only reduce subjectivity, but will also foster a fair and consistent grading process amongst scorers. Furthermore, this inter-rater reliability data could be used for accreditation purposes and other college-wide reports indicating consistent and reliable assessment of student learning.

