Using Grading Rubrics to Guide Student Learning

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Assessment

• “The purpose of assessment is to improve learning” (Angelo, 2000)

• “Assessment is a dynamic pedagogy that extends, expands, enhances, and strengthens learning” (Driscoll, 2001)
Questions to Consider

1. What do you want your students to learn from your class? What are your course goals (i.e. critical thinking)?
2. How do you assess whether or not your students are reaching those goals (i.e. essays, tests, etc.)?
3. How much time do you spend grading student assignments or tests? How instructive are your feedback?
4. Will your students be able to assess their own progress and the those of their peers in terms of the goals?
Outcomes of Session
(By the end of this session, you should be able to …)

I. See the real value grading rubrics offer in a teaching and learning environment

II. Understand the benefits, usage, and construction of grading rubrics

III. Design your own grading rubrics for your specific discipline
Opening Exercise

- Grading rubrics are key to helping students clearly understand what is expected of them (goals).

- In particular, it provides them with explicit descriptions of the attributes of quality work, helping them better focus their work (outcomes).

- The exercise we’re about to do will hopefully demonstrate what a day and night difference grading rubrics make for teaching and learning (pedagogy).
Impromptu Oral Presentations

ASSIGNMENT

• Your task is to give a two-minute presentation about UC Merced. The presentation is worth a total of 30 points. You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
  • Delivery
  • Eye-Contact
  • Content
  • Use of Visuals
Impromptu Oral Presentations
Grading Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenter's Name:</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Below Expectation</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery (3 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker is relaxed and comfortable, speaks without undue reliance on notes. (3 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker is generally relaxed and comfortable, but too often relies on notes. (2 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker appears anxious and uncomfortable, and reads notes, rather than speaks. (1 pt.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye-Contact (7 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker makes eye-contact with evaluator and audience. (7 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker makes eye-contact with evaluator or audience only. (3 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker does not make eye-contact with evaluators or audience. (1 pt.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content (10 pts.)</td>
<td>The content focuses on two UCM features: 1) bobcat mascot and 2) fairy shrimp. (10 pts.)</td>
<td>The content focuses on at least one of the two UCM features: 1) bobcat mascot and 2) fairy shrimp. (6 pts.)</td>
<td>The content omits both UCM features: 1) bobcat mascot and 2) fairy shrimp. (1 pt.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Visuals (10 points)</td>
<td>The speaker uses the white board to draw sketches of a bobcat AND a fairy shrimp. (10 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker uses the white board to draw sketches of a bobcat OR a fairy shrimp. (6 pts.)</td>
<td>The speaker does not use the white board at all or does not draw sketches of a bobcat or a fairy shrimp. (1 pt.)</td>
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</table>

Total Possible 30 Points
Debriefing

• What happened in scenario 1?
  • Student’s perspective
  • Teacher’s perspective

• What happened in scenario 2?
  • Student’s perspective
  • Teacher’s perspective

• What role did grading rubric play in each?
Impromptu Presentation

**Scenario #1**
- Assignment is given, but teacher’s expectations are not made explicit.
- Student is left to wonder what teacher is looking for in assignment.
- Teacher grades student’s work based on a “hidden” set of expectations.
- Student feels grade was unfairly given and unsure how to improve.

**Scenario #2**
- A grading rubric explaining teacher’s expectations is given with assignment.
- Student uses rubric to prepare assignment.
- Teacher uses rubric to grade assignment.
- Student understands why grade was given and how to improve using rubric as a road map.
What is a grading rubric?

- Grading rubrics are explicit schemes classifying quality work into categories that vary along a continuum.

- They can be used to classify virtually any product or behavior, such as essays, research reports, portfolios, works of art, recitals, oral presentations, performances, and group activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Scale Level 1</th>
<th>Scale Level 2</th>
<th>Scale Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria 3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rubrics Layout

**Essay Assignment (100 pts.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (90-100%)</th>
<th>Good (80-89%)</th>
<th>Developing (70-79%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong> (40 pts.)</td>
<td>Great ideas! (36-40 pts.)</td>
<td>Develop ideas more. (32-35 pts.)</td>
<td>Ideas need reworking. (28-31 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity</strong> (40 pts.)</td>
<td>Clearly written! (36-40 pts.)</td>
<td>Write more concisely. (32-35 pts.)</td>
<td>Rewrite for clarity. (28-31 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong> (20 pts.)</td>
<td>Sources accurately cited. (18-20 pts.)</td>
<td>Citations need reformatting. (16-17 pts.)</td>
<td>Need to provide citations. (14-15 pts.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some benefits of grading rubrics

- Grading Rubrics…
  - Provide timely feedback
  - Prepare students to use detailed feedback
  - Encourage critical thinking
  - Facilitate communication with others
  - Help teachers refine their skills
  - Level the playing field
  - Provide criterion-based reference
Rubrics and Teaching

• Complex outcomes can be examined systematically (e.g. critical thinking, comprehension, etc.).

• Rubrics provide criterion-based reference (as opposed to norm-based reference).

• Faculty and students are on the same page in terms of expectations and standards.
Rubrics and Grading

• Rubrics allow faculty to give detailed formative feedback to students in an efficient manner.

• Points can be assigned to rubrics and used for grading.

• Rubrics can be easily augmented for different assignments, courses, and faculty.

• Effective rubrics can help faculty reduce the time spent assessing and grading students’ competence.
Rubrics and Assessment

• Grading rubrics enable:
  • students to critically and constructively assess their own work and the works of their peers
  • faculty to chart students’ progress and evaluate students’ performance and products
  • administrators and colleagues to assess effectiveness of a program, course, and/or assignment.
How to construct a grading rubric?

1. **Identify** what you want from your students and what you are assessing, e.g., critical thinking.

2. **List** the characteristics of what you are assessing, e.g., appropriate use of evidence, recognition of logical fallacies, analysis, etc.

3. **Group and Describe** the best and worst product (and everything in between) you could expect using these characteristics. This will give you the continuum of categories (four is ideal).

4. **Apply** it to samples products and revise as needed to eliminate ambiguities.
Best Practices

1. Hand out the grading rubric along with the assignment so students will know your expectations and how they'll be graded.

2. Use a rubric for grading student work and return the rubric with the grading on it.

3. Develop a rubric with your students for an assignment or group project. Students can then monitor themselves and their peers using agreed-upon criteria that they helped develop.
4. Have students apply your rubric to some sample products before they create their own.

5. Have students exchange paper drafts and give peer feedback using the rubric, then give students a few days before the final drafts are turned in to you. You might also require that they turn in the draft and scored rubric with their final paper.

6. Have students self-assess their products using the grading rubric and hand in the self-assessment with the product; then faculty and students can compare self- and faculty-generated evaluations.
Grading Rubrics & WASC

• The use of grading rubrics can help align course goals with learning outcomes by providing students a road map.
• WASC Accreditation encourages the use of grading rubrics at the course, program, and school levels.
• WASC has provided us with a grading rubric for our education effectiveness review, so we can better prepare.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Descriptive Terms</strong></th>
<th><strong>ELEMENT &amp; DEFINITION</strong></th>
<th><strong>INITIAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>EMERGING</strong></th>
<th><strong>DEVELOPED</strong></th>
<th><strong>HIGHLY DEVELOPED</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes:</strong> A. Are established, referenced in publications, cited and used by faculty and advisors:</td>
<td>For only a few programs and units; only vaguely (if at all) for GE; not referenced in publications; only a few faculty know and use for designing curriculum, assignments, or assessment</td>
<td>For many programs and units, and most GE aspects; beginning to be referenced in basic documents; beginning to be used by some faculty as reference for design of curriculum, assignments, and assessment</td>
<td>For all units (academic &amp; co-curricular), and for GE; cited often but not in all appropriate places; most faculty cite; used in most programs for design of curriculum, assignments, and assessment</td>
<td>For all units (academic and co-curricular), and for GE; cited widely by faculty and advisors; used by all faculty to design curricula, assignments, and assessment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Outcomes are assessed:</td>
<td>Occasionally, using surveys and self reports; seldom using direct assessment; rarely leading to revision of pedagogy</td>
<td>Occasionally, principally using surveys; beginning to move beyond self reports toward some direct assessment; seldom leading to revision of pedagogy</td>
<td>Periodically, sometimes using authentic and performance-based methods; may lack documentation; pedagogy is occasionally reviewed and revised</td>
<td>Regularly; using multiple methods, including authentic and performance-based; pedagogy systematically reviewed and revised based on assessment data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Learning is demonstrably achieved:</td>
<td>At levels that may not be up to standards; concerns that standards set by institution are too low for a baccalaureate-level institution</td>
<td>For most students at levels set by the institution; faculty are beginning to discuss results</td>
<td>For all students at or above levels set by institution; results discussed periodically by most faculty</td>
<td>For all students at or above levels set by institution; results are discussed regularly and deliberatively by all faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning Processes:</strong> A. Curricula &amp; pedagogy are:</td>
<td>Not visibly aligned with outcomes; few programs have evidences of achievement beyond mere completion of designated courses</td>
<td>Beginning to be aligned with established learning outcomes, with achievement demonstrated in some areas beyond mere completion of designated courses</td>
<td>Broadly aligned with learning outcomes; in most programs, student achievement beyond the mere completion of designated courses is demonstrated in most areas</td>
<td>Highly visible, fully aligned with learning outcomes; in all programs, achievement beyond mere completion of designated courses is demonstrated at both the program (comprehensive) &amp; course levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Curricular processes are:</td>
<td>Rarely informed by good learning practices; few curricula reviewed, mostly without reference to evidences of student learning</td>
<td>Informed in a few instances by good learning practices; some curricula reviewed and improved but with little reference to evidences of student learning</td>
<td>Informed in many cases by good learning practice; reviewed and improved by relevant faculty; often based on evidences of student learning</td>
<td>Regularly informed by good learning practice (such as employing assessment-as-learning), consistently the result of scholarly reflection by relevant faculty based on evidences of student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Learning:</strong> A. Indicators of educational effectiveness are:</td>
<td>Not effectively in place</td>
<td>Found in some areas; dissemination of performance results is beginning; no reference to benchmarks</td>
<td>Multiple, with data collected regularly, disseminated; some performance benchmarks set and used for comparison</td>
<td>Multiple, with data collected regularly, disseminated widely, compared to program benchmarks in all programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Program Review is:</td>
<td>Rare, if at all, with little or no useful data being generated</td>
<td>Occasional, in some departments or units, with the results being infrequently used to suggest process improvements</td>
<td>Frequent, in most divisions or units, with results being used at the departmental level to reflect on effectiveness</td>
<td>Deliberate, systematic, and institution-wide, with results being broadly disseminated and used to improve the processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Faculty, staff, and institutional leaders are:</td>
<td>Not visibly committed to a culture of evidence except in isolated cases</td>
<td>Supportive at top levels only, or sporadically and unevenly; for the development of a culture of evidence</td>
<td>Supportive of a culture of evidence at top levels, by most mid-level personnel, and some faculty and staff</td>
<td>Visibly committed to creating and sustaining a culture of evidence in planning at all levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Performance data are:</td>
<td>Not in evidence in any decision processes or used for improvement in any programs</td>
<td>Beginning to be considered in making improvement decisions at institutional level and in some program levels</td>
<td>Frequently considered by decision-making bodies at all levels, but with few documents of data use or outcomes</td>
<td>Consistently obtained, used and documented by decision-making bodies for program improvement at all levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. In reference to accreditation processes, the institution is:</td>
<td>Apparent indifference to Commission actions or expectations and/or failure of leadership to resource and expect such implementation; little, if any, momentum</td>
<td>Hesitant or partial implementation of prior Commission actions; some concerns whether momentum can be sustained after Commission review</td>
<td>Has taken formal actions and/or begun processes to implement prior Commission actions in most programs; momentum and impact need to be verified</td>
<td>Promptly and fully incorporates prior Commission actions, showing forward momentum and a positive trajectory in virtually all programs and units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall:</strong> The institution can best be described as follows:</td>
<td>Committed to some aspects of Educational Effectiveness; if other areas are not addressed, continuing reaffirmation of accreditation is threatened</td>
<td>Promising commitments to Educational Effectiveness in most areas; significant number of areas noted for improvement</td>
<td>Mostly well-established commitments to Educational Effectiveness; some areas for improvement</td>
<td>Operates at an exemplary level in addressing its Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Grading Rubrics

- Sciences Courses
- Math Courses
- Writing Courses
- Scientific Methods
- Human Behavior
- Term Papers
- Critical Thinking
- WASC Educational Effectiveness
Take Home Point

- Write down one or two ways the use of Grading rubrics can enhance your teaching effectiveness and strengthen your students’ learning.
Reference


• Rubistar: [http://rubistar.4teachers.org](http://rubistar.4teachers.org)