USING RUBRICS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT WORK

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The **advantages** of using rubrics in assessment are that they:

- allow assessment to be more objective and consistent
- focus the teacher to clarify his/her criteria in specific terms
- clearly show the student how their work will be evaluated and what is expected
- promote student awareness of the criteria to use in assessing their own and peer performance
- provide useful feedback regarding the effectiveness of the instruction
- provide benchmarks against which to measure and document progress

Rubrics can be created in a variety of forms and levels of complexity, however, they all contain common **features** which:

- focus on measuring a stated **objective** (performance, behavior, or quality)
- use a **range** to rate performance
- contain specific performance characteristics arranged in levels indicating the **degree** to which a standard has been met.

Steps in Rubric Development

1. Determine learning outcomes.
2. Keep it short and simple (Include 4-6 items at primary level, 4-10 at secondary level; use brief statements or phrases, use student-friendly language).
3. Each rubric item should focus on a different skill.
4. Focus on how students develop and express their learning.
5. Evaluate only measureable criteria.
6. Write descriptors for highest level of performance first.
7. After you write your first descriptor for the highest level, circle the words in that descriptor that **can vary**. These words will be the ones that you will change as you write the descriptors for other levels of performance.
8. Ideally, the entire rubric should fit on one sheet of paper.
9. Reevaluate the rubric (Did it work? Was it sufficiently detailed?).

Terms to use in measuring range/scoring levels

Needs Improvement ... Satisfactory ... Good ... Exemplary

Beginning ... Developing ... Accomplished ... Exemplary

Needs work ... Good ... Excellent

Novice ... Apprentice ... Practitioner ... Expert

Numeric scale ranging from 1 to 4.

Or use visual descriptors – especially good for younger children, eg

OH DEAR!	*GETTING THERE!*	*PRETTY COOL!*	*WAY TO GO!*
			

Better to use an even number of performance descriptors, as it overcomes the tendency to 'sit on the fence'!

Doesn't really matter if you go from highest to lowest or lowest to highest, but be consistent so that students know how your rubric style works.

Words that convey various degrees of performance

Depth ... Breadth ... Quality ... Scope ... Extent ... Complexity ...
Degrees ... Accuracy

Presence to absence

Complete to incomplete

Many to some to none

Major to minor

Consistent to inconsistent

Frequency: always to generally to sometimes to rarely

Wording

Rubrics should ideally be worded for the student not for the teacher, eg "I have spelled all words correctly" rather than "You have correctly spelled all words." Such wording encourages students to evaluate their own work, rather than relying only on the teacher to evaluate. Alternatively, avoid the use of personal pronouns altogether and simply state the performance, eg "All words are spelled correctly."

Timing of Rubrics

Always give students the rubric for a task at the same time you give them the work to do, or at least before they commence work on the product stage of work.

Use of product and process criteria cards

"Curriculum is made up of three elements: product, process and content. One major concern teachers have about project and performance assessment is how to develop fair and clear assessment criteria without making the list of requirements too long and without overly emphasising one of these elements over another. One way to handle this dilemma is to use product and process criteria cards. These cards can be used over and over again every time a student does the same or a similar project, or engages in the same or a similar process.

As an individual teacher, you may have the same generic criteria for certain projects or performances your students do regardless of the specific academic content they cover. ... When this is the case, consider developing criteria cards to use every time students do the same type of project or engage in the same learning process – regardless of the content. When all students know and understand the criteria for certain products and processes and have criteria cards readily available for reference, assessment becomes much easier for you and more understandable to them." (Carolyn Coil, *Working with Assessing Student Performance,* 2004)

For example, a teacher sets a project for students to develop a collage about 20th Century inventions. S/he has generic criteria for collage and for research. The rubric s/he develops refers to the criteria for these and also has content criteria, such as number of inventions, links between inventions, accurate information on inventor, time and place. The finished rubric may look something like this:

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR INVENTIONS COLLAGE	**Beginning**	**Developing**	**Accomplished**	**Exemplary**
Follows collage criteria card.				
Follows research criteria card.				
Accuracy of information, including inventor, time, place.				
Has 10 or more inventions.				
Shows relationships between inventions.				

COLLAGE CRITERIA CARD

Has a solid backing.
Is visually neat and attractive.
Pictures overlap – there is no background/white space showing through between pictures.
Is creative and original.
Title and labels are spelt correctly.

RESEARCH SKILLS CRITERIA CARD

Uses 4 or more sources.
Sources are varied, eg books, Internet, interviews, audio-visual sources, primary research.
Notes are taken, in own words, from each source.
Sources are noted and recorded in a bibliography.
Bibliography follows format taught.

Or, if product and process criteria cards are not used, it may look something like this:

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR INVENTIONS COLLAGE	**Beginning**	**Developing**	**Accomplished**	**Exemplary**
Collage	My collage does not have a solid backing, could be much neater and have overlapping pictures. I should include a title and labels, spelt correctly.	My collage has a solid backing, could be neater, and have overlapping pictures and a title and labels. Much of the text contains spelling or grammar errors.	My collage has a solid backing, is mostly neat, with overlapping pictures and a title and labels. Some text contains spelling or grammar errors.	My collage has a solid backing, is visually neat, with overlapping pictures and a title and labels spelt correctly.
Research	I did not use any sources of information, instead relying on what I think I know.	I used only 1 source of information. I took my own notes. I provided a bibliography of my source.	I used 2-3 sources of information, including books and the Internet. I took my own notes. I provided a bibliography of references.	I used 4 or more sources of information, including books and the Internet. I took my own notes. I provided an accurate bibliography of references.
Accuracy of information, including inventor, time, place.	Little of my information is accurate.	Some of my information is accurate.	Most of my information is accurate.	All of my information is accurate.
Has 10 or more inventions.	I have shown fewer than 4 inventions.	I have shown 4-6 inventions.	I have shown 7-9 inventions.	I have shown 10 or more inventions.
Shows relationships between inventions.	I have not shown how my chosen inventions relate to each other.	I have tried to show how my chosen inventions relate to each other.	I have shown how my chosen inventions relate to each other.	I have clearly shown how my chosen inventions relate to each other.