



Richlin's Rant

Rubrics

*having a rubric means never having to say
"but that isn't what I wanted you to do..."*

Have your students ever turned in work that completely misses your intent for an assignment? If so, you can avoid that happening again through the learning magic of rubrics!

Rubrics provide both criteria and standards for doing an assignment. Students often are not clear on what is expected. A rubric can be used to clarify assignments and to assess them. With a rubric, students are able to evaluate their own and their colleagues' work, improving their work and saving the instructor time and effort. Rubrics are provided to students along with each assignment, although some rubrics will cover many similar assignments, such as essays or research papers. Although time-consuming to develop, rubrics make student work better and grading easier.

Clear rubrics can be the basis for departmental discussions of course standards and be used to sequence courses. They can provide consistency in grading across course sections and provide evidence of learning to accrediting agencies.

Developing a rubric requires two steps: first, identifying the necessary elements of an assignment and second, stating the criteria for achievement. A short description is provided for different levels of achievement for each element. For instance, in the attached sample rubric for an oral presentation, Focus on Topic can be rated from "0" for "hard to tell what the topic was" to "3" for "stays on topic all of the time." This may seem obvious when it has been stated, but developing the criteria for each element is difficult and takes time.

An excellent resource for beginning the development of rubrics can be found at
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>.

Rubistar has sample rubrics posted by teachers and faculty members on topics as wide-ranging as chemistry research projects and proper behavior at classical music concerts. There is no charge for viewing and using the Rubistar rubrics and there is usually a category already begun for almost any assignment. Rubrics also are provided in *Blueprint for Learning: Constructing Courses to Facilitate, Assess, and Document Learning* (2006) by Richlin, *Effective Grading* (1998) by Walvoord and Anderson, *Assessing Student Learning* (Suskie, 2004), and *Changing the Way We Grade Student Performance: Classroom Assessment and the New Learning Paradigm* (Anderson & Speck, Eds., Summer 1998).

The attached rubrics were developed by Dr. Laurie Richlin and CGU PFF Fellows as part of their scholarship of teaching.

Sample Rubric for Assessing an Oral Presentation

| CATEGORY | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Focus on Topic | Stays on topic all of the time | Stays on topic most of the time | Stays on topic some of the time | It was hard to tell what the topic was |
| Content | Shows a full understanding of the topic | Shows a good understanding of the topic | Shows some understanding of the topic | Does not seem to understand the topic very well |
| Enthusiasm | Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others | Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic | Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat faked | Very little use of facial expressions or body language. Did not generate much interest in topic being presented |
| Posture and Eye Contact | Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation | Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with several people in the room during the presentation | Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact | Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation |
| Presentation Activities and/or Technology | Adequately used and significantly contributed to audience learning | Adequately used and moderately effective in contributing to audience learning | Adequately used but not effective in contributing to audience learning | Minimal to no use of presentation activities and/or technology |
| Generalizability | Applicable to a broad range of courses and topics | Applicable within the pharmacy profession only | Applicable within presenter's department only | Applicable only to presenter's course |
| Time Limit | Presentation is 10-20 minutes long | Presentation is 7-9 minutes long | Presentation is 5-6 minutes long | Presentation is less than 5 minutes OR more than 20 minutes |
| Clear Speech | Speaks clearly and distinctly all the time | Speaks clearly and distinctly most of the time | Speaks clearly and distinctly some of the time | Often mumbles or cannot be understood |

Sample Rubric for Assessing Design of Course Assignments

Created by Marlene Biseda & Ariana Brooks

| CATEGORY | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Assignment Link to Learning Objectives (LOs) | Assignment is clearly linked to LOs | Assignment is linked to LOs, but not clearly stated | There appears to be a link between the assignment & LOs | There is an unclear link between assignment & LOs | Assignment is not linked to LOs |
| Assignment Purpose | Purpose of the assignment is clearly defined | Most aspects of the purpose are clearly defined | Some aspects of the purpose are clearly defined | Few aspects of the purpose are clearly defined | Purpose of the assignment is not clearly defined |
| Assignment Objectives | Overall task and sub-task objectives (if appropriate) are clearly explained | Task is broken down by objectives appropriately & most objectives (>50%) are clearly defined | Task is broken down appropriately & some objectives (about 50%) are clearly defined | Task is not broken down appropriately or few objectives (<50%) are clearly defined | Task is not broken down into the appropriate objectives & these objectives are not clearly defined |
| Assignment Parameters, Penalties, and Due Dates | Assignment parameters, penalties, and due dates are clearly defined | Only two of the elements are clearly defined OR all three are defined but unclear | Only one of the elements is clearly defined OR two are defined but unclear | Only one of the elements is defined but unclear | Assignment parameters, penalties, and due dates are not defined |
| Assignment Values | Value of the assignment and value of its tasks are clearly indicated | Value of the assignment OR its tasks are clearly indicated | Value of the assignment OR its tasks are indicated but unclear | Value of the assignment OR its tasks are not indicated | Value of the assignment and its tasks are not indicated |
| Assignment Level | Assignment is appropriate to student level | Assignment is close to student level | Assignment is appropriate for some students | Assignment is appropriate for a few students | Assignment is not appropriate to student level |
| Rubric | Rubric clearly delineates categories and standards | | | | There is no rubric |

Sample Rubric for Assessing Design of a Rubric

Created by Marlene Biseda & Ariana Brooks

| CATEGORY | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| Rubric Categories Uniqueness | Rubric has unique assessment categories | Most of the assessment categories (>50%) are unique but a few overlap with others | Some of the assessment categories (about 50%) are unique but some overlap with others | Few of the assessment categories (< 50%) are unique; most overlap with others | Rubric categories are not unique and overlap each other |
| Rubric Category Objectives | Assessment categories account for all task and sub-task objectives factors of the learning experience | Assessment categories account for most of the relative factors of the learning experience | Assessment categories account for some of the relative factors of the learning experience | Few assessment categories account for the relative factors of the learning experience | Assessment categories do not account for all relevant factors of the learning experience |
| Rubric Category Assessment Criteria | Assessment criteria for each category are clearly defined | Assessment criteria for most of the categories (>50%) are clearly defined | Assessment criteria for some of the categories (about 50%) are clearly defined | Assessment criteria for few of the categories (<50%) are clearly defined | Assessment criteria are not clearly defined for any category |
| Rubric Category Importance/W weight | The relative importance/weight of each category is identified | The relative importance/weight of most categories (>50%) are identified | The relative importance/weight of some categories (about 50%) are identified | The relative importance/weight of few categories (<50%) are identified | The relative importance/weight is not identified for any category |
| Rubric Performance Scale | Rubric scale clearly defines all levels of performance | Rubric scale clearly defines most levels of performance | Rubric scale clearly defines some levels of performance | Rubric scale clearly defines few levels of performance | Rubric scale does not clearly define levels of performance |
| Rubric scale Differentiation | Achievement at each level is clearly differentiated from that of the higher and lower levels | Achievement at most levels is clearly differentiated from that of the higher and lower levels | Achievement at some levels is clearly differentiated from that of the higher and lower levels | Achievement at few levels is clearly differentiated from that of the higher and lower levels | Achievement at each level is not clearly differentiated from that of higher and lower levels |
| Rubric Scale Tone | | | Scale labels and details are positive | Most scale labels and details are positive | Scale labels and details are negative |