Grading Rubrics

Content:

Steps for Creating a Grading Rubric

1. **Define the purpose of the assignment/assessment for which you are creating a rubric.**

   - *What exactly is the assigned task?* Does it break down into a variety of different tasks? Are these tasks equally important? What are the learning objectives for this assignment/task? What do you want students to demonstrate in their completed assignments/performances?

   - *What might an exemplary student product/performance look like?* How might you describe an acceptable student product/performance? How might you describe work that falls below expectations?

   - *What kind of feedback do you want to give students on their work/performance?* Do you want/need to give them a grade? Do you want to give them a single overall grade? Do you want to give them detailed feedback on a variety of criteria? Do you want to give them specific feedback that will help them improve their future work?

2. **Decide what kind of rubric you will use:**

   Holistic Rubric
   This type of rubric that is much easier to create, but more difficult to accurately use. Typically, a teacher provides a series of letter grades or a range of numbers (1-4 or 1-6, for example) and then assigns expectations for each of those scores. When grading, the teacher matches the student work in its entirety to a single description on the scale.

   > *Advantages:*
   > - Emphasis on what learners can demonstrate (rather than what she cannot)
   > - Saves time by minimizing the number of decisions made
   > - Can be used consistently across raters after training

Disadvantages:
- Does not provide specific feedback for improvement
- Can be difficult to choose a score when student work is at varying levels across the criteria
- Criteria cannot be weighted

Analytic Rubric

This is the standard grid rubric that many teachers routinely use to assess students' work. This is the optimal rubric for providing clear, detailed feedback. With an analytic rubric, criteria for the students' work is listed in the left column and performance levels are listed across the top. The squares inside the grid will typically contain the specifics for each level.

Advantages:
- Provides feedback on areas of strength or weakness
- Each criterion can be weighted to reflect its relative importance

Disadvantages:
- More time consuming to create and use than a holistic rubric
- May not be used consistently across raters, unless extremely well defined

Checklists

Checklists are a distinct type of rubric – where there are only two performance levels possible. Checklists tend to be longer than other types of rubrics since each aspect of performance being evaluated becomes its own criteria. Most rubrics can be converted rather directly into a checklist.

Advantages:
- Simpler and faster way to grade
- Grading is clearer to students
- Less arbitrary and more consistent grading decisions
- Have the potential to raise the rigor of students' performance

Disadvantages:
- Onerous to create
- Longer rubric with many criteria; risks being overwhelming/nitpicky
- Little granularity as they lose the middle (may be overly punitive or permissive for ambiguous student effort)

3. Define the criteria.

Ask yourself: what knowledge and skills are required for the assignment/assessment? Make a list of these, group and label them, and eliminate any that are not critical. The list should contain no more than 6-7 criteria, but need not include that many.

Helpful strategies for defining grading criteria:
- Review the learning objectives for the course; use the assignment prompt, existing grading checklists, peer response sheets, comments on previous work, past examples of student work, etc.
- Try describing 4.0/3.5/<3.0 work
- Work with other instructors or students for a different perspective

Consider the effectiveness of the criteria:
- Can they be observed and measured?
- Are they important and essential?
- Are they distinct from other criteria?
- How will you weight them relative to each other?

4. Design the rating scale.

Most rating scales include 3-5 levels. Without realizing it, when teachers detail the levels of performance, we tend to use degrees of deficiency (e.g. mostly, somewhat, lacking) rather than affirmative non-judgmental statements as to what the students are capable of at each point along the continuum. If we are going to truly use the rubric as a tool to enhance students' ability to self-assess and thus enhance their performance, we must provide clear markers along the way for how students can improve and not unintentionally send the message that their ongoing work is insufficient rather than on a path of progress.

Consider the following:
- Given what students are able to demonstrate in this assignment/assessment, what are the possible achievement levels?
- Will you use numbers or descriptive labels for these levels?
- If you use descriptive labels, how will this correspond with grading?

5. Write descriptions for each level of the rating scale.

Create statements of expected performance at each level of the rubric. For an analytic rubric do this for each particular criterion of the rubric. These descriptions help students understand your expectations and their performance in regard to those expectations. Well-written descriptions:
- describe observable and measurable behavior.
- use parallel language across the scale.
- indicate the degree to which the standards are met.

6. Create your rubric.

Develop the criteria, rating scale and descriptions for each level of the rating scale into a rubric. Space permitting, include the assignment at the top of the rubric. For reading and grading ease, limit the rubric to a single page, if possible. Consider the effectiveness of your rubric and revise accordingly.

Example: Holistic Rubric

Above average: The audience is able to easily identify the focus of the work and is engaged by its clear focus and relevant details. Information is presented logically and naturally. There are no more than two mechanical errors or misspelled words to distract the reader.

Sufficient: The audience is easily able to identify the focus of the student work which is supported by relevant ideas and supporting details. Information is presented in a logical easy to follow manner. There is minimal interruption to the work due to misspellings and/or mechanical errors.

Developing: The audience can identify the central purpose of the student work without difficulty and supporting ideas are present and clear. The information is presented in an orderly fashion that can be followed with little difficulty. There are some misspellings and/or mechanical errors, but they do not seriously distract from the work.

Needs Improvement: The audience cannot clearly or easily identify the central ideas or purpose of the student work. Information is presented in a disorganized fashion causing the audience to have difficulty following the author's ideas. There are many misspellings and/or mechanical errors that negatively affect the audience's ability to read the work.

Example: Analytic Rubric

	Needs Improvement (1)	Developing (2)	Sufficient (3)	Above Average (4)
Clarity (Thesis supported by relevant information and ideas.)	The purpose of the student work is not well-defined. Central ideas are not focused to support the thesis. Thoughts appear disconnected.	The central purpose of the student work is identified. Ideas are generally focused in a way that supports the thesis.	The central purpose of the student work is clear and ideas are almost always focused in a way that supports the thesis. Relevant details illustrate the author's ideas.	The central purpose of the student work is clear and supporting ideas always are always well-focused. Details are relevant, enrich the work.
Organization (Sequencing of elements/ideas)	Information and ideas are poorly sequenced (the author jumps around). The audience has difficulty following the thread of thought.	Information and ideas are presented in an order that the audience can follow with minimum difficulty.	Information and ideas are presented in a logical sequence which is followed by the reader with little or no difficulty.	Information and ideas are presented in a logical sequence which flows naturally and is engaging to the audience.
Mechanics (Correctness of grammar and spelling)	There are five or more misspellings and/or systematic grammatical errors per page or 8 or more in the entire document. The readability of the work is seriously hampered by errors.	There are no more than four misspellings and/or systematic grammatical errors per page or six or more in the entire document. Errors distract from the work.	There are no more than three misspellings and/or grammatical errors per page and no more than five in the entire document. The readability of the work is minimally interrupted by errors.	There are no more than two misspelled words or grammatical errors in the document.

Example: Checklist

Criterion	Yes	No
All Sites have notes		
Sites notes are thorough		
Site notes are thoughtful		
Answers all site questions for all sites		
Provided reflection on each of the 6 site visits		
Reflection on site visits was thoughtful		

Additional Resources

- *How to Create a Rubric: https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-create-a-rubric-4061367
- *Rubrics – Types of Rubrics, Creating Rubrics, Evaluating Rubrics, and Other Examples Improving Your Rubrics: https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/rubric-repair/
- Holistic, Analytic, and Single-Point Rubrics: https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/holistic-analytic-single-point-rubrics/
- 6 Reasons to Try Single Point Rubrics: https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-reasons-try-single-point-rubric
- Free Rubric Creator: https://www.rubriccreator.com/
- More Example Rubrics: https://www.schrockguide.net/assessment-and-rubrics.html\
- Rubric Codes (how to speed up your grading): https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/rubric-codes/
- Creating Rubrics on Canvas: https://arcadia.instructure.com/courses/3678/pages/create-a-rubric?module_item_id=54366
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. 2012. *The Understanding by Design Guide to Advanced Concepts in Creating and Reviewing Units.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Materials used to develop this packet.