

RUBRICS, AND YOU

Rubrics, by Design

What is a rubric?

At its most basic, a rubric:

- ▣ Is a scoring tool.
- ▣ Breaks down an assignment into component parts.
- ▣ Provides a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for those parts.

The Four parts of a rubric

1. **Title and assignment description**
2. **Scale of achievement – descriptive and/or number/letter grade designation**
3. **The dimensions of the assignment – skills/knowledge expected.**
4. **The value of each dimension--description of what constitutes each level of performance.**

Title:

Assignment Description:

	Level 3 Exemplary	Level 2 Satisfactory	Level 1 Unacceptable
Dimension 1	Parameters for a level 3 performance	Parameters for a level 2 performance	Parameters for a level 1 performance
Dimension 2	Parameters for a level 3 performance	Parameters for a level 2 performance	Parameters for a level 1 performance
Dimension 3	Parameters for a level 3 performance	Parameters for a level 2 performance	Parameters for a level 1 performance

Any assignment can be scored on a rubric

- ❖ **Paper**
- ❖ **Presentation**
- ❖ **Group Project**
- ❖ **Essay on an Exam**
- ❖ **Performance**
- ❖ **Infographic**

Keep your description brief, it is only there to delineate the rubric.

Assignment Description

Scale of achievement

The scale allows you to assign a number or letter according to how well or poorly the assignment was performed. Be tactful, but clear in your definitions.

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Sophisticated	Competent	Partly Competent	Not yet competent
Exemplary	Proficient	Marginal	Unacceptable
Advanced	Intermediate high	Intermediate	Novice
Distinguished	Proficient	Intermediate	Novice
Accomplished	Average	Developing	Beginning

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While there is no formula for the number of levels on a rubric scale, more than 5 makes it too difficult to differentiate.

If multiple faculty are using the scale to grade across courses, consider using four as it eliminates the inclination to grade down the middle.

The Dimensions allow you to identify which components of the assignment are most important.

You may choose to weight the different components according to the importance of a given aspect of the assignment.

Component skills and knowledge should be defined in the dimensions of the assignment.

The Dimensions of the Assignment

	Exemplary	Proficient	Marginal	Unacceptable
Knowledge/understanding 30%				
Thinking/Inquiry 20%				
Communication 10%				
Use of Visual Aids 20%				
Presentation skills 20%				

Assigning value to the Dimensions

	Exemplary 4	Proficient 3	Marginal 2	Unacceptable 1
Knowledge/ understanding 30%	The presentation uses relevant and accurate detail. Research is thorough and goes beyond what was assigned in texts.	The presentation uses knowledge that is generally accurate. Research is adequate, but does not go beyond what was assigned.	The presentation draws heavily on assumption and theory. Not all research is from reputable sources.	The presentation uses little relevant information. Little or no research is apparent.
Thinking/Inquiry 20%	The presentation is centered around a thesis which shows a high level of conceptual ability	The presentation shows an analytical structure and a central thesis, but the analysis is not fully developed.	The presentation shows minimal analytical structure and a central thesis, but the link between the two is absent.	The presentation shows no analytical structure and no central thesis.
Communication 10%	The presentation is imaginative and effective in conveying ideas. The presenter responds effectively to audience reaction and questions.	The presentation is successful at conveying the main ideas, but lacks imagination. The presenters were able to answer most, but not all questions.	The presentation is successful at conveying the main ideas, but lacks energy. The presenters were unable to answer most questions.	The presentation fails to capture the imagination of the audience. The presenter seems confused as to the subject matter.
Use of Visual Aids 20%	Visual aids are appropriate and easily understood. Presenter refers to visual aids at appropriate moment.	Visual aids are present, but may be hard to view or difficult to use. Presenter refers to visual aids, but more aids would enhance presentation.	Visual aids are present, but there are too few to be impactful. Presenter does not refer to visual aids appropriately to support presentation.	No visual aids are utilized or visual aids are unsuccessful and/or not utilized in the presentation.
Presentation skills 20%	The presenter engages the audience by speaking clearly and loudly, makes eye contact, and uses appropriate gestures and body language.	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly, but tends to a monotone and fails to use eye contact. Presenter seems uncomfortable in their use of gestures and body language.	The presenter speaks loudly, but swallows their words so they are hard to understand. They fail to make eye contact and do not attempt gestures and are unaware of their body language.	The presenter cannot be heard. There is no attempt to engage the audience.

Things to Discuss

When Designing a Common Rubric for Outcomes Assessment

1. What skills do you expect a student to have or develop to be able to complete this assignment?
2. What exactly is the assignment? If you are not using a common assessment tool across all sections of a course, you will need to design a rubric that can value the variety of assessment tools.
3. What evidence can students provide in this assignment that would show they have accomplished what you wanted them to?
4. What are the highest expectations you have for a student?
5. What is the worst fulfillment of the assignment you can imagine short of not submitting the assignment at all?

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE RUBRIC DESIGN

Involving students in the design of the rubric can tell you:

- ❖ What they already know.
- ❖ What they don't know.
- ❖ What misconceptions and misunderstandings they may have about the assignment.

4 METHODS TO INVOLVE STUDENTS

1. The Presentation Method

- Standard rubric, designed by the instructor.
- Student involvement limited to presentation of the rubric and the ensuing discussion.

2. The Feedback Model

Based in the Presentation Model, but offers the opportunity for the student participation.

- A. Students respond to and effect change in the tool for the purpose of:
 - i. clarity or
 - ii. to assign value to the dimensions
 - iii. or even the expectations of achievement.

3. The Rubric Creation Model

This model allows the students to become directly involved creating the rubric for their assignment.

- A. After the assignment is carefully reviewed, each student is given 3-5 slips of paper that are color coded.
- B. Each student is asked to write down
 - i. one criteria for an “A” or exemplary paper on the blue slip,
 - ii. one criteria for a “B” or proficient on the yellow slip, and so on.
- C. The slips are then collected and the dimensions of the paper are created from the student suggestions.
- D. The rest of the process can be completed by the instructor outside of class.
- E. Value of the dimensions can also be evaluated in the classroom.
- F. Post it notes can be used to make the process a bit easier to control.

4. The Group Creation Model

In this model, the instructor does little of the creation process, allowing the students to develop the rubric for the assignment. This process calls for group participation.

- A. Groups of approximately four should be formed. In multiple rounds, each group will discuss:
 - i. The scale of achievement
 - ii. Task dimensions
 - iii. Value of the dimensions
- B. After each round, the instructor will ask a spokesperson from each group to present the group's work to the class, perhaps asking the group to narrow its response.
- C. From the lists of created by the multiple groups, the class will then vote on the scale, dimension and value they want associated with the assignment.

A Rubric is Simply a Scoring Tool

A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery.

Rubrics can be used for a wide array of assignments: papers, projects, oral presentations, artistic performances, group projects, etc.

Rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides, to provide formative feedback to support and guide ongoing learning efforts, or both.

Examples of Rubrics and Resources:

<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/rubrics.html> (provides good examples of rubrics for a variety of courses)

<http://www.rcampus.com/indexrubric.cfm> (a how to site that helps you build rubrics)

<http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/rubrics.htm> (Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) Sample Rubric Page—large database of sample rubrics)