Tech Snacks: Rubrics[1]

A rubric is a scoring guide that assesses and articulates specific components and expectations for an assignment. Rubrics can be used for a variety of assignments, including: research papers, lab work, class participation, group projects, portfolios and presentations.

Why use a Rubric?

Rubrics help instructors:
- Assess assignments consistently from student to student.
- Save time in grading, both short-term and long-term.
- Give timely, specific feedback.
- Clarify expectations and components of an assignment for themselves and for students.
- Refine assignment prompts by evaluating rubric results.

Rubrics help students:
- Understand expectations and components of an assignment
- Become more aware of their learning process and progress.
- Improve work through timely and detailed feedback.

Getting Started

Although it takes time to build a rubric, you will save time in the long run as grading and feedback become more streamlined. Consider starting small by creating one rubric for one assignment per semester. You may also ask colleagues if they have developed rubrics for similar assignments.

Rubric Development Guidelines
- ➔ Examine an assignment for your course.
- ➔ Outline the critical elements to be evaluated (must be objectively measurable).
- ➔ Create an evaluative range for performance quality under each element. For instance: "Excellent – Good – Unsatisfactory" or "Beginning – Emerging – Exemplary."
- ➔ Add descriptors that qualify each level of performance. Avoid using subjective or vague criteria such as "interesting" or "creative"; instead, articulate non-subjective indicators.
- ➔ Assign a numerical scale to each level.
- ➔ Give a draft of the rubric to colleagues or OTLE for feedback.
- ➔ Train students to use your rubric and solicit feedback; this will help you judge whether the rubric is clear to them and will identify any weaknesses.

Introducing Rubrics to Students

Consider showing students a sample assignment and explaining how you would use the rubric to assess it. For a more interactive introduction, provide sample assignments and have students evaluate them using the rubric. Ask students to turn in their results or share with a partner so that they have to justify their evaluation.

Self-Assessment and Peer-Assessment with Rubrics

Rubrics are also useful for facilitating peer and self-assessment. You may consider building self-assessment into the assignment itself so that students check that they are meeting all of the requirements for the assignment. For assignments with multiple drafts, you might have students assess their peers' work by using the rubric as a guide.

---

[1] Information in this handout is adapted from
https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/assessing-student-learning/using-rubrics.html
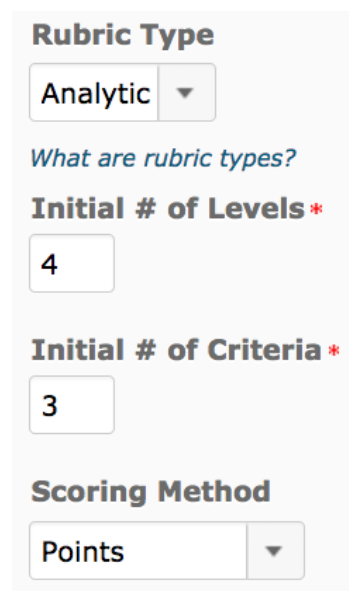
Rubrics on Brightspace[2]

Brightspace's Rubric tool lets you create Rubrics within a course, attach them directly to course activities, and use them as a direct grading instrument. They take some time to set up initially but will save you a ton of grading time later!

Creating a Rubric in Brightspace

The Rubric tool can be found under the Assessments tab in Brightspace courses. From there click on "New Rubric," give it a descriptive name, and choose the **"Analytic" (multiple criteria, multiple levels)** or **"Holistic" (one criteria, multiple levels)** grading framework. Select how many levels and criteria you want, and click Save.

Click the "Levels and Criteria" tab, where you can label each level and criteria, assign points to each level, and add descriptions to each Rubric cell. Be clear and descriptive, because your students will be able to see this information! When you "Save," it is automatically in "Published" mode. If you want to save it as a draft , go to the top right and set the status to "Draft" and then "Save."

Rubric Type

Analytic ▼

What are rubric types?

Initial # of Levels *

4

Initial # of Criteria *

3

Scoring Method

Points ▼

Linking a Rubric to an Activity

You can link a Rubric to an Assignment Folder, Discussion Topic, or Grade item. Edit the activity you want to link to a Rubric, and click on the "Assessment" tab of that activity. You'll be able to choose from all of the Published rubrics in that course. Unlike grade items, you can attach a Rubric to more than one activity.

How Can Students View my Rubrics?

Assignments — Students can see it when they access the folder before submitting a document.

Discussions — Students can see it before they start a new thread.

We also suggest including copies of your grading rubrics either in the course syllabus, or in a "Course Information" or "Module 0" module in the Content area, so students can reference the rubrics throughout the semester.

Grading Assignments Using Rubrics

Open an Assignment to view student work like you normally would. When viewing a student submission, the attached Rubric should be visible as a link in the "Evaluation" section. Clicking the rubric will open a dialog box that will let you select a level for each criteria, and Brightspace will automatically convert those choices into a grade score. Discussion grading is even simpler with a Rubric and will be self-explanatory.