



Overview and Reflection on Current Practice

What It Is and Why It Is Important

Rubrics have become commonplace in the education system. They can be found all over the web - along with tools to create them, in curriculum materials, and on national and state high-stakes assessments. Often, the implementation of rubrics is driven by reforms, from standards-based grading to project-based learning to assessment for learning. With such an emphasis on rubrics, it is necessary that teachers understand their value - their role in teaching and learning - and that teachers can identify the characteristics of quality rubrics.

A rubric is an assessment tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work and articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor. The rubric spells out the scoring criteria so that multiple teachers, using the same rubric for a student's essay or a science lab report, for example, would arrive at the same score or grade. The multidimensional set of scoring guidelines can be used across the teaching and learning experience, from first beginning the project with students, to monitoring progress along the way, and finally assessing the final product.

What makes rubrics worthwhile? A [quality rubric can:](#)

- communicate to students in student-friendly language what is expected of them,
- give students the opportunity to self-assess their progress and set goals,
- help teachers monitor a student's learning process and provide authentic, informative feedback,
- contribute information to develop and adjust lesson plans,
- provide consistency and fairness and lessen bias in evaluating student work.

When quality rubrics are used throughout a relatively complex assignment, teachers promote student success by making expectations transparent and cultivating a growth mindset. With quality rubrics, teachers and peers can give specific, descriptive feedback that supports not only skill development, but also the development of thoughtful judgment. Quality rubrics are used throughout the course of the project, serving as the primary reference from the onset, through various rounds of feedback, and into the final presentation.

So, what do quality rubrics look like? What makes a quality rubric? All [rubrics have two features in common:](#)

1. a list of criteria, or "what counts" in a project or assignment; and
2. gradations of quality, with descriptions of strong, middling, and problematic student work.

The gradations of quality should reflect and reveal problems that students commonly experience. The levels of quality must provide descriptive details that help students spot their weaknesses; likewise, the levels should indicate concrete criteria to help students move from one level to the next.

Some [useful tips for recognizing and creating quality rubrics](#) include:

- the use of parallel and student friendly language as a purposeful guide for instruction and learning,
- limiting the number of columns to avoid "stretching" a criterion,
- relying on descriptive language to provide specifics rather than vague words like "good" or "excellent",
- developing a common template for similar learning targets or performance tasks.

Rubrics are far more than a static evaluation tool presented in our curriculum materials or downloaded from the internet. Rather, the benefits of using rubrics as both teaching and grading tools are many. As teachers grow in their understanding and recognition of quality rubrics, they can consider ways to implement them in their own classrooms, leveraging them to support multiple kinds of learning opportunities, all leading to student success.

Thinking About Your Current Practice

Have you ever given students a performance task – a project, a presentation, a real-world problem to solve and present – and then been frustrated with students’ results? Consider these questions as you prepare to build your understanding of rubrics and recognize the characteristics of quality rubrics.

- What have I done or used to prepare my students for success with a project or product?
- What are my expectations for the performance task? How have I clearly articulated the specific criteria for a quality product?
- What have I done or used throughout the process to support students’ growth toward a quality finish?
- How have I been fair and reasonable in my assessment of the final product?

Evidence of Skill and Implementation

The Task: Demonstrating Your Skill

Complete the following task as evidence of your learning, as well as for application or implementation in your classroom:

1. From what you have learned about using rubrics from your personal resources and those in the [Possible Learning Pathways](#) make the case for using rubrics in your instruction and as an assessment tool. Your audience can be your teaching partners, your school’s faculty, and/or your administration. Include a minimum of five points that would inform and persuade your audience of the value of using rubrics. Be creative with the format, i.e., a slide show, an info-graphic, a short video (about 3 minutes).
2. Research rubrics for your content (see resources in [Possible Learning Pathways](#)). Select a variety of three to analyze following the directions below. In addition to content or performance task rubrics, the variety could include a teamwork or collaboration rubric, a single point rubric, one you suspect is not of high quality. Label and attach a copy of each of the rubrics with your analysis. Your analysis should include the following two parts:
 - a. For each rubric, describe the style and content in a minimum of 4 elements: i.e., type of rubric, clarity of the criteria, language choice, distinction between the levels, point structure, format.
 - b. For each rubric, explain whether or not the rubric meets your expectations for your grade level and content.
3. Select one of the rubrics you have analyzed and implement it in your classroom. Verify your initial thoughts about the rubric: How well did it articulate your teaching goals? How well did it support students’ learning? In other words, how teacher-friendly and student-friendly is it?

Reflection:

In well-developed paragraphs, share your thoughts about each prompt below.

1. Explain how your thinking about rubrics has changed. What misconceptions about rubrics did you have before this task that were alleviated by completing the task?
2. Expand upon two or three of your biggest take-aways in growing your understanding of quality rubrics. What will stay with you as you move forward?
3. Describe the role rubrics will have in your future instruction. What are your plans for implementing rubrics? What more do you want to learn about rubrics to better use them?

Learning Targets

You will be able to...

1. Recognize high quality rubrics.
2. Analyze the qualities of a rubric and determine its best use in assessment.
3. Select the most appropriate rubrics for use with specific student learning goals.

Possible Learning Pathways to Prepare for the Task

The following activities and resources will help you deepen and sharpen your understanding of the content. Choose those that will fill your learning needs and help you complete the task.

Making the Case for Rubrics

- This article from Edutopia [How do rubrics help?](#) describes the value of rubrics, includes sample rubrics, and provides guiding questions for reviewing rubrics.
- The [TLT Group](#), a non-profit organization for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, provides a wealth of information about rubrics. Included are definitions, types and uses of rubrics.
- A [rubric for rubrics](#) is included in the TLT resources. You will find it to be particularly helpful in analyzing the rubrics you identify in task two.
- Heidi Goodrich Andrade has written extensively about rubrics. [Understanding Rubrics](#) defines rubrics and discusses their value; examples across content and grade level are included.
- The [Authentic Assessment Toolbox](#) discusses the components of rubrics, as well as a comparison of analytic and holistic rubrics.

Sample Rubrics

- This website from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, [Creating and Using Rubrics for Assessment](#), has a wealth of vetted rubrics for elementary, middle and high school, writing, math and science, presentations, and discussion, teamwork, and group rubrics. The presentation rubrics include podcasts, PowerPoint, and social media projects.
- A comprehensive and wide-ranging collection of information about rubrics and rubric examples are on [Kathy Schrock's Guide to Everything-Assessment and Rubrics](#).
- PBLWorks.org provides [rubrics for projects, presentations, and teamwork](#). They are available by grade spans K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. You will need to create a free log in for full access.

Single Point Rubrics

- This [journal article](#) by Professor Jarene Fluckiger, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Summer 2010, describes the value of a single point rubric for student self-assessment.
- Jennifer Gonzalez, author of the Cult of Pedagogy, explains single point rubrics in [Meet the Single Point Rubric](#) February 2015.
- [6 Reasons to Try a Single-Point Rubric](#) from Edutopia, October 2017, describes the benefits of using a single-point rubric.

Additional Tools to Deepen and Sharpen Your Understanding

Making the Case for Rubrics

- Another article by Andrade delves into the implementation of instructional rubrics and describes a process to create rubrics with students for [Using Rubrics to Promote Thinking and Learning](#).
- This article, also by Heidi Andrade, [Teaching with Rubrics: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly](#) includes warnings against approaches that limit the effectiveness of rubrics. You might jigsaw the articles by Andrade with your team to identify the common points.
- The number one question to ask yourself in [How to Get Higher-Quality Student Work in PBL](#) (project based learning) is “Did I use rubrics?” The answer to this question explores the value of rubrics and exemplars to help students understand the quality of work expected.
- UC Berkley’s Center for Teaching and Learning provides [Fast Facts: Getting Started with Rubrics](#), along with resources from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- A blog post on Blackbaud discusses [The Rise of Rubrics for Performance Based Assessment in K-12 Education](#).
- Clarifying the “what” and “how” of rubrics is explored in this blog post from Edutopia: [Tame the Beast - Tips for Designing and Using Rubrics](#).

Sample Rubrics

- From Quick Rubric, view two sample analytical rubrics included in [What is a Rubric](#).
- UC Berkley’s Center for Teaching and Learning cites [Values Rubrics](#) from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. These rubrics include such topics as critical thinking, information literacy, inquiry analysis, quantitative literacy, and oral communication.

Single Point Rubrics

- [The Single-Point Mastery Rubric](#) from Competency Works is a brief article on single point rubrics, adapted from [Cult of Pedagogy](#).
- [It’s Time We Talked About Rubrics](#) from the Center for Collaborative Education, August 2019, is a blog entry about the use of single-point rubrics.

Books of Value in Understanding and Recognizing Quality Rubrics

- Arter, J., and J. Chappuis. 2007. Creating and recognizing quality rubrics. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Stevens, D.D. and A.J. Levi. 2005. Introduction to rubrics. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Stiggins, R.J. 2001. Student-involved classroom assessment. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Submission Guidelines

Submission Guidelines

Following are items you must submit to earn this micro-credential and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. To earn this micro-credential, you must successfully complete each element of the rubrics.

Part I: Task Submission

1. From what you have learned about using rubrics from your personal resources and those in the [Possible Learning Pathways](#) make the case for using rubrics in your instruction and as an assessment tool. Your audience can be your teaching partners, your school's faculty, and/or your administration. Include a minimum of five points that would inform and persuade your audience of the value of using rubrics. Be creative with the format, i.e., a slide show, an info-graphic, a short video (about 3 minutes).
2. Research rubrics for your content (see resources in [Possible Learning Pathways](#)). Select a variety of three to analyze following the directions below. In addition to content or performance task rubrics, the variety could include a teamwork or collaboration rubric, a single point rubric, one you suspect is not of high quality. Label and attach a copy of each of the rubrics with your analysis. Your analysis should include the following two parts:
 - a. For each rubric, describe its style and content in a minimum of 4 elements: i.e., type of rubric, clarity of the criteria, language choice, distinction between the levels, point structure, format.
 - b. For each rubric, explain whether or not the rubric meets your expectations for your grade level and content.
3. Select one of the rubrics you have analyzed and implement it in your classroom. Verify your initial thoughts about the rubric: How well did it articulate your teaching goals? How well did it support students' learning? In other words, how teacher-friendly and student-friendly is it?

Part II: Reflection

In well-developed paragraphs, share your thoughts about each prompt below.

1. Explain how your thinking about rubrics has changed. What misconceptions about rubrics did you have before this task that were alleviated by completing the task?
2. Expand upon two or three of your biggest take-aways in growing your understanding of quality rubrics. What will stay with you as you move forward?
3. Describe the role rubrics will have in your future instruction. What are your plans for implementing rubrics? What more do you want to learn about rubrics to better use them?

Success Criteria for Completing the Task

Part I: Task

Your task will be evaluated on the following one-column rubric. You must earn a “yes” on all elements of the rubric in order to earn the micro-credential.

Notes on What Needs Improvement	YES	Notes on How the Work Meets or Exceeds Expectation
	The case for using rubrics in instruction and as an assessment tool is based upon expert recommendations and research.	
	The case for using rubrics in instruction and as an assessment tool includes a minimum of 5 points that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. inform the audience of the specific characteristics of rubrics and b. persuade the audience of the value of rubrics. 	
	The analysis for each of three rubrics includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a thorough description of the rubric’s characteristics with a minimum of 4 elements, b. a clear explanation of how or how not the rubric meets your expectations for your grade level and c. a copy of each rubric is included with the analysis. 	
	Analysis of one rubric implemented in the classroom includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. alignment with and articulation of teaching goals and b. usefulness as a student learning tool. 	

Part II: Reflection

Your reflection will be evaluated on the following rubric. You must earn a “yes” on all elements of the rubric in order to earn the micro-credential.

Notes on What Needs Improvement	YES	Notes on How the Work Meets or Exceeds Expectation
	<p>CONTENT: All components of the reflection are present:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain how your thinking about rubrics has changed. What misconceptions about rubrics did you have before this task that were alleviated by completing the task?2. Expand upon two or three of your biggest take-aways in growing your understanding of quality rubrics. What will stay with you as you move forward?3. Describe the role rubrics will have in your future instruction. What are your plans for implementing rubrics? What more do you want to learn about rubrics to better use them?	
	<p>DETAILED: Reflection includes sufficient detail for reader to know what the teacher has learned and how knowledge is/will be used in teaching and learning.</p>	
	<p>CLARITY: Reflection is clear and coherent.</p>	

Iowa Teaching Standards

The following Iowa Teaching Standards are closely aligned with this micro-credential.

- 1. Demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.
- 2. Demonstrate competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.
- ✓ 3. Demonstrate competence in planning and preparing for instruction.
- 4. Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students
- ✓ 5. Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.
- 6. Demonstrates competence in classroom management.
- ✓ 7. Engages in professional growth.
- 8. Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

Ohio Teaching Standards

The following Ohio Teaching Standards are closely aligned with this micro-credential.

- 1. Teachers understand student learning and development and respect the diversity of the students they teach.
- 2. Teachers know and understand the content area for which they have instructional responsibility.
- ✓ 3. Teachers understand and use varied assessments to inform instruction, evaluate and ensure student learning.
- ✓ 4. Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction that advances the learning of each individual student.
- 5. Teachers create learning environments that promote high levels of learning and achievement for all students.
- 6. Teachers collaborate and communicate with students, parents, other educators, administrators and the community to support student learning.
- ✓ 7. Teachers assume responsibility for professional growth, performance and involvement as individuals and as members of a learning community.