Assessment and Feedback Strategies: Writing Rubrics

Overview

The following is an overview of writing rubrics, focused on two main types of rubrics:
1. Analytic
    a. Basic
    b. Detailed
2. Holistic

The examples given are not meant as templates, or to standardize your course. They are solely designed as examples for how to incorporate some aspects of written assignments into a functional rubric.
The assignments, criteria, and point values are examples used for the purpose of illustration. They are not prescribed.

For information on how to integrate your rubric with your D2L course, watch these videos: Rubrics Tool for Instructors.

Analytic Writing Rubrics

Analytic rubrics detail the performance criteria and scoring system for a product created by a student. These rubrics allow the scoring to reflect the weight of various aspects of an assignment. They can provide very useful feedback to students and instructors on skills that require further development (Little, 2006).

When developing an Analytic Rubric it is important to consider:
1. What are the learning objectives covered in this activity/assessment?
2. What cognitive function of that/those learning objective(s) is/are being evaluated?
3. What criteria is being utilized to assess this?
    a. This criteria will be directly used in the rubric.
4. Share the rubric with students before the assignment.
5. The evaluation based off the rubric can help students develop. It can also help the instructor adapt activities/assessments to the needs of the students.
6. The rubric can be a useful tool for students (Paz, 2009).

Example 1 -- Basic Analytic Rubric
Grading criteria for written assignments (45 points per assignment/4 written assignments per semester, 180 points total).

You will be assigned four written assignments during the semester. These assignments will be evaluated based on the following rubric. You are expected to submit each assignment two weeks after it is assigned (please refer to syllabus for exact dates and submission details). You will receive feedback on your assignment no later than two weeks after you have submitted it (again refer to syllabus for exact dates).

Written Assignments	Point Value
Clarity: Central ideas are critical, thoughtful, and clearly stated.	25
Mechanics: Language (Vocabulary, grammar, tone, references)	10
Structure : Format, Organization, Transitions	10

Example 2 -- Detailed Analytic Rubric
Grading criteria for written assignments (45 points per assignment/4 written assignment per semester, 180 points total).

You will be assigned four written assignments during the semester. These assignments will be evaluated based on the following rubric. You are expected to submit each assignment two weeks after it is assigned (please refer to syllabus for exact dates and submission details). You will receive feedback on your assignment no later than two weeks after you have submitted it (again refer to syllabus for exact dates).

	Low Performance	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectation	Exceeds Expectations	Score
Introduction	Position is not presented.	Position is present, but vague. The main ideas of the paper are missing or vague.	Position is identified in an organized fashion.	Student engages the reader while clearly outlining the main concepts of the paper.	5
Central Ideas: Clear, Focused, Properly sequenced with transitions.	Central ideas are not present or do not support the main position.	Some central ideas are missing or unclear.	Central ideas are clearly identified. The order and connection between ideas could be improved.	Student clearly articulates main ideas and presents these to the reader in a logical, analytical manner.	15

Support/Research	No research present.	Research is present. Some support is relevant, but most is vague or missing.	Support is relevant and present. For the most part, research is used logically.	Research is highly relevant, diverse, and current. It directly supports ideas and position of critical thought.	10
Conclusion	No effective conclusion present.	Student restates position.	Student summarizes position and central ideas.	Student clearly summarizes position and supported central ideas. The logical thought process is explicit.	5
Grammar and Mechanics	Significant errors throughout paper.	Some grammatical/mechanical errors. Some errors are significant.	Few grammatical/mechanical errors. The errors present are minor.	No grammatical or mechanical errors.	5
APA Style, Citations, and References	Significant errors that detract from the presentation.	Some significant errors in APA style, citations or references.	Few insignificant errors in APA style, citations, or references.	No errors in APA style, citations, or references.	5

Note. Adapted partially from *Rubrics. Assessment for Effective Intervention*, p. 138, by D.L. Paz, 2009, Sage Publications.

Some Examples of when it may be good to use Analytic Rubrics:
- Detailed feedback is desired for student and/or instructor development
- Multiple graders -- criteria descriptions may make scoring more uniform
- Illustration of strengths and weakness is desired

Holistic Writing Rubrics

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Holistic Rubrics have one score for all components of a project (they judge the entire project as one piece). Holistic rubrics focus on what the student has accomplished in the project, without providing feedback on weaknesses.

Example 3 -- Holistic Rubric
Grading criteria for written assignments (3 points per assignment/4 written assignment per semester, 12 points total).

You will be assigned four written assignments during the semester. These assignments will be evaluated based on the following rubric. You are expected to submit each assignment two weeks after it is assigned (please refer to syllabus for exact dates and submission details). You will receive feedback on your assignment no later than two weeks after you have submitted it (again refer to syllabus for exact dates).

Score	Description
3: Exceeds Expectations	The student clearly identifies and articulates ideas through logical, thoughtful presentation. All criteria of the task are met or exceeded, and there are fewer than three mechanical errors.
2: Meets Expectations	The student identifies all central ideas supported by relevant details. There is a logical progression throughout, and minimal mechanical errors.
1: Needs Improvement	The student presents work with significant errors, lack of order, and unclear ideas.
0: Low Performance	Student did not attempt the task.

You may want to consider using a Holistic Rubric if:
- Multiple responses could be correct
- The objective is overall proficiency, without targeting specific criteria/goals

On The Web

- When To Use: Holistic vs. Analytic Rubrics
- The Basics of Rubrics
- Example of Detailed Holistic Rubric
- Example of Detailed Analytic Rubric
- Letter Grade Based Detailed Analytic Rubric

Little, D. (2006). *Grading with rubrics: Developing a fair and efficient assessment tool. Teaching Concerns: Newsletter of the Teaching Resource Center for Faculty and Teaching Assistants, Fall 2006*, 10/02/2014.

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