RUBRIC USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Using rubrics is a way of ensuring that students, teachers, and parents alike know the purpose of the work that students are being asked to do. The use of rubrics as a tool for scoring work has the potential for giving students the power and responsibility that goes with knowing what is being asked of them and how to achieve it.

What is a rubric?

A rubric is an evaluation tool that describes the criteria for performance at various levels using demonstrative verbs. It is a performance-based assessment process that accurately reflects content skills, process skills, work habits, and learning results.

There are generally two types of rubrics: holistic and analytic. It is important to analyze the task, activity or project being assessed and determine which type of rubric is most appropriate to apply. A holistic rubric describes a student's work as a single score--the report or project as a whole is assigned a score. Therefore, holistic rubrics are best suited to tasks that can be performed or evaluated as a whole and/or those that may not require extensive feedback.

Analytic rubrics specify criteria to be assessed at each performance level, provide a separate score for each criterion, and may include a composite score for overall performance. In some cases, the composite score is weighted based on the importance of each dimension.

Why should rubrics be used?

Using rubrics focuses both students and teachers on two essential questions:

- What do we want students to know and do?
- What would exemplary demonstration of this learning look like?

Rubrics serve several purposes in the assessment process. These purposes include:

- Creating a common framework and language for evaluation.
- Providing students with clear expectations about what will be assessed, as well as standards that should be met. Send messages about what is most meaningful.
- Increasing the consistency and objectivity of evaluating (especially scoring or rating) performances, products, and understanding.
- Providing students with information about where they are in relation to where they need to be for success.
- Identifying what's most important to focus on in instruction.
- Giving students guidance in evaluating and improving their work. Students can learn how to think about evaluation.

How do you develop a rubric?

At first developing rubrics is very difficult. The greatest challenge is for teachers and, ultimately, students to translate the performance of various assignments to the rubric fairly and reliably. For this they need support, time, and practice.

Rubrics can be developed using the following 8-step process.

- Step 1: Determine what the assessment will encompass

- Step 2: Review previous student work and/or other rubrics to identify any additional assessment criteria
- Step 3: Define each dimension
- Step 4: Adopt a scale for describing the range of products/performances and write a description for each dimension for each point on the scale
- Step 5: Develop a draft rubric
- Step 6: Evaluate the rubric
- Step 7: Pilot test, revise, and try the rubric again
- Step 8: Share the rubric with students and their parents

Tool #11 in the *Aiming High ToolKit* (Resource Section Tab 15) explains the process for the development of rubrics and provides examples. Additional tools for designing rubrics are provided on the following pages. They include the "Rubric to Evaluate the Quality of a Rubric," an examples of a rubric; "Words and Phrases for Prompt and Rubric Design"; and "Descriptors for Weaker and Stronger Performance Levels."

RUBRIC TO EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF A RUBRIC

Criteria	Needs To Be Reworked	Acceptable But Needs More Clarity If Used For High Stakes Testing	Clearly Written
Performance Levels Addressed	Scoring guide is open-ended	The scoring guide provides for different performance levels	The scoring guide is descriptive of each level of performance
Description of Performance Levels	There are no specific descriptions of the different performance levels	Differences between the levels rely on looking for a number of examples or responses	The descriptions define clear and significant differences between the performance levels
Language Specificity	Vague words are used to discriminate between levels: some, many, few, good, excellent	Subjective words (good, excellent, some) are used to discriminate between levels but are further defined	The critical attributes between each level of performance are included
Usefulness	The ratings do not provide useful instructional information	Ratings provide instructional information that needs further task analysis	Ratings provide useful instructional information

Developed by the SBE Design Team
Northern Colorado BOCES

WORDS AND PHRASES FOR PROMPT AND RUBRIC DESIGN

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Instruction Verbs for Five Levels of Thinking				
KNOWLEDGE/ COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
list	use	inspect	plan	rate
repeat	show	inventory	create	score
record	apply	examine	design	choose
relate	employ	diagram	program	value
locate	interpret	analyze	manage	select
review	operate	compare	arrange	assess
restate	sketch	contrast	compose	estimate
describe	schedule	relate	propose	appraise
discuss	illustrate	question	set up	evaluate
explain	translate	test	collect	revise
recognize	demonstrate	measure	assemble	judge
identify	dramatize	differentiate	prepare	debate
define		distinguish	construct	oppose
report		calculate	formulate	defend
name		experiment	organize	criticize
recall				
tell				

FOUR LEVELS OF DIFFERENCE IN DEGREE		
DEGREES OF UNDERSTANDING	DEGREES OF FREQUENCY	DEGREES OF EFFECTIVENESS
▪ thorough/complete ▪ substantial/extensive ▪ minimal/general ▪ partial/some misunderstanding	▪ nearly always/always ▪ often/frequently ▪ sometimes/occasionally ▪ rarely/almost never/ never	▪ highly effective ▪ effective ▪ moderately effective ▪ minimally effective/ ineffective

Descriptors for Weaker Performance Levels

- recognizes and describes briefly
- incomplete attempt
- with some errors
- without complete understanding
- generally explains
- general, fundamental understanding
- uses a single method
- represents a single perspective
- identifies few connections
- without drawing accurate conclusions
- without explaining the reason
- presents confusing statements and facts
- without demonstrating complete understanding of the characteristics
- with limited details
- demonstrates beginning understanding
- has a general sense
- with inaccuracies
- takes a common, conventional approach
- overlooks critical details
- relies on single source
- vague or incomplete description
- unable to apply information in problem solving
- does not perceive a pattern
- presents concepts in isolation
- omits important details, facts, and/or concepts
- no evidence of future projections

Descriptors for Stronger Performance Levels

- thoroughly understands and explains
- efficient, thorough solution
- without errors
- thorough, extensive understanding
- provides new insight
- thorough mastery of extensive knowledge
- uses multiple methods
- represents a variety of perspectives
- draws complex connections
- draws logical conclusions which are not immediately obvious
- clearly explains the reasoning
- provides clear, thorough support
- demonstrates complete understanding of all the characteristics
- in elaborate detail
- sophisticated synthesis of complex body of information
- shows an impressive level of depth
- with precision and accuracy
- takes an original, unique, imaginative approach
- provides comprehensive analysis
- uses multiple sources
- thorough explanation of critical analysis
- solves problem by effective application of information
- identifies an abstract pattern
- relates concepts using a variety of factors
- thorough presentation of important details, facts, and concepts
- predicts future changes