

De Anza College Developing an Assessment Rubric

Think about the major graded assignments that you are giving students this quarter. Choose one (in only one class) that you feel measures some aspect of a core competency. Keep it simple. Use an assignment you always give that you feel is important. It only has to address one aspect of the Student Learning Outcome and/or ICC.

Develop a rubric or grading scale that articulates in words how you grade that assignment. What components compose an A on this assignment? What makes up a B? Define each level.

General Information on Grading Rubrics

A **rubric** translates the standards and criteria that make up grading into some sort of chart or description. Rubrics can be used to score many kinds of written assignments or exams, papers, projects, speeches or portfolios. They are not useful, however, as a grading mechanism for multiple choice or short answer tests.

A rubric answers the question, “What precisely is an A on a particular assignment or project? How is it different from a B or C?” While this is information that many of us carry inside our heads, in order to clearly assess student learning outcomes, it must be articulated in writing. However, it is up to you – the expert in your classroom – to define these standards and criteria and how they will be applied to the class work that you assign. Your rubric will be as individual as your grading style and pedagogy.

There are three steps to creating a rubric:

1. Define the specific components that are key elements to the assignment or project.
2. Delineate specific levels of success for each element.
3. Assemble the elements into a chart or written document.
4. optional--create numerical scales for each level of success. If this aspect of the rubric is added, a statistical analysis comparing a student's progress, group and individual success relative to specific criteria can be created . . . the realm of possibilities can only grow with your imagination

After you have created a rubric, it's helpful to share it with another faculty member in your discipline (or better yet, in a different discipline) to check if:

- a) The wording is understandable to a student or novice (watch for an excess of discipline-specific jargon).
- b) The progression of criteria for each level is logical and consistent.

Note: You do not need to share your rubric with your students, but if you do it may prove helpful. In a survey done in Spring 2003, many Cabrillo Learner Outcomes Summer Institute alumni reported that clear communication resulted from using a rubric. This did not necessarily improve overall grades, but students were more aware of what they'd done and where they needed to do to improve. As a result, the survey revealed that conflict over grading had significantly lessened!

The free website <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> offers templates for creating rubrics. More information is included in the following pages.

A short excerpt from the text: Introduction to Rubrics by Stevens and Levi has also been included. It may offer you more insight as to the usefulness of a rubric too.

Based on Cabrillo College's "Workbook Instructional Planning"

