Creating Rubrics to Assess Writing and Speaking by Deborah Healey
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Student writing sample for discussion
Q: Why are you learning English?
   I am and work in museum. So, if my English vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation could be enhance, I think that I could get some advantage like the following. My job could be more interesting when I meet somebody from other countries. Now, the English guide take charge of these groups. When it happen that I had to guide English groups in the museum, i had research my words everytime and the conversation wasn't nice for me. If I want to change job, I think that the English, even if its not necessary for the work that I will do, will be part of application.

Outline
Checklists
        Set of criteria, as a list
Rubrics
        Criteria are usually in a matrix
Benefits of rubrics for students
   • Students can fully understand what they need to do in order to succeed with a task.
   • Students work on self-assessment, which is a critical thinking skill.
   • Students can more easily do peer assessment if they are using rubrics.
   • Grading is fairer.
Benefits for teachers
   • The teacher can fully understand the task and decide what is important.
   • The teacher fully understands what he or she is asking students to do.
   • Grading is fairer.
   • Grading is much faster and easier.
Drawbacks of rubrics
   • They take time to do well.
   • They take practice to do well.
   • You can't change your mind as you are grading, even if you realize you forgot something important. The rubric is a contract that binds the teacher as well as the student.
   • A poorly-designed rubric is not helpful to the students or to the teacher.

Six steps to create a rubric, adapted from Create a Rubric Tutorial at
http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/eta/Rubric_Tutorial/default.htm
   1. Start with the performance objective
   2. Identify the characteristics/tasks comprising the performance
   3. Identify the potential levels of quality (e.g., very good, good, fair, weak, very weak)
   4. Assign a point value to each level, and a total point value for the assessment
   5. Identify the criteria for each level of quality within a characteristic/task
   6. Create the rubric table – put the dimensions as rows and the levels as columns.

Step 1: Performance Objectives with the ABCD Model
   "How to Write Clear Objectives" from Pennsylvania State University's Teaching and Learning http://ets.tlt.psu.edu/learningdesign/objectives/writingobjectives/

Objectives need to be based on specific, observable behavior (e.g., not "learn" and "understand" but "create" or "list").
A = Audience (who is being evaluated?)
B = Behavior (observable!)
C = Condition (under what conditions will the behavior occur?)
D = Degree (how much/many, how fast, how accurately, etc. – what makes it good?) – also called criteria

Examples of Well-Written Objectives – from PSU
Below are some example objectives which include Audience (A), Behavior (B), Condition (C), and Degree of Mastery (D). Note that many objectives actually put the condition first.

Cognitive (application level) -"Given a sentence written in the past or present tense, the student will be able to re-write the sentence in future tense with no errors in tense or tense contradiction (i.e., I will see her yesterday.)."
Affective - "Given the opportunity to work in groups, the student will demonstrate an positive increase in attitude towards cooperation, as measured by a survey."
Cognitive (comprehension level) -"Given examples and non-examples of constructivist activities in a college classroom, the student will be able to accurately identify the constructivist examples and explain why each example is or isn't a constructivist activity in 20 words or less."

Participants in this webinar (Audience), after listening carefully and participating actively in group work (Condition), will create rubrics (Behavior) that will contain at least three rows for characteristics and at least three columns for levels (Degree).

Step 2: Identify the characteristics/tasks comprising the performance
Make sure you focus on enough but not too many. Try to keep the rubric to one or two pages at most.

Step 3: Identify the potential levels of quality
More levels is a lot more work. Have enough, but no more.
Three levels: weak, average, very good (9 cells with 3 characteristics)

	Weak (1 point)	Average (2 points)	Very Good (3 points)
Characteristic 1 or task element 1	<describe what makes something "poor">	<describe what makes something "satisfactory">	<describe what makes something "excellent">
Characteristic 2 or task element 2			
Characteristic 3 or task element 3			

Four levels: very weak, almost satisfactory, satisfactory, excellent (12 cells with 3 characteristics)
Five levels: very weak, weak, average, very good, excellent (15 cells with 3 characteristics – and you often have more than 3. That's a lot of writing).

Step 4: Assign a point value to each level, and a total point value for the assessment.
Sample calculation – if you have 4 points in 5 characteristics, the total can be 20 (or 15, if one of the levels is 0). Don't let the math stop you!

Step 5: Identify the criteria for each level of quality within a characteristic/task.

Start with what makes something excellent. How would a student get the maximum number of points for each characteristic/task? Be as complete as possible in thinking about this.

Now, look at the weakest. What would a very weak characteristic/task look like?

Finally, look at the middle areas. What is missing in each characteristic/task?

Describe each of the levels carefully and clearly, so that students can understand what you want.

Step 6: Create the rubric table.

Tables in Word work well for creating templates for rubrics.

Sample table with three characteristics, and three points.

Course name:

Assignment:

Date:

	Weak (1 point)	Average (2 points)	Very Good (3 points)
Content (interesting ideas, examples)	No examples that explain why you want to learn English.	At least one example that explains why you want to learn English.	At least two examples that explain why you want to learn English.
Grammar	Several mistakes that make it hard to understand your meaning.	1 or 2 small mistakes, but the reader can understand your meaning.	No mistakes in what we have studied so far (simple present and simple past).
Mechanics	Several mistakes that make it hard to understand your meaning.	1 or 2 small mistakes, but the reader can understand your meaning	No mistakes in what we have studied so far (capitalization, punctuation, common spelling words).

Online help with rubrics: Rubican and Rubistar

RubiStar gives you ideas about what you might find helpful. YOU need to decide what fits your behavioral objective! You can change any of the characteristics or descriptions.
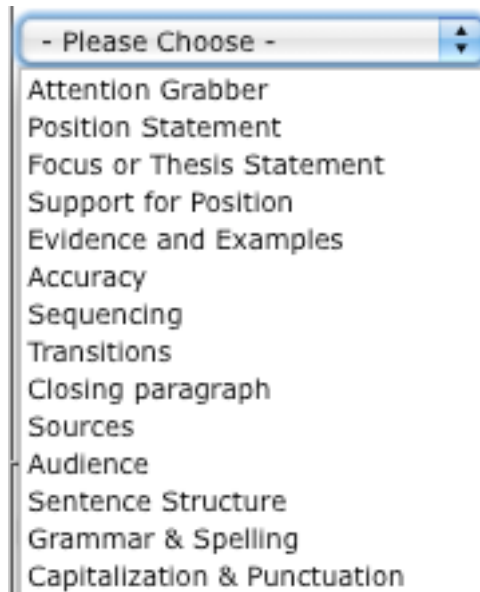
Persuasive writing
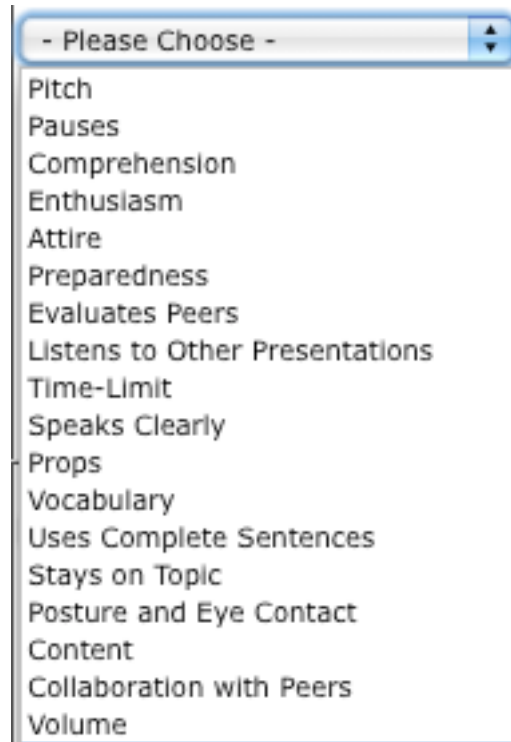
Oral presentation

Resources

- Writing Objectives: http://ets.tlt.psu.edu/learningdesign/objectives/writingobjectives/
- Classifying Objectives (a revised Bloom's Taxonomy):
  http://edtech.tennessee.edu/~bobannon/classifications.html
- Sample checklist for writing:
- http://www.scribd.com/doc/35772510/Writing-Checklist - see My Writing Checklist.doc
- Create a Rubric Tutorial:
  http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/eta/Rubric_Tutorial/default.htm
- Make Room for Rubrics:
  http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/assessment/roomforubrics.htm
- Understanding Rubrics: http://www.middleweb.com/rubricsHG.html
- Rubican: http://www.rubrician.com
  - Writing examples - http://www.rubrician.com/writing
  - Persuasive writing rubric (US 8th graders):
    http://www.intercom.net/local/school/sdms/mspap/wkidpers.html
  - Informative writing rubric (US 8th graders):
    http://www.intercom.net/local/school/sdms/mspap/wkidinf.html
- RubiStar: http://rubistar.4teachers.org/
  - Persuasive essay example
    http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=CustomizeTemplate&bank_rubric_id=127&section_id=5&