Understanding Rubrics

A rubric is a scoring tool that lays out specific expectations for an assignment, either written or oral.

Why Use Rubrics

Rubrics appeal to teachers and students for many reasons. First, they are powerful tools for both teaching and assessment. Rubrics can improve student performance, as well as monitor it, by making teachers’ expectations clear and by showing students how to meet these expectations. The result is often marked improvements in the quality of student work and learning. Thus, the most common argument for using rubrics is they help define “quality” and teacher expectations.

A second reason that rubrics are useful is that they help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their own and others’ work. When rubrics are used to guide self and peer assessment, students become increasingly able to spot and solve problems in their own and one another’s work.

Third, rubrics reduce the amount of time teachers spend evaluating student work. They convey effective feedback, minimize marking complaints, provide more perceived objectivity, and give transparency and consistency in marking.

Finally, rubrics are easy to use and to explain.

Elements of a Rubric

• Objectives
  ○ Row headings
  ○ Criteria
• Standards
  ○ Column headings
  ○ Levels of achievement
• Measurement
  ○ Cell description
  ○ Achievement differentiation
  ○ Grade assignment

Examples of rubrics can be found at:
http://rubistar.4teachers.org  Teach-noloy
Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Classroom Learning Using Rubrics

• Creating rubrics is the hard part – using them is relatively easy.
• Once you have created a rubric, give copies to students and ask them to assess their own progress on a task or project. The point is for the rubric to help students learn more and produce better final products.
• Look at models: Show students examples of good and not-so-good work. Identify the characteristics that make the good ones good and the bad ones bad.
• List criteria: Use the discussion of models to begin a list of what counts in quality work.
• Articulate gradations of quality: Describe the best and worst levels of quality, and then fill in the middle levels based on your knowledge of common problems.
• Practice on models: Have students use a rubric to evaluate models.
• Use self and peer assessment: Give students their task. As they work, stop them occasionally for self and peer assessment.
• Revise: Always give students time to revise their work based on the feedback they get.
• Use teacher assessment: Use the same rubric students used to assess their work yourself.
• Grading is relatively easy with rubrics. A piece of work that reflects the highest level of quality for each criterion deserves a mark in the 85% to 100% range and so on. Because one piece of work rarely falls in only one level of quality, many teachers average out the levels of quality, either formally or informally.
• Rubrics can also be included in portfolios. The idea is to support and to evaluate student learning.

Adapted from:
