

8.2 | Evaluate: Rubric Samples & Design Guidelines

A ‘rubric’ is a rule or an explanation. When used in the context of assessment, a rubric communicates the rules, criteria, and/or standards that will be used for judging quality or for scoring a learning assignment. Rubrics work particularly well for assessing non-traditional or alternative assignments (products, presentations, papers, portfolios, teamwork, discussion posts, etc.). Instructors can use rubrics as a standard or benchmark for grading and to provide feedback to learners. Learners can use rubrics to guide the completion of an assignment. Therefore, they should be given to learners *in advance* of the assignment due date to optimize learning. Learners can also use rubrics to peer-assess the work of others.

What makes a good rubric? To a large extent, this depends on (1) the nature of the learning task involved, (2) the purpose of the assessment, and (3) your learner audience. For example, a rubric intended to guide the learner in completing an ePortfolio of their own work will likely include general and flexible criteria to allow the learner to exhibit creativity and highlight his/her strengths. On the other hand, a rubric used to grade a student’s first research paper will include specific requirements concerning formatting, mechanics, the number of cited sources, depth of analysis, and other expectations. Basically, an effective rubric: *“helps learners focus on the important elements of a performance and provides information on which they can reflect and base strategies for growth”* (Howland, Moore, Marra & Jonassen, 2002, pp. 234-235).

Instructions:

Explore:

Consider the guidelines for creating rubrics, below, and then read through the sample rubrics that follow. Complete your exploration by searching the Internet for examples of rubrics. For each rubric, take note of the specific (1) learning task, (2) assessment purpose, and (3) intended learner audience.

Synthesize:

Produce a short list of criteria for a “good” rubric, being sure to identify a specific learning task, assessment purpose and learner audience (this will provide a context for your list).

Evaluate:

Use your list of criteria to evaluate a rubric of your choice. Compare your list of criteria and your evaluation results with similar lists and evaluations produced by colleagues and/or course peers.

Guidelines for Creating Rubrics:

You can use the table below as a template to develop an assignment rubric, adding more rows as necessary:

1. Briefly describe the **learning task and purpose** of the rubric (e.g., “Use to assess a 10-page essay on...;” “Use to assess a laboratory exercise on the...”).
2. List the **learning outcome or objective** associated with the assessment.
3. Use the left-hand column of the table to list the **criteria** that will be judged (e.g., clarity of writing, visual aesthetics, factual accuracy, depth of discussion, documentation, group collaboration, etc.).



4. Assign a heading to the remaining columns to describe three to five **levels of mastery or proficiency**. How will you label the levels of performance? Examples:

- Beginning/Novice, Developing, Accomplished, Exemplary/Expert
- Needs Work, Adequate, Excellent
- Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, Distinguished
- Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent
- Numeric Scale (1, 2, 3, 4)

5. In each column and row, provide a verbal description of the **indicators of proficiency** (or lack thereof) for each criterion and mastery level. What will you look for in the learners' work, and what are the indicators or signs of a good or bad performance? Use language that focuses on discernible, empirical differences in performance, clearly delineating what is "better" or "worse." Performance can vary on a number of dimensions, such as depth, breadth, quality, scope, extent, complexity, degrees, and accuracy. For example:

- Presence to absence
- Complete to incomplete
- Many to some to none
- Major to minor
- Consistent to inconsistent
- Frequency: always, generally, sometimes, rarely

For group interaction and teamwork, consider the following dimensions:

- Sharing/comparing of information
- Discovery and exploration of dissonance or inconsistency among participants
- Negotiation of meaning/co-construction of knowledge
- Testing and modification of proposed synthesis or co-construction
- Agreement statements/applications of newly constructed meaning

6. Decide on a **point value for each level of proficiency**. This will be determined by your professional judgment and the nature of the assignment. It is generally wise to allow from 3 to 5 points per criteria. Any less is difficult to justify with students, and if you use more, the difference between point allowances is difficult to distinguish. For example:

0 points = no evidence of an attempt to meet the stated criterion.

1 point = some evidence that stated criterion was addressed.

2 points = participant met most of requirements for criterion.

3 points = participant met all requirements for criterion.

(Or: 2 = meets all requirements 3 = exceeds requirements)

Rubric Development Template:

Learning Task & Purpose of the Rubric:
Learner Audience:
Associated Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

Criterion	Level/Description of Mastery or Proficiency & Scoring				Score Received
	1	2	3	4	
Total Score: _____					



Rubric for Assessing the Effectiveness of a Rubric

The following rubric is adapted from Howland, J., Moore, J., Marra, R.M., & Jonassen, D.H. (2002). *Learning to solve problems with technology: A constructivist perspective*. (2nd edition.) Prentice Hall.

Criteria	Descriptive Question	Lowest Measure	Medium Measure	Highest Measure
Comprehensiveness of Elements	Are all of the important elements of the performance identified?	Important elements are missing (attach list of missing elements)		All important elements are identified.
Uni-dimensionality of Elements	Are the elements irreducible, or do they represent factors that are better addressed separately?	More than one element should be broken down (attach list).	One element should be broken down.	All elements are unidimensional.
Distinctiveness of Ratings	Do the ratings represent clearly different categories, or is there overlap or ambiguity?	Ratings for one or more elements seem to overlap (attach list of elements).		Ratings for each element are distinct from one another.
Comprehensiveness of Ratings	Do the ratings cover the full range of expected performances?	Ratings are missing (Attach list).		All-important ratings are identified.
Descriptiveness of Ratings	Do the ratings provide meaningful input for reflection?	Several ratings have generic or minimally useful labels (attach list).	Few ratings have generic or minimally useful labels (attach list).	All ratings communicate clearly.
Clarity	To what extent do key stakeholders understand the rubric?	Few students will understand all of the terms used in elements and ratings (attach list of suggestions).	Most students will understand most of the terms used in elements and ratings (attach list of suggestions).	All students will understand.
Quality of Information Provided to the Student		Misses many opportunities for information to communicate clearly about the quality of the performance.	Adequate information is provided to serve as the basis for growth.	Lots of specifics are provided to facilitate development.
Quality of Scales Used	To what extent does the rubric resist the temptation to provide generic scales?	“Generic” scales seem to compromise the value of the rubric (attach list of offending elements).		The scale for each element reflects a sincere effort to identify distinctive ratings.
Completeness of Scales Used	To what extent does the rubric resist the temptation to summarize?	Information of value may be overlooked because a summary collapsing categories is used (attach list of suggested additions).		No attempt to create an overall score or grade is evident.



Rubric Sample #1:

Learning Task – The middle school student’s final project will demonstrate proficiency in writing and presenting.

Assessment Purpose – The rubric will guide and assess the learning progress of middle school students on the composition and presentation of their final year-end project, and will be used by the homeroom teacher in grading the year-end project.

Learner Audience – English students in grades 5-8.

Year-End Writing & Presentation Project

Criteria	Novice	Apprentice	Practitioner	Expert
Writing organization	Needs support to organize ideas in simple formats such as lists, outlines or summaries.	Makes use of simple organizational patterns: introduction, body and conclusion, order of events.	Organizes ideas and material using a clear, well-defined structure.	Uses sophisticated approaches to organizing ideas and material, with strong openings, supportive details and through-provoking conclusions.
Idea or concept development	Needs support to go beyond a summary of facts to ideas or positions.	Is beginning to form ideas or state a position (e.g., likes & dislikes, agreement & disagreement) in a short and direct manner, lacking supporting details.	Develops his or her own ideas and positions and shows some skill in supporting those ideas and positions.	Develops ideas and positions that are original, notable and well supported and documented.
Style, tone & vocabulary	Exhibits some difficulty in using everyday language and simple (elementary) vocabulary to describe or discuss.	Writes or speaks in a simple (elementary) manner.	Uses a style or tone appropriate to the assignment, and uses a range of vocabulary to communicate purpose.	Consistently uses an appropriate style, tone, format or genre. Uses vocabulary that highlights Meaning. Experiments with literary techniques (analogies, metaphors, imagery, etc.) that support meaning or position.
Speaking & Presenting	Uses the forms of spoken language in both writing and presenting. Appears extremely self-conscious and uncomfortable speaking in front of a group.	Communicates using a number of the basic conventions of language. Appears somewhat comfortable speaking in front of a group.	Communicates (writes, speaks, presents) using many of the conventions of spoken or written language.	Communicates (writes, speaks, presents) with an excellent command of the conventions of spoken or written language.
Response to constructive criticism	Needs support to edit the work of others, as well as requiring support to revise his/her own work in response to the constructive criticism of others.	Needs some assistance in peer-editing. Able to make simple revisions to his/her own work in response to the constructive criticism of others.	Able to provide constructive criticism when peer-editing. Able to revise his/her own work to make ideas or organization clearer in response to constructive criticism from others.	Able to provide substantive and constructive criticism when peer-editing. Self-edits, responds positively to critique and is willing and able to revise and rewrite.



Rubric Sample #2:

Learning Task – The trainee will identify three to five worthwhile products that he/she would be willing to evaluate during Consumer Reviews Online Magazine new reviewer training.

Assessment Purpose – The rubric will guide and assess the learning progress of product evaluation trainees in determining the worth of products to evaluate and in selecting appropriate products for consumer evaluation reports.

Learner Audience – New product reviewer trainees.

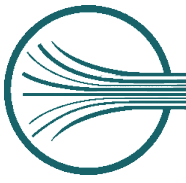
Product Evaluation: Potential Product Identification – Rubric Due Week 1 (worth 10 points)

Assignment Description:

You are to submit a list of from three to five potential products, any one of which you would be willing to evaluate. Include a brief description of each product and why you think it would be worthwhile evaluating it. The description for each product should be no more than one paragraph long. You will receive feedback on the feasibility of evaluating the identified products. Refer to the following rubric for guidelines on how this assignment will be assessed.

Rubric: Potential Products to Evaluate – Week 1

Criteria	Points Possible	Points Awarded
Provided a list of from three to five potential products, any one of which the course participant would be willing to evaluate for the product evaluation project.	3	
Provided a brief, one-paragraph description for each of the potential products. Provided enough background information on the products to enable the course facilitator to judge their suitability as the subject of an evaluation.	3	
For each potential product, provided a justification for the worth of the evaluation and how the evaluation results might be used.	3	
List was thorough and demonstrated effort and care in identifying viable, worthwhile subjects for evaluation.	1	
Total Points:	10	/10



Rubric Sample #3:

Learning Task – Reflect on and synthesize readings regarding the use of student assessment data to inform the design and revision of instruction.

Assessment Purpose – To ascertain whether students are successfully synthesizing the assigned readings and making valid and useful connections for professional practice.

Learner Audience – Novice Instructional Designers

Instructional Design Based on Assessment Data

Assignment	Criteria	Points Possible	Standard for Full Credit	Points Awarded
Reflective Synthesis	Prensky articles and EDUCAUSE articles on the "Net Generation," along with articles that present alternative viewpoints.	20	The course participant addresses the characteristics of the Net Generation that impact instructional design. Summarizes alternative points of view, states a position and defends that position with the literature.	
	Connecting data to learning.	20	Addresses ideas on connecting data to learning, as mentioned in <i>Data Driven Differentiation</i> .	
	Use of scientifically-based research.	20	Critiques the articles read with respect to the validity of the research cited. Provides a justification for chosen viewpoint based on scientifically-based research (SBR). Addresses how the readings have impacted thinking on teaching and learning.	
	Reflection & Mechanics.	15	Paper is three-to-four pages long, the points are made clearly, there is a logical flow from point to point, uses correct spelling, grammar & sentence structure.	
	Total Points Possible:	75	Comments:	___/75

**Rubric Sample #4:**

Learning Task – Create an informative multimedia product for use on the client’s website.

Assessment Purpose – The rubric will be used to judge the content, functionality, and aesthetics of multimedia products produced. The final scores will be ultimately used to recommend three of the final projects to the client for potential adoption and use on their website.

Learner Audience – Novice graphics and web designers enrolled in a course that involves working with a real-world client to identify and produce a multimedia product for use on the client’s website.

Rubric for Multimedia Products for an Informative Client Website

	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
CONTENT...				
...is credible and authoritative.				
...is presented in a sequential and logical format.				
...does not contain any mechanical errors.				
...is expressed using user-appropriate language.				
...nature matches the client's stated purpose for the website.				
...resources and links are current (within five years).				
FUNCTIONALITY...				
Navigation system is evident, intuitive, clear, and easy to follow.				
Cueing system to guide the user is evident.				
All client-specified elements are accessible and functioning.				
No required functionality is missing.				
DESIGN / AESTHETICS...				
Multimedia product is visually appealing.				
Graphics are designed using conventional design principles.				
Product is designed to meet universal design standards (accessibility).				
Graphics add to the value & effectiveness of instruction.				
“Wow” factor.				
Scores:				
Total Score (out of 60 possible):				___/60
Product Rating Scale: 48-60 = Exemplary Product, Highly Recommended 35-47 = Very Good Product, Recommended <22 = Unacceptable product				
22-34 = Fair Product, Do Not Recommend				