

I use rubrics for everything!

Dr. Shawni Jackson, faculty member in the Anheuser-Busch School of Business, has developed or adapted rubrics for every course she teaches to evaluate student work. Asked why she uses rubrics, Dr. Jackson has a one-word response, “Consistency!”

Here are some benefits of developing and using rubrics from *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment* by Walvoord & Anderson, 1998, p. 72:

- Diagnose students’ strengths and weaknesses very specifically;
- Save time in the grading process and
- Help instructors grade consistently across students, sections of a course and semesters.

Rubrics can be used as direct measures of performances, presentations, portfolios, papers and internships. They allow for comparisons across students without having to use objective tests. While rubrics take time to develop, they save time in the grading process. Dr. Jackson begins with generic rubrics, created originally by Ms. Richarlene Beech, and then “constantly tweaks and updates them to make them appropriate for each class.” She matches the student learning outcomes for her courses to the criteria on the rubrics. She has offered to share her generic rubrics, which accompany this newsletter in an e-mail.

Rubrics should be shared with the students so that they understand the criteria on which they will be graded. Dr. Jackson says, “I give out and go over the rubrics with the students the first week of class so that they know what to expect when I’m grading.” Student reaction to Dr. Jackson’s rubrics is very positive, “I like that you use a rubric because I can see how I got my grade rather than it coming out of the air.” Dr. Jackson has the students

staple a copy of the rubric to their submitted papers to ensure that they understand how they will be evaluated.

In addition to their use for grading, rubrics can be used for course and program assessment. Using common rubrics, instructors can analyze the results to find areas of strength and weakness across student learning or performance. Dr. Jackson reports that every summer, “I review the rubrics to assess what worked and what needs to be changed. I update my teaching, my courses and my rubrics.” She uses a master rubric in Excel to record student scores and analyze the results.



The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) sponsored the development of 15 rubrics by faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the U.S. Called VALUE rubrics, they are designed for institutional-level assessment of student learning, not for grading, but serve as examples and models. The rubrics, available at aacu.org, cover the following outcomes:

Intellectual and Practical Skills

Inquiry and analysis
Critical thinking
Creative thinking
Written communication
Oral communication
Reading
Quantitative literacy
Information literacy
Teamwork
Problem solving

Personal and Social Responsibility

Civic engagement
Intercultural knowledge and competence
Ethical reasoning
Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Integrative and Applied Learning

Integrative learning