Rubric Development Guidelines

In education, rubrics are a tool developed assess students' performance. This assessment tool lists the dimensions (tasks) of the performance to be evaluated, and the specific criteria used to evaluate each dimension. It is different than a simple checklist since it also describes the gradations of quality (levels) for each dimension of the performance to be evaluated, and assigns a point value to each gradation of quality.

Rubrics are typically used with assessments that are subjective (presentations, papers, discussions, portfolios, essays, projects) rather than objective assessments (multiple choice, true/false or fill-in-the-blank tests.)

Rubrics are **used for many reasons**, some of which include:
1. Rubrics make expectations clear to the students (i.e., Coaching Rubric)
2. Rubrics show students how to meet expectations i.e. what they need to do to be successful (i.e., Coaching Rubric)
3. Rubrics help students evaluate the quality of their own work (i.e., Coaching Rubric)
4. Rubrics identify the specific elements used to differentiate between the qualities of performances. (i.e. it helps the student answer the question 'why did I get a point taken off?') (i.e., Scoring Rubric)
5. If more than one person is evaluating the performance, it improves the consistency and objectivity (standardization) of grading (Scoring Rubric)

Rubrics all contain **three common features** which:

- focus on measuring a stated objective (performance, behavior, or quality).
- use a range to rate performance.
- contain specific performance characteristics arranged in levels indicating the degree to which a standard has been met

Six steps to creating a rubric

1. Record the performance objective or purpose (Title)
2. Identify the key attributes comprising the performance (Performance Criteria)
3. Identify the potential gradations of quality (Levels of Performance)
4. Assign a descriptive level to each gradation. May assign a point value if creating a scoring rubric for grading purposes.

5. Articulate the performance criteria for each level of quality within a dimension/task (begin with the high level criteria)
6. Create the rubric table

Step 1: Record/Write the performance objective or purpose.

Step 2: Identify the key attributes comprising the performance.

Dimensions are the broad concepts or specific tasks the student must demonstrate when performing the activity. Dimensions can be specific tasks or they can address a variety of intellectual or cognitive competencies that target a specific academic discipline or involve multiple disciplines.

Example:
Group Exercise Analyzing a Case Study
1. contribute to the group discussion
2. take responsibility for required work
3. value others viewpoints
4. analyze the study cooperatively
5. present the outcome in a given format

Step 3: Identify the potential gradations of quality.

Gradations are the descriptive levels of quality starting with the worst quality up to the best quality OR best quality down to the worst quality.

--Example of a 3 level gradation: needs improvement, average, excellent (excellent, average, needs improvement)
--Example of a 4 level gradation: beginning, developing, accomplished, exemplary (exemplary, accomplished, developing, beginning)
--Example of a 5 level gradation: poor, fair, average, very good, excellent (excellent, very good, average, fair, poor)

Step 4: Assign a point value to each gradation and a total point value for the assessment *(Scoring rubric only and decide if it is holistic or analytic scoring)*.

Assign a point value to each gradation of quality, and identify the total point

value for the assessment. If you already know the total number of points for this assessment... Divide the total number of points by the number of dimensions to get the maximum point value for achieving the highest gradation for a dimension. For example, if the assessment is worth 15 points, and there are 5 dimensions, the highest gradation will be worth 3 points. Each gradation below this highest level should be valued at less than the 3 points.

Example: Exemplary (3 points) Superior (2 points) Needs Improvement (1 point) Poor (0 points)
Exemplary (15 points) Superior (14 -10 points) Needs Improvement (10 -5 points) Poor (5 – 0 points)

Although most rubrics have at least 1 point for the lowest value, you can have a zero for the lowest gradation.

Even number of performance levels BEST…Odd number of performance levels typically results in middle level evaluations

Step 5: Articulate the performance criteria for each level of quality within a dimension/task/key attribute (begin with the high level criteria)

Start with the best quality of each dimension. Briefly describe the specific expectations you have for the student. Circle the words in the descriptor that can vary. These are the words you will change as you write the less than top level. Then, for each level below the best quality, identify the flaws or missing elements which will cause the student to lose points off the best quality performance.

Avoid negative language when listing the criteria. Instead try to identify the specific criteria which is missing or flaw so they know why they were assessed with a lower quality performance.

Example:
Group Exercise Analyzing a Case Study
    1. contribute to the group discussion
Exemplary – Student understands overall context of the discussion. Contributes ideas and valuable information. Extends connections from the case study to relevant course content.

Superior – Student usually understands overall context of the discussion and asks questions about context as related to the case study. Makes connections on own and "gets" those others make.

Needs Improvement – Student is aware of overall context of the discussion, but makes no connection on own. Can recite connections of others but rarely can support them using course content.

Poor – Student has little or no grasp of the discussion context. Sees the group discussion as isolated with no connection of course content to the case study.

Step 6: Create the rubric table.