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Rubric Roulette? Don't Be Random - Choose or Design Rubrics to Match Learning Objectives and Time Constraints

L. L. Hester

Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Keuka College, 141 Central Ave., Keuka Park NY 14478 USA
(lhester@keuka.edu)

Extended Abstract

This mini-workshop presented a selection of learning objectives, writing assignments and assignment rubrics used in a non-majors general education course, a majors introductory course, a mixed-majors upper level course and an upper-level majors course. Discussion centered on how assignments and rubrics might vary depending on type of course, specific learning objectives and classroom and grading time constraints. Discussion of assignment structure and rubric effectiveness included debates on the advantages and disadvantages of multiple submissions, use of peer feedback (with same or different rubric) and use of simple vs. detailed grading rubrics. Examples of rubrics presented in this mini-workshop can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/ABLErubrics. This Google Document is editable by anyone with the link, so please consider contributing your own ideas, links, citations and rubrics to this google doc.

Table 1. Comparison of selected rubric options.

	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Inclusion of Specific Details (category #, point breakdown etc.)	Guides students and teaching assistants, may improve consistency for multiple graders	Students are too literal, may use as a checklist in a way that limits creativity
Examples of Expert and Novice	Communicates examples to students	Students may want to simply copy and change details
Published / Validated (e.g. Timmerman et al., 2010)	May help justify rubric use to students, builds on work of others and increases cross-institution consistency	Not specific to your assignment or student population and not many are available
Using Rubric for Peer Reviews	May increase consistency and focus student feedback, gets students reading the rubric and applying it	Students may grade easier than instructor so that students are disappointed with instructor grade
Same Rubric for two submissions (if applicable)	Students pay attention to rubric feedback and use it, clearly communicates expectations	May cause poor grades on initial assignment (can correct with added points)

References

Timmerman, B.E.C., D.C. Strickland, R.L. Johnson and J.R. Payne. 2010. Development of a 'universal' rubric for assessing undergraduates' scientific reasoning skills using scientific writing. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education,* 36 (5): 509-554.

Keywords: Rubrics

Mission, Review Process & Disclaimer

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