Rubrics and Feedback: Communicating with Students About Assessment

Faculty of Management
October 8, 2014

Dr. Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, and Dr. Deborah Kiceniuk
Centre for Learning & Teaching
A joint workshop that we will present in two parts:

1. Dr. Suzanne Le-May Sheffield – facilitate a session on creating rubrics to ensure meaningful feedback

2. Dr. Deborah Kiceniuk - approaches to feedback focused on “creating dialogue with your students about feedback”
At the end of this workshop we hope that....

You will have the opportunity to:

- Define a rubric structure for a course assignment
- Discuss with colleagues the pros and cons of different approaches to rubric design
- Conceptualize assessment feedback as reciprocal communication between teachers and students
- Reflect, individually and collectively, about your approach to student feedback
Creating Rubrics for Meaningful, Effective, and Efficient Evaluation

Dr. Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Director
Centre for Learning and Teaching
June 2014
What is a rubric?

“…a rubric is a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divide an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts.” (Stevens and Levi, 2005, p.3)
Overview

- Learn how to create effective rubrics (and why you might want to)
- Discuss with colleagues assessment criteria and expectations
- Begin to frame a rubric for a course assignment

Image source: http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2014/05/19/us-rubiks-cube-anniversary.html
How do Rubrics Support Students’ Learning?

- Criterion-referenced grading tool ensures consistency
- Articulates performance levels
- Clarify students understanding of expectations
- Encourage critical thinking
- A learning process
- Provide timely feedback (and getting students to use it)
- Explain rather than justify a specific grade
Think about one assignment for your course and discuss the following questions with the person beside you:

- Why did you create this assignment? What does it assess?
- What are the specific outcomes of this assessment tool?
- To which course learning outcome(s) does this assessment link? [What do you hope students will know/be able to do/believe or value when they have completed this assessment?]
## Rubric Framework & Key Features

### Task Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Scale level 1</th>
<th>Scale level 2</th>
<th>Scale level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.1** Basic rubric grid format.

Sample Scale Level Terminology

- Excellent, Acceptable, Unacceptable
- A, B, C, D, F
- Numerical framework (10-8, 7-5, <5)
- Advanced, Developing, Emerging
- Advanced, Intermediate, Novice
Example: Oral Presentation Assignment

- You will prepare and give a 10-minute oral presentation. Your presentation should share your findings on a specific focus of the week’s topic we are studying, based on your own independent library/online research. You should make use of relevant images and other visual aids. (Make sure your sources are listed in a handout or on your PowerPoint presentation.) Be prepared to answer questions from the instructor and students in the class for 5 minutes following your presentation.
Activity #2
Itemizing Criteria

■ Decide upon 3 key criteria of your assignment that would be the focus of your assessment.

■ Decide upon the grading scale that is most appropriate.

■ Discuss how you would weight the scoring of these traits and list traits in order of grade weighting.

■ Share briefly with your partner why you chose these traits and why you have prioritized certain traits over others.
A Rubric for Rubrics
Sample dimensions

- Clarity of Criteria
- Distinction Between Levels
- Reliability of Scoring
- Clarity of Expectations/Guidance to Learners
- Support of Metacognition (Awareness of Learning)
- Engagement of Learners in Rubric Development/Use

Activity #3
Creating Descriptors for each Criteria Across the Scale

- For each of the criteria, consider your top scale (excellent, grade A) expectations and describe them succinctly.

- For each of the criteria, consider your lowest scale (unacceptable, emerging) expectations and describe them succinctly.

- If time allows, consider to what extent each of these descriptors will be achieved on other scales ensuring the descriptors are comparative across scales.

- Share briefly with your partner the challenges you faced in shaping the descriptors across the scale.
Sample Rubrics!
Resources


Ready, Set….Wife!

http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/001f1a5f00/feedback
Feedback as Reciprocal Communication

Dr. Deborah Kiceniuk
Associate Director
Centre for Learning and Teaching
Outline for Session

- What is Feedback?
- Why Do We Provide It?
- Is It Effective? - Student Use and Learning
- Feedback as Communication
- Some Examples
What is Feedback?

- Social process by which information is given to a recipient who then can use it to attain future goals
- It is feedback only…

“if it is actually used to alter the gap between current performance and the performance aimed for” (Jonsson, 2012)

- Process of communication
How Do “You” Give Feedback?

Group Discussion
Why Do ‘You’ Provide Feedback?

- Advice for improvement on current assignment
- Advice for improvement on future work
- Explaining/justifying a grade
- Ritual in the academic world

From Carless, 2006
Why Provide Feedback?

“We learn faster, and much more effectively, when we have a clear sense of how well we are doing and what we might need to do in order to improve.” (Carless, 2006)
Effectiveness of Feedback

Studies show that students perceive FB...

- Lacking specific advice to Improve
- Difficult to Interpret
- Negative impact on student’s self-esteem

Yorke (2003)
## Teacher/Student - Perceptions of Feedback

### Teachers’ Perceptions
- Fair Grading
- Provide detailed feedback
- Useful
- Difficulty to decode criteria
- Emotional

### Students’ Perceptions
- Mixed Feelings about Fairness
- Not enough detail
- Not useful
- Difficult to de-code criteria
- Emotional

Carless (2006)
Is It Effective?

Do students alter their performance and act on feedback?

Based on...

- Students understanding of the feedback process
- The language used
- Appropriateness – specific and general
- Knowledge of assessment criteria
Is It Effective?

Three interlocking components…

◆ Discourse
◆ Power
◆ Emotional
Feedback as Communication

Is a social process in which elements, such as discourse, power, and emotion, impact on how messages can be interpreted

Carless (2006)
Communication - Why?

Students must do something with the feedback information to be able to learn from it.

Dialogue is fundamental to teaching and learning.

Nicol (2010)
Discuss the criteria for assessment in groups

Class discussion of general feedback comments (post)

Require student to identify the kinds of feedback they want with the assignment

Group discussions of feedback
Feedback as Communication

Group Discussion
Types of Feedback

- Instructor
- Peer – Student to Student
- Self-assessment
Peer Feedback
Student to Student

- Peer/Instructor-derived criteria
- Peer feedback – needs guidance on standards
- Formative feedback

Revisions from student feedback were more successful than instructor alone feedback

Yang et al. (2006)
Peer Feedback

Group Discussion
Self-Reflection/Assessment/Feedback

Students make judgments about their own learning

Different abilities

good students = underrate

weaker students = overrate

higher level students = better
Self-Reflection/Assessment/Feedback

Time – over the semester…

Students - lower in the beginning of the semester

Accuracy – positive student/teacher correlation

Effect – students perform better on tests when they engage in learning self-reflection
Self-Reflection/Assessment/Feedback

Group Discussion
Quality Feedback

- Timely
- Strategies to alter student performance
- Articulate – non-jargon
- Empowering
- Manageable
- Developmental – aimed at improving current and future performance

Jonsson (2012)
Feedback as Communication

- Feedback Dialogues
- Incorporated into Classroom Discussion
- Part of the Course Design
Thank you!
Resources


