Creating a Rubric[1]

Rubric: *A scoring scale used to assess student performance along a task-specific set of criteria*

Criteria: *A characteristic that indicates mastery of a skill or top performance on a task*

Level of performance: *A score that indicates how closely student performance matches the criteria for that task*

Descriptor: *A statement that clearly identifies the performance expectations at each level of performance for each criterion*

The following table contains a sample Rubric for assessing a research project.   The text below the table explains each component more thoroughly.

Research Rubric

Criteria	Weight	Level of Student Performance		
		0	**1**	**2**
Number of Sources	**x1**	1-4	5-9	10-12
Historical Accuracy	**x3**	Lots of historical inaccuracies	Few inaccuracies	No apparent inaccuracies
Organization	**x1**	Can not tell from which source information came	Can tell with difficulty where information came from	Can easily tell which sources info was drawn from
Bibliography	**x1**	Bibliography contains very little information	Bibliography contains most relevant information	All relevant information is included

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[1] The material for this instruction sheet was excerpted from the following website: http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/rubrics.htm. Only minor changes have been made from the document's original form. The website contains other useful information on rubrics, such as reasons to include different levels of performance, analytic vs. holistic rubrics, and choosing the appropriate number of levels.

A rubric is comprised of two components: *criteria* and *levels of performance*. Each rubric has at least two criteria and at least two levels of performance. The criteria are characteristics of good performance on a task. Full criteria are statements of performance such as "includes a sufficient number of sources" and "project contains few historical inaccuracies," although these statements may be shortened to fit criteria into the table more easily. For each criterion, the evaluator applying the rubric can determine to what degree the student has met the criterion, i.e., the student's level of performance. In the above rubric, there are three levels of performance for each criterion. For example, the project can contain lots of historical inaccuracies, few inaccuracies or no inaccuracies, corresponding to levels 0, 1, and 2. One other feature of these criteria is that they are weighted. Notice that the criterion for Number of Sources is weighted "x1", and the criterion for Historical Accuracy is weighted "x3". When calculating a students' scores using this rubric, their Level of Performance score for Historical Accuracy would be multiplied by three. This weighting plan indicates that historical accuracy is a very important component of the research goals that this rubric is designed to assess.

The above rubric includes another common, but not necessary, component of rubrics -- *descriptors*. Descriptors spell out what is expected of students at each level of performance for each criterion. In the above example, "lots of historical inaccuracies," "can tell with difficulty where information came from" and "all relevant information is included" are descriptors. A descriptor tells students more precisely what performance looks like at each level and how their work may be distinguished from the work of others for each criterion. Similarly, the descriptors help the evaluator distinguish between student works more precisely and consistently.