



Towards engaging students in curriculum transformation: What are the effective characteristics of rubrics?

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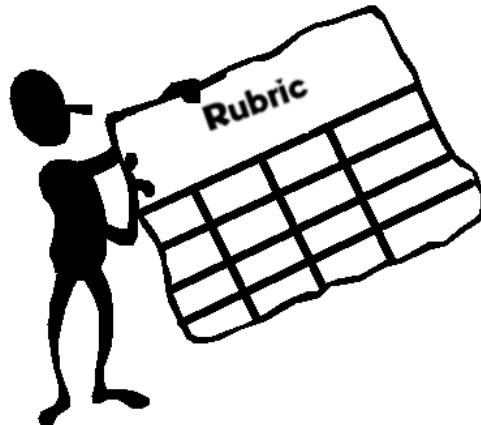
The project

Project title: Owning the rubric: Student engagement in rubric design, use and moderation

Funding program: Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) Innovation and Development Grants

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Why?

Importance of “... creating opportunities for students to develop capabilities to operate as judges of their own learning” (Boud & Molloy, 2013, p. 698)

Students involved in the development or implementation of a scoring rubric outperform those that only sighted, or were not provided with, the rubric (Becker, 2016)

Can improve the quality of students' work (Burke, 2009; Jönsson, 2013)



Co-construction of rubrics (students, lecturers)



Optimal qualities of rubrics ⇔ Non-appropriate qualities of rubrics

Research questions






1. What are the characteristics of effective rubrics?
2. How can students and academic staff work collaboratively to design, use and moderate rubrics to promote student learning?
3. How does the application of collaboratively constructed rubric impact on student learning experiences?
4. What, research-informed, practice can engage students and academic staff in the collaborative process of designing, using and moderating rubrics to promote learning?

Activity

Characteristics
of effective rubrics
(in higher
education)?



Methodology

- Systematic literature review =>
Effective rubric characteristics (ERCs)
Created ERC Questionnaire (ERCQ)

- Delphi method (2 rounds) – experts consulted

- Effective Rubric Characteristic Inventory (ERCI)

- Using ERCI to co-construct rubrics with students

Participants

RECENT: Identifying effective rubric characteristics ...

- 25 experts invited to comment on 59 ERCs
- 2 rounds of Delphi surveys

CURRENTLY: Co-construction of rubrics ...

- 6 classes of students + their lecturers, across:
 - 3 higher education institutions
 - disciplines (science, education, theology, communications, nursing, radiography)
 - varied course stages (1st year, 2nd year, etc.)
 - undergraduate courses
- Questionnaires, interviews, focus groups

Findings

- 37 Effective rubric characteristics (ERCs)
- 6 categories:
 1. Purpose of rubrics
 2. Marking criteria
 3. Performance descriptors
 4. Feedback narrative
 5. Rubric development
 6. Rubric application

Category	Effective rubric characteristic
Purpose of rubrics	Rubrics are useful as instructional tools for providing assessment guidelines to students. Rubrics help in providing quality feedback to students. Rubrics are a time-efficient way for teachers to provide feedback to students. An effective rubric reduces marker bias. Rubrics provide indicators for success and descriptions of these indicators. Rubrics provide indicators for success and descriptions of these indicators. Rubrics help focus student effort. Rubrics are useful as assessment tools (e.g., for grading). Rubrics are useful as instructional tools (e.g., for teaching and learning). Rubrics help teachers communicate intended learning outcomes. Rubrics help students to plan their approach to an assignment. Rubrics promote consistent marking of student assessments. Students' use of rubrics improves the standard of their work. The use of rubrics reduces marking subjectivity. The purpose of a rubric is better understood if it is co-constructed by teachers and students.
Marking criteria	Rubric marking criteria should align with the learning outcomes of an assessment.
Performance descriptors	Performance descriptors should be informative of what is good and bad work. Performance descriptors should be worded concisely. Performance descriptors should reflect clear gradations of quality.
Feedback narrative	Students benefit from feedback comments at the end of a rubric.
Rubric development	The effectiveness of a rubric should be tested against benchmarked performance standards. Rubrics should be created not based on personal demands but rather on discipline standards. Rubric creators should be sensitive to the use of academic discourse (e.g. terminology or jargon). Rubric creators should avoid vague and ambiguous language. Peer-marking should occur among teachers to assess the effectiveness of a rubric. The co-construction of a rubric provides learning opportunities for students. Co-creating a rubric allows teachers and students to have a shared understanding of the expectations of an assessment. The wording of a rubric is more clearly understood by students when they are a part of constructing the rubric.
Rubric application	A rubric should be provided to students prior to them starting an assessment. An effective rubric provides students with the opportunity to self-evaluate their own work before submission. The purpose of a rubric should be explained to students. Teachers should receive instruction in how to use the rubric prior to marking. Students should receive instruction in how to use the rubric prior to submission. Examples of exemplar work should be provided to students to illustrate work of high quality. Rubrics do not replace good instruction. Students should be provided with opportunities to practice their use of the rubric (e.g., provision of work of different standards to mark). Students should be encouraged to read the rubric after a grade is provided.



(see page 8 of paper)

Findings – Sample of ERCs

Category	Effective rubric characteristic (selection)
Purpose of rubrics	<p>Rubrics help in providing quality feedback to students.</p> <p>Rubrics are a time-efficient way for teachers to provide feedback to students.</p> <p>An effective rubric reduces marker bias.</p>
Marking criteria	<p>Rubric marking criteria should align with the learning outcomes of an assessment.</p>
Performance descriptors	<p>Performance descriptors should be informative of what is good and bad work.</p> <p>Performance descriptors should be worded concisely.</p> <p>Performance descriptors should reflect clear gradations of quality.</p>
Feedback narrative	<p>Students benefit from feedback comments at the end of a rubric.</p>
Rubric development	<p>The effectiveness of a rubric should be tested against benchmarked performance standards.</p> <p>Rubrics should be created not based on personal demands but rather on discipline standards.</p> <p>Rubric creators should be sensitive to the use of academic discourse (e.g. terminology or jargon).</p>
Rubric application	<p>A rubric should be provided to students prior to them starting an assessment.</p> <p>An effective rubric provides students with the opportunity to self-evaluate their own work before submission.</p> <p>The purpose of a rubric should be explained to students.</p>

Implications

How can these findings be applied to your own context?

- Working with students?
- For professional development?



Questions and discussion



References and acknowledgements

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[Additional references listed in the full paper]

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