

THE ASSESSMENT CHRONICLES

OF LANEY COLLEGE

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RUBRICS CAN HELP!

by Cheli Fossum and David Mitchell

It's getting to be that time of the semester—essays, projects, final exams to grade. Ugh! But there's a tool out there that can come to your rescue. A rubric! "What's that?", you may ask. A rubric is a guide to help you score student work in a fair and valid way that is composed of the criteria you want to evaluate in your assignment, and a scale for rating the work the student has submitted. Rubrics can be used to:

- Clarify for students what you expect on the assignment (hand out the rubric at the same time you give the assignment).
- Level the playing field for students who are new to college work and are not sure what's required on a college-level assignment.
- Give students clear and useful feedback on how they are doing.
- Make your grading faster, easier, more efficient and more consistent.
- Assess your students' learning as a whole so YOU also get feedback about what your students are understanding, and where there are still gaps.

What's more, rubrics can be used to evaluate almost any type of student work, from writing assignments and essays to speeches, presentations, performances, projects, and works of art. Are you convinced? Below are steps to help you create a useful rubric for your assignment:

1. Decide on the dimensions or criteria for the assignment (creativity, organization, depth of analysis, etc.)
2. For each dimension, define "excellent" performance. What does "excellent" look like?
3. Decide how many performance levels you want and what you want to label each level—Good? Fair? Needs work?
4. Assign points to each category. Make sure that the number of points for each category corresponds to your grading scale.

Here's a few on-line resources you can use to help you create rubrics:

- www.taskstream.com (go to "Resource Tools" and find "Rubric Wizard")
- <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>
- www.laney.edu/wp/assessment/how-to-create-rubrics-and-examples/

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE RUMORS

by David Mitchell

On our travels throughout the campus, Cheli Fossum and I often hear misconceptions about learning assessment requirements and procedures. Below you'll find a short true/false quiz that will hopefully clear up some of these misunderstandings.

1. "I have to assess every SLO in every course every year."

False. Laney requires that you assess ONE SLO per course each academic year (as long as each SLO is assessed at least once every three years).

2. "In my action plans (how I'm going to act on my assessment findings from the assessments I've completed), it's okay to write 'no changes needed' or 'will assign more homework on X topic'."

False. The ACCJC is looking for **change!** Yes, they want to see that we've assessed all our courses, but more importantly, they want to see how we've **changed and improved** our programs and courses as a result of assessment. No program, course, instructor, collaboration, assignment, assessment tool, test, or rubric is perfect, so how are you going to make improvements? That's what you need to document in your "action plan".

3. "I'm going to be evaluated on the assessment results of my class."

False. You will NEVER be evaluated as an instructor on your assessment results.

4. "TaskStream is difficult to use."

False. Learning any new software program is challenging at the beginning, but after you use TaskStream a few times, you get the hang of it.

5. "No one ever looks at the work I submit in TaskStream."

False. There is a team of instructors who are members of the Learning Assessment Committee who periodically review and comment on assessment work in TaskStream.

UPCOMING TASKSTREAM WORKSHOPS

The end of the semester is fast approaching, so your friendly and helpful Learning Assessment Committee is at the ready to assist you in entering your assessment findings and action plans for the fall semester. We have two TaskStream workshops planned, so mark your calendar, bring your data with you on the day of your choice, and let's do this!

- Thursday, December 12 from 1:00 to 4:00 in F-170 (finals week)
- Tuesday, December 17 from 10:00 to 2:00 in G-100 (lunch provided)

