How To Assess SLOs: Introduction to Rubrics

The Assessment Process

- Define SLOs
- Create assessment tools/rubrics
- Assess SLOs
- Compile results
- Reflect on results
- Plan and implement changes and improvements
- Repeat!

Assessment Methods

- **Direct Assessment Methods**
  - Involve examining and evaluating student work or performance
- **Indirect Assessment Methods**
  - Explore indicators of student learning
  - Can get information about attitudes and opinions
  - Not a guarantee of student learning

Direct Assessment Methods

- Tests or selected test questions
- Class assignments (term papers, projects, lab reports)
- Performance evaluations (oral speech, debate, performance)
- Portfolios (collection of student's work over time)

Indirect Assessment Methods

- Surveys (satisfaction surveys, perception surveys)
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Reflective essays or writing samples
  - Students reflect on their learning

Both types are useful

- It's best to assess each outcome in more than one way

- Use a combination of direct and indirect methods

- Direct assessment methods MUST be used, and they can be supplemented with indirect methods

The assessment method must fit the SLO

- SLO:
  - Formulate and communicate persuasive arguments in writing
- Assessment:
  - Analysis of student papers in which they formulate persuasive arguments

The assessment method must fit the SLO

- SLO:
  - Construct and deliver a clear, well-organized verbal presentation
- Assessment:
  - Evaluation of student-prepared speeches

The assessment method must fit the SLO

- SLO:
  - Demonstrate safe use of electrical tools and instruments
- Assessment:
  - Observations of laboratory skills and adherence to safety guidelines

What is a Rubric?

- A rubric is the guide used to score performance assessments in a reliable, fair, and valid manner and is generally composed of:
  - **dimensions** for judging student performance,
  - a **scale** for rating performances on each dimension, and
  - **standards of excellence** for specified performance levels.
    pals.sri.com/pals/guide/glossary.html

What is a Rubric?

- A rubric is a scoring guide used in subjective assessments. A Rubric shows how learners will be assessed and/or graded. In other words, a rubric provides a clear guide as to how 'what learners do' in a course will be assessed. http://its.monmouth.edu/FacultyResourceCenter/rubrics.htm www.sic.cc.il.us/upfiles/AssessmentRelatedTerms2.htm

What is a Rubric?

- A flexible grading tool
- Can be used to:
  - clarify your expectations
  - make grading more efficient
  - convey useful feedback
  - assess student learning

Rubrics include…

- A list of "dimensions" or "primary traits" of the assignment
  - Examples: organization, argumentation, use of color, depth of analysis, creativity, calculations, vocal variety, etc.
- For each dimension/primary trait, there is a description of the highest level of achievement.

Rubrics include…

- Lower levels of achievement are also described for each dimension.
- Can be organized as a grid (or not).

General Rubric Format

	Excellent	Good	OK	Needs work	Not done
organization	(description appears in each box)				
content					
analysis					
Grammar/ mechanics					

What is the purpose of a rubric in the assessment process?

- Provides a way to assess a student's ability to write, create, and think critically.
- When learning outcomes are described as critical thinking or complex performance, traditional assessment does not provide reasonable information about the students' performance.
- Rubrics can offer clear performance targets.

How are Rubrics helpful to the instructor and the student?

- They **help instructors and students define "quality."**

- When **students** use rubrics regularly to judge their own work, they **begin to accept more responsibility** for the end product. It cuts down on the "am I done yet" question.

- Rubrics **reduce the time instructors spend grading** students' work and makes it easier for the instructor to explain to the student why they received a certain grade and identifies ways they can improve their work.

How are Rubrics helpful to the instructor and the student?

- They make our expectations clear to our students
- Rubrics "level the playing field" - they clarify what is often left unsaid
- Using a rubric helps the instructor grade consistently
- They can be used to help us refine our teaching skills

Rubric-resistant people may…

- …feel that rubrics limit creativity
- …feel that rubrics can take the "personality" out of learning
- …see rubrics as confining and limiting

However…

- "If our students can read a Rubric and know what the expectation is, this greatly enhances their ability to reach it. You can tell them to 'reach for the stars,' but if they are just grappling out there in the dark, they are not going to make it. With the Rubric, they have a clear-cut route. They know what has to be done." --Instructor Lorrie LaCroix*

  (*Taken from "Developing Rubrics that Help Make Grading Fair" presentation given October 2006, by John Miller, Ph.D., Department of Teacher Education, California State University, East Bay, with appreciation to Prof. Lisa Rodke for sharing it.)

How to Create a Rubric - 1

- Decide on the "dimensions" or "primary traits" of the assignment
  - (Organization, clarity, depth of analysis, creativity, grammar/mechanics, etc.)
- For each dimension, define "excellent" performance.

How to Create a Rubric - 2

- Decide how many performance levels to include. (2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)
- Decide on labels for each performance level
  - (good, competent, needs work)
  - (exemplary, proficient, developing, beginning)
  - (excellent, good, adequate, needs work, incomplete)

How to Create a Rubric - 3

- Define the remaining performance levels for each dimension. (Make sure they are different from each other.)

- Assign points to each category. Make sure that the number of points for each category corresponds to your grading scale.

- Or - use a "Rubric Converter"

General Rubric Format

	Excellent	Good	OK	Needs work	Not done
organization					
content					
analysis					
Grammar/ mechanics					

Online resources

- Templates to download
  (http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/july/Rubrics/
  Rubric_Template.html)

- FREE Online website for creating and
  locating Rubrics
  (http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php)

Online resources

- Use the "Rubric Wizard" in TaskStream. It's easy!

- www.taskstream.com

  - Log in, then click on "Resource Tools"

  - TaskStream contains examples that you can modify

  - Once you create a rubric on TaskStream, "publish" it so that other Laney instructors can see it, use it, and modify it for themselves.

Examples of Rubrics

- Today's handout packet
- Laney rubrics website
  - http://www.laney.peralta.edu/rubrics
- TaskStream Rubric Wizard

Online resources (lots) to make it easy for you!

- http://www.rubricconverter.com
- http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php
- http://www.middleweb.com/CSLB2rubric.html
- http://www.teachervision.fen.com/teaching-methods/rubrics/4521.html
- http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/july/rubrics/Rubric_Guidelines.html

More Online resources to make it easy for you!

- http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/july/Rubrics/Rubric_Template.html
- http://gsi.berkeley.edu/resources/grading/introduction.html
- http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/
- http://www.bridgew.edu/AssessmentGuidebook/
- http://pareoline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=3
- http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html

How to use a rubric to collect assessment information (A)

1. Hand out the rubric to your students and explain it.

2. Make copies of the rubric. As you grade each assignment, fill out one rubric per student. (circle items and add comments)

3. Make copies of the completed rubrics to keep.

How to use a rubric to collect assessment information (B)

4. Staple the completed rubrics to student work and return it to them.

5. On the rubric copies you kept, make a tally of the number of students in each performance category for each primary trait. This will allow you to see strong areas and weak areas for the whole class.

How to use a rubric to collect assessment information (C)

6. Reflect on the results.
   - Were there any weak areas?
7. Discuss the results in your department.
   - How could the weak areas be improved?
8. Make an action plan.
9. Report the results of the assessment and the improvement plan. (TaskStream)
10. Carry out the improvement plan!

Ideas for improvements in the classroom (A)

- State goals of assignment more clearly
- Revise content of course or assignment
- Revise activities leading up to the assignment
- Increase in-class discussions and activities
- Increase student collaboration and/or peer review

Ideas for improvements for the classroom (B)

- Provide more frequent or expand feedback on student progress
- Increase guidance for students as they work on assignments
- Use methods of questioning that encourage the competency you measured
- State criteria for grading more explicitly

Ideas for improvements for the classroom (C)

- Increase interaction with students outside of class
- Ask a colleague to critique assignments/activities

Ideas for department-wide improvements (A)

- Offer/encourage attendance at seminars, workshops or discussion groups about teaching methods

- Consult teaching and learning experts about teaching methods

- Encourage faculty to share activities that foster competency

Ideas for department-wide improvements (B)

- Purchase books and collect articles on teaching about competency
- Visit classrooms to provide feedback (mentoring)
- Create bibliography of resource material
- Create a binder for rubrics and results

Ideas for department-wide improvements (C)

- Analyze course curriculum, so that the department can build a progression of skills as students advance through courses

- Develop supplemental instruction opportunities: tutoring, study groups, small group work sessions, etc.

If you're feeling overwhelmed…

- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Try assessing something!
  - You'll get a better sense of what's involved
  - You'll see that it's not so hard
  - We'll have some evidence that instructors are using assessment results to plan changes. We want to show ACCJC that we are doing this!

If we do this right…

- We'll have stimulating conversations about teaching and learning.
- We'll learn to be more effective.
- We'll have more job satisfaction.
- Students will learn more deeply.