

# I

## WHAT IS A RUBRIC?

**Ru'bric**, n. [OE. rubriche, OF. rubriche, F. rubrique (cf. it. rubrica), fr. L. rubrica red earth for coloring, red chalk, the title of a law (because written in red), fr. ruber red. See red.] That part of any work in the early manuscripts and typography which was colored red, to distinguish it from other portions. Hence, specifically: (a) A titlepage, or part of it, especially that giving the date and place of printing; also, the initial letters, etc., when printed in red. (b) (Law books) The title of a statute;—so called as being anciently written in red letters.—Bell. (c) (Liturgies) The directions and rules for the conduct of service, formerly written or printed in red; hence, also, an ecclesiastical or episcopal injunction;—usually in the plural.

—Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1913

**Rubric**: n 1: an authoritative rule 2: an explanation or definition of an obscure word in a text [syn: gloss] 3: a heading that is printed in red or in a special type v : adorn with ruby red color.

—WordNet, 1997

Today, a rubric retains its connection to authoritative rule and particularly to "redness." In fact, professors like us who use rubrics often consider them the most effective grading devices since the invention of red ink.

At its most basic, 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. Rubrics can be used for grading a large variety of assignments and tasks: research papers, book critiques, discussion participation, laboratory reports, portfolios, group work, oral presentations, and more.

#### 4 AN INTRODUCTION TO RUBRICS

Dr. Dannelle Stevens and Dr. Antonia Levi teach at Portland State University in the Graduate School of Education and the University Studies Program, respectively. Rubrics are used quite extensively for grading at Portland State University, especially in the core University Studies program. One reason for this is that the University Studies Program uses rubrics annually to assess its experimental, interdisciplinary, yearlong Freshman Inquiry core. Because that assessment is carried out by, among others, the faculty who teach Freshman Inquiry, and because most faculty from all departments eventually do teach Freshman Inquiry, this means that the faculty at Portland State are given a chance to see close up what rubrics can do in terms of assessment. Many quickly see the benefits of using rubrics for their own forms of classroom assessment, including grading.

In this book, we will show you what a rubric is, why so many professors at Portland State University are so enthusiastic about rubrics, and how you can construct and use your own rubrics. Based on our own experiences and those of our colleagues, we will also show you how to share the construction or expand the use of rubrics to become an effective part of the teaching process. We will describe the various models of rubric construction and show how different professors have used rubrics in different ways in different classroom contexts and disciplines. All the rubrics used in this book derive from actual use in real classrooms.

#### Do You Need a Rubric?

How do you know if you need a rubric? One sure sign is if you check off more than three items from the following list:

- ☐ You are getting carpal tunnel syndrome from writing the same comments on almost every student paper.
- ☐ It's 3 A.M. The stack of papers on your desk is fast approaching the ceiling. You're already 4 weeks behind in your grading, and it's clear that you won't be finishing it tonight either.
- ☐ Students often complain that they cannot read the notes you labored so long to produce.
- ☐ You have graded all your papers and worry that the last ones were graded slightly differently from the first ones.

- ☐ You want students to complete a complex assignment that integrates all the work over the term and are not sure how to communicate all the varied expectations easily and clearly.
- ☐ You want students to develop the ability to reflect on ill-structured problems but you aren't sure how to clearly communicate that to them.
- ☐ You give a carefully planned assignment that you never used before and to your surprise, it takes the whole class period to explain it to students.
- ☐ You give a long narrative description of the assignment in the syllabus, but the students continually ask two to three questions per class about your expectations.
- ☐ You are spending long periods of time on the phone with the Writing Center or other tutorial services because the students you sent there are unable to explain the assignments or expectations clearly.
- ☐ You work with your colleagues and collaborate on designing the same assignments for program courses, yet you wonder if your grading scales are different.
- ☐ You've sometimes been disappointed by whole assignments because all or most of your class turned out to be unaware of academic expectations so basic that you neglected to mention them (e.g., the need for citations or page numbers).
- ☐ You have worked very hard to explain the complex end-of-term paper; yet students are starting to regard you as an enemy out to trick them with incomprehensible assignments.
- ☐ You're starting to wonder if they're right.

Rubrics set you on the path to addressing these concerns.

### What Are the Parts of a Rubric?

Rubrics are composed of four basic parts in which the professor sets out the parameters of the assignment. The parties and processes involved in making a rubric can and should vary tremendously, but the basic format remains the same. In its simplest form, the rubric includes a task description (the assignment), a scale of some sort

## 6 AN INTRODUCTION TO RUBRICS

Title				
Task Description				
		Scale level 1	Scale level 2	Scale level 3
Dimension 1				
Dimension 2				
Dimension 3				
Dimension 4				

Figure 1.1 Basic rubric grid format.

(levels of achievement, possibly in the form of grades), the dimensions of the assignment (a breakdown of the skills/knowledge involved in the assignment), and descriptions of what constitutes each level of performance (specific feedback) all set out on a grid, as shown in Figure 1.1.

We usually use a simple Microsoft Word table to create our grids using the “elegant” format found in the “auto format” section. Our sample grid shows three scales and four dimensions. This is the most common, but sometimes we use more. Rarely, however, do we go over our maximum of five scale levels and six to seven dimensions.

In this chapter, we will look at the four component parts of the rubric and, using an oral presentation assignment as an example, develop the above grid *part-by-part* until it is a useful grading tool (a usable rubric) for the professor and a clear indication of expectations and actual performance for the student.

### Part-by-Part Development of a Rubric

#### *Part 1: Task Description*

The task description is almost always originally framed by the instructor and involves a “performance” of some sort by the student. The task can take the form of a specific assignment, such as a paper, a poster, or a presentation. The task can also apply to overall behavior, such as participation, use of proper lab protocols, and behavioral expectations in the classroom.

We place the task description, usually cut and pasted from the syllabus, at the top of the grading rubric, partly to remind ourselves

### Changing Communities in Our City

**Task Description:** Each student will make a 5-minute presentation on the changes in one Portland community over the past thirty years. The student may focus the presentation in any way he or she wishes, but there needs to be a thesis of some sort, not just a chronological exposition. The presentation should include appropriate photographs, maps, graphs, and other visual aids for the audience.

	Scale level 1	Scale level 2	Scale level 3
Dimension 1			
Dimension 2			
Dimension 3			
Dimension 4			

Figure 1.2 Part 1: Task description.

how the assignment was written as we grade, and to have a handy reference later on when we may decide to reuse the same rubric.

More important, however, we find that the task assignment grabs the students' attention in a way nothing else can, when placed at the top of what they know will be a grading tool. With the added reference to their grades, the task assignment and the rubric criteria become more immediate to students and are more carefully read. Students focus on grades. Sad, but true. We might as well take advantage of it to communicate our expectations as clearly as possible.

If the assignment is too long to be included in its entirety on the rubric, or if there is some other reason for not including it there, we put the title of the full assignment at the top of the rubric: for example, "Rubric for Oral Presentation." This will at least remind the students that there is a full description elsewhere, and it will facilitate later reference and analysis for the professor. Sometimes we go further and add the words "see syllabus" or "see handout." Another possibility is to put the larger task description along the side of the rubric. For reading and grading ease, rubrics should seldom, if ever, be more than one page long.

Most rubrics will contain both a descriptive title and a task description. Figure 1.2 illustrates Part 1 of our sample rubric with the title and task description highlighted.

*Part 2: Scale*

The scale describes how well or poorly any given task has been performed and occupies yet another side of the grid to complete the rubric's evaluative goal. Terms used to describe the level of performance should be tactful but clear. In the generic rubric, words such as "mastery," "partial mastery," "progressing," and "emerging" provide a more positive, active, verb description of what is expected next from the student and also mitigate the potential shock of low marks in the lowest levels of the scale. Some professors may prefer to use nonjudgmental, noncompetitive language, such as "high level," "middle level," and "beginning level," whereas others prefer numbers or even grades.

Here are some commonly used labels compiled by Huba and Freed (2000):

- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent (NSF Synthesis Engineering Education Coalition, 1997)
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable
- Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate, novice (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, 1986, p.278)
- distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice (Gotcher, 1997):
- accomplished, average, developing, beginning (College of Education, 1997)

(Huba & Freed, 2000, p.180)

We almost always confine ourselves to three levels of performance when we first construct a rubric. After the rubric has been used on a real assignment, we often expand that to five. It is much easier to refine the descriptions of the assignment and create more levels after seeing what our students actually do.

Figure 1.3 presents the Part 2 version of our rubric where the scale has been highlighted.

There is no set formula for the number of levels a rubric scale should have. Most professors prefer to clearly describe the performances at three or even five levels using a scale. But five levels is enough. The more levels there are, the more difficult it becomes to differentiate

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	Excellent	Competent	Needs work
Dimension 1			
Dimension 2			
Dimension 3			
Dimension 4			

Figure 1.3 Part 2: Scales.

between them and to articulate precisely why one student's work falls into the scale level it does. On the other hand, more specific levels make the task clearer for the student and they reduce the professor's time needed to furnish detailed grading notes. Most professors consider three to be the optimum number of levels on a rubric scale.

If a professor chooses to describe only one level, the rubric is called a holistic rubric or a scoring guide rubric. It usually contains a description of the highest level of performance expected for each dimension, followed by room for scoring and describing in a "Comments" column just how far the student has come toward achieving or not achieving that level. Scoring guide rubrics, however, usually require considerable additional explanation in the form of written notes and so are more time-consuming than grading with a three-to-five-level rubric.

### Part 3: Dimensions

The dimensions of a rubric lay out the parts of the task simply and completely. A rubric can also clarify for students how their task can be broken down into components and which of those components are most important. Is it the grammar? The analysis? The factual content? The research techniques? And how much weight is given to

each of these aspects of the assignment? Although it is not necessary to weight the different dimensions differently, adding points or percentages to each dimension further emphasizes the relative importance of each aspect of the task.

Dimensions should actually represent the type of component skills students must combine in a successful scholarly work, such as the need for a firm grasp of content, technique, citation, examples, analysis, and a use of language appropriate to the occasion. When well done, the dimensions of a rubric (usually listed along one side of the rubric) will not only outline these component skills, but after the work is graded, should provide a quick overview of the student's strengths and weaknesses in each dimension.

Dimension need not and should not include any description of the quality of the performance. "Organization," for example, is a common dimension, but not "Good Organization." We leave the question of the quality of student work within that dimension to the scale and the description of the dimension, as illustrated in Part 4 of the rubric development.

Breaking up the assignment into its distinct dimensions leads to a kind of task analysis with the components of the task clearly identified. Both students and professors find this useful. It tells the student much more than a mere task assignment or a grade reflecting only the finished product. Together with good descriptions, the dimensions of a rubric provide detailed feedback on specific parts of the assignment and how well or poorly those were carried out. This is especially useful in assignments such as our oral presentation example in which many different dimensions come into play, as shown in Figure 1.4, where the dimensions, Part 3 of the rubric, are highlighted on page 11.

#### *Part 4: Description of the Dimensions*

Dimensions alone are all-encompassing categories, so for each of the dimensions, a rubric should also contain at the very least a description of the highest level of performance in that dimension. A rubric that contains only the description of the highest level of performance is called a scoring guide rubric and is shown in Figure 1.5 on page 12.

Scoring guide rubrics allow for greater flexibility and the personal touch, but the need to explain in writing where the student has failed



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	Excellent	Competent	Needs work
Knowledge/understanding 20%/20 points			
Thinking/inquiry 30%/30 points			
Communication 20%/20 points			
Use of visual aids 20%/20 points			
Presentation skills 10%/10 points			

Figure 1.4 Part 3: Dimensions.

to meet the highest levels of performance does increase the time it takes to grade using scoring guide rubrics.

For most tasks, we prefer to use a rubric that contains at least three scales and a description of the most common ways in which students fail to meet the highest level of expectations. Figure 1.6 illustrates the rubric with three levels on the scale that was actually used for grading the "Changing Communities in Our City" assignment. Note how the next level down on the scale indicates the difference between that level of performance and the ideal, whereas the last level places the emphasis on what might have been accomplished but was not. This puts the emphasis not on the failure alone, but also on the possibilities. This final rubric on page 13 emphasizes Part 4 of rubric development for an oral presentation with the descriptions of the dimensions highlighted.

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	Excellent	Competent	Needs work
Knowledge/ understanding 20%	The presentation demonstrates a depth of historical understanding by using relevant and accurate detail to support the student's thesis. Research is thorough and goes beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned texts.	The presentation uses knowledge that is generally accurate with only minor inaccuracies and that is generally relevant to the student's thesis. Research is adequate but does not go much beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned text.	The presentation uses little relevant or accurate information, not even that which was presented in class or in the assigned texts. Little or no research is apparent.
Thinking/ inquiry 30%	The presentation is centered around a thesis, which shows a highly developed awareness of historiographic or social issues and a high level of conceptual ability.	The presentation shows an analytical structure and a central thesis, but the analysis is not always fully developed or linked to the thesis.	The presentation shows no analytical structure and no central thesis.
Communication 20%	The presentation is imaginative and effective in conveying ideas to the audience. The presenter responds effectively to audience reactions and questions.	Presentation techniques used are effective in conveying main ideas, but they are a bit unimaginative. Some questions from the audience remain unanswered.	The presentation fails to capture the interest of the audience and/or is confusing in what is to be communicated.
Use of visual aids 20%	The presentation includes appropriate and easily understood visual aids, which the presenter refers to and explains at appropriate moments in the presentation.	The presentation includes appropriate visual aids, but these are too few, are in a format that makes them difficult to use or understand, or the presenter does not refer to or explain them in the presentation.	The presentation includes no visual aids or includes visual aids that are inappropriate or too small or messy to be understood. The presenter makes no mention of them in the presentation.
Presentation skills 10%	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard, using eye contact, a lively tone, gestures, and body language to engage the audience.	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard but tends to drone or fails to use eye contact, gestures, and body language consistently or effectively at times.	The presenter cannot be heard or speaks so unclearly that she or he cannot be understood. There is no attempt to engage the audience through eye contact, gestures, or body language.

Figure 1.6 Part 4: Three-level rubric: Description of dimensions with all levels of performance described.

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	Criteria	Comments	Points
Knowledge/ understanding 20%	The presentation demonstrates a depth of historical understanding by using relevant and accurate detail to support the student's thesis. Research is thorough and goes beyond what was presented in class or in the assigned texts.		
Thinking/ inquiry 30%	The presentation is centered around a thesis, which shows a highly developed awareness of historiographic or social issues and a high level of conceptual ability.		
Communication 20%	The presentation is imaginative and effective in conveying ideas to the audience. The presenter responds effectively to audience reactions and questions.		
Use of visual aids 20%	The presentation includes appropriate and easily understood visual aids, which the presenter refers to and explains at appropriate moments in the presentation.		
Presentation skills 10%	The presenter speaks clearly and loudly enough to be heard, using eye contact, a lively tone, gestures, and body language to engage the audience.		

Figure 1.5 Part 4: Scoring guide rubric: Description of dimensions at highest level of performance.

In this sample rubric, the descriptions are limited enough that when a student does not fit neatly into one column or the other, we can convey that fact by circling elements of two or more columns. Under "Presentation skills," for example, we might easily find ourselves circling a "using eye contact and a lively tone" in the "excellent" column, but circling "fails to use" and "gestures and body language consistently or effectively at times" in the "Competent" column. When the descriptions are more comprehensive and include more options, we often use boxes that can be checked off beside each element of the description to make conveying this mixed response easier and tidier.

Seen in its entirety, the rubric for this oral presentation may seem more of a task than simply grading students the old-fashioned way. Stripped down to its four components, however, and developed step by step, it becomes a template on which to place the expectations most professors have in the backs of their minds anyway.

### Creating Your First Rubric: Is It Worth the Time and Effort?

Professors who regularly construct and use rubrics can create a rubric like the oral presentation rubric we used as an example in less than an hour, less if they are simply modifying an existing rubric designed for a similar assignment. For beginners, however, the first few rubrics may take more time than they save.

This time is not wasted, however. When we first began constructing and using rubrics, we quickly found that they not only cut down on grading time and provided fuller feedback to our students, but they affected our classroom preparation and instruction as well.

The first step in constructing or adapting any rubric is quite simply a time of reflection, of putting into words basic assumptions and beliefs about teaching, assessment, and scholarship. We put ourselves in the place of our students by recalling our own student days and focusing not only *what* we learned but *how* we learned it best—that is, what expectations were clear, what assignments were significant, and what feedback was helpful. That reflection translated into classroom practices as we became more adept at imparting not only our knowledge and expectations for each assignment, but what we hoped our students would accomplish through fulfilling the assignments we

gave. Further down the road, we realized our students were not like us and our assignments should acknowledge different student learning styles.

We even began to involve our students in developing the rubrics. In so doing, we found that, as Cafferalla and Clark (1999) concluded in their analysis of studies of adult learners, making the process of learning as collaborative as possible for our students resulted in better teaching.

Moreover, although the first few rubrics may take considerable time to construct, they do save time in grading, right from the very beginning. When the sample rubric used in this chapter was used in a class of more than thirty students, for example, the time taken to grade the presentations was reduced to the actual class time in which the presentations were given, plus an extra hour or so devoted to adding a few individualized notes to each rubric. We simply circled whatever categories applied during or immediately after the student presented. Aside from saving time, this meant that the grades and comments were handed back to the students the very next class period, while the memory of the assignment was fresh in their minds. Timely feedback means more student learning.

Rubrics not only save time in the long run, but they are also a valuable pedagogical tools because they make us more aware of our individual teaching styles and methods, allow us to impart more clearly our intentions and expectations, and provide timely, informative feedback to our students. Chapter 2 elaborates on these reasons for incorporating rubrics into your classroom instructional practices.

# BLANK RUBRIC FORMAT FOR A THREE-LEVEL RUBRIC

## Three-Level Rubric

Task Description:

Dimensions	Exemplary	Competent	Developing

# BLANK RUBRIC FORMAT FOR A FOUR-LEVEL RUBRIC

## Four-Level Rubric

Task Description:

Dimensions	Exemplary	Accomplished	Developing	Beginning

### Rubric for Film Presentation

**Task Description:** Working in groups of four or five, students will develop and present to the class an analysis of a Japanese movie about World War II. This analysis should go beyond a simple synopsis of the movie to discuss how well or poorly the film reflects a particular point of view about the war. You are expected to do additional research to develop this presentation and to use visual aids of some sort. All group members are expected to participate in the presentation.

	Exemplary	Competent	Developing
Individual presentation skills	<input type="checkbox"/> The presenter spoke clearly, slowly, and loudly enough to be heard without shouting, modulating voice tone and quality. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter used expressive, appropriate body language and maintained eye contact with the audience. <input type="checkbox"/> The presenter used all the time allotted but did not speak too long. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter used humor and anecdotes appropriately to liven up and illustrate the presentation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter or an assistant competently handled the equipment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter was understood but mumbled, spoke too fast or too slow, whispered or shouted, or droned; intelligibility, however, was not compromised. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter's body language did not distract significantly, but the presenter fidgeted, remained rigid, never looked at the audience, or engaged in other inappropriate body language. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter's timing was <u>too long</u> or too brief. <input type="checkbox"/> Humor and anecdotes were used, but they were over-or underused to liven up and or illustrate the presentation. <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment was used, but there was some fumbling although not to the point where it seriously distracted from the presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> The presenter mumbled, spoke too fast or too slow, whispered or shouted, or droned to the point where intelligibility was compromised. <input type="checkbox"/> The presenter fidgeted, remained rigid, never looked at the audience, or engaged in other body language that distracted seriously from the content. <input type="checkbox"/> The presenter barely used the time allotted of used much too much time. <input type="checkbox"/> The lack of humor and anecdotes made the presentation dull. <input type="checkbox"/> There was a lot of fumbling with the equipment that could have been prevented with a little practice.
Group presentation skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presentation allowed each member an equal opportunity to shine. <input type="checkbox"/> The individual presentations followed one another in a way that promoted a logical discussion of the topic, and connections between individual presentations were clearly shown. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group members treated each other with courtesy and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/> The presentation was unbalanced in the way time or content was assigned to members. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The individual presentations followed one another in a way that mostly promoted a logical discussion of the topic, but connections between individual presentations were not clearly shown, or the presentation lost direction from time to time for other reasons. <input type="checkbox"/> Group members mostly treated each other with courtesy and respect, but there were lapses where members were not listening to each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> The presentation was seriously unbalanced so that one or a few people dominated and or carried the ball. <input type="checkbox"/> There was little if any evident logic in how the individual presentations followed one another, and the connections between individual presentations were unclear. <input type="checkbox"/> Group members showed little respect or courtesy toward one another.

**Figure 6.7** Three-level rubric with checked boxes for summative feedback and grading.



Group organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The group thesis is clearly stated at the beginning and carried through in the rest of the presentation. <input type="checkbox"/> The topics to be covered are introduced and the direction the overall presentation will take is made clear.	<input type="checkbox"/> The group thesis emerges from the presentation but is either unclear, unstated, or not stated directly. <input type="checkbox"/> A clear thesis is stated, but it is not carried through in the presentation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topics to be covered and the direction the presentation will take are stated but they are not the topics covered or the direction actually taken.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no stated group thesis. <input type="checkbox"/> There is no indication of what topics will be covered or what direction that coverage will take. <input type="checkbox"/> No order or focus emerges in the course of the presentation.
Individual organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The individual presentation was well organized in itself with an introduction, body, and conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> That organization was emphasized and made clear to the audience through the use of appropriately captioned PowerPoint, overheads, and/or handouts.	<input type="checkbox"/> The individual presentation was mostly well organized, but there were problems with the introduction, body, or conclusion. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The presenter used PowerPoint, overheads, handouts, but those were too wordy or too vague to help the audience follow the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/> The presentation rambled with little evidence of an introduction, body, or conclusion. <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint, overheads, or handouts either were not used or did not assist the audience in following the organization in any significant way.
Individual content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facts and examples were detailed, accurate, and appropriate. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theories referenced were accurately described and appropriately used. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyses, discussions, and conclusions were explicitly linked to examples, facts, and theories.	<input type="checkbox"/> Facts and examples were mostly detailed, accurate, and appropriate, but there were lapses. <input type="checkbox"/> Theories were referenced but they were either not accurately described or not appropriately used. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The connection between analyses, discussions, and conclusions is evident or implied, but it is not explicitly linked to examples, facts, and theories.	<input type="checkbox"/> Facts and examples were seriously lacking in detail, inaccurate, or inappropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Theories referenced were inaccurately described and inappropriately used or not referenced or used at all. <input type="checkbox"/> There is no clear connection between analyses, discussions, and examples, facts, and theories.

Figure 6.7 Continued

Figure 7.6

## A Rating Scale Rubric for Health Education Field Experience Supervisors

Please evaluate the student under your supervision using the following scale.

- 5 = Superior for an entry level health educator
- 4 = Slightly better than an entry level health educator
- 3 = Acceptable for an entry level health educator
- 2 = Slightly less than an entry level health educator
- 1 = Seriously deficient
- N/O = Not sufficient observation for evaluation

	5	4	3	2	1	N/O
1) Accesses, uses, evaluates current, reliable health knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Demonstrates word processing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Reads, interprets, and uses research information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Demonstrates problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Develops appropriate educational materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Uses audiovisual equipment skillfully and appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Demonstrates teaching skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Demonstrates promotional/publicity skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Uses knowledge of learning styles in development of presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Is sensitive to individual differences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Knows how and where to refer clients/ students for further help and information within organizational guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) Develops a professional network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Shows positive work attitude and ethic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Demonstrates willingness to work beyond minimum expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15) Displays professional appearance appropriate to the organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Adapted with permission from a rubric used by faculty in the Department of Health Science at Towson University.*

# Presentation Rubric

Student: Stanley Livingston  
Topic: Ad campaign

	Professional	Adequate	Needs work	You're fired	Grade
Content	Full grasp (more than needed) of material in initial presentations and in answering questions later.	Solid presentation of material and answers all questions adequately but without elaboration.	Less than a full grasp of the information revealed rudimentary presentation and answers to questions.	No grasp of information, and some misinformation, and unable to answer questions accurately.	B+
Organizations	Information is presented in a logical interesting sequence that is easy for the audience to follow.	Information is presented in a logical sequence that is easy for the audience to follow but a bit dull.	Presentation jumps around a lot and is not easy to follow although it is possible.	Audience cannot follow presentations because it follows no logical sequence.	C
Graphics	Graphics explain and reinforce the rest of the presentation.	Graphics relate to the test of the presentation.	Graphics are too few or not sufficiently related to the rest of the presentation.	Graphics are either not used or are superfluous.	B
English	No misspelled words or grammatical errors.	No more than two misspelled words or grammatical errors.	Three misspelled words or grammatical errors.	Four or more misspelled words or grammatical errors.	A
Elocution	Speaks clearly, correctly, and precisely, loud enough for audience to hear and slowly enough for easy understanding.	Speaks clearly, pronounces most words correctly, loud enough to be easily heard, and slow enough to be easily understood.	Speaks unclearly, mispronounces many major terms, and speaks too softly or rapidly to be easily understood.	Mumbles, mispronounces most important terms, and speaks too softly or rapidly to be understood at all.	C
Eye Contact	Eye contact constant; minimal or no reading of notes.	Eye contact maintained except when consulting notes, which is too often.	Some eye contact, but mostly reading from notes.	No eye contact; reads from notes exclusively.	B-

Figure 6.3 Three-level rubric with circled feedback. Note how the less complex descriptions make this a viable way to grade using circles.

Grading Rubric for Metamorphosis Paper		
Task Description: Write a research paper about a person, institution, or movement that has created or sought to create significant change. (Professors were allowed to add to this description but not to subtract from it.)		
High mastery	Average mastery	Low mastery
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An inviting introduction draws the reader in, a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There is a clear thesis.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transitions are thoughtful and clearly show how ideas connect.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Uses an appropriate variety of sources, which are well integrated and support the author's points.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations, paraphrases and summaries are used and cited appropriately.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Uses the proper format (APA, MLA, etc.)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing is logical and effective.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Spelling is generally correct even on more difficult words.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader effectively through the text.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Grammar and usage contribute to the clarity; conventions, if manipulated for stylistic effect, work.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice and style are appropriate for the type of paper assigned.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paragraphs are well-focused and coherent.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion, but the introduction or the conclusion may not tie the paper into a coherent whole.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There is a thesis but it is ambiguous or unfocused.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transitions often work well, but some leave connections between ideas fuzzy.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sources generally support the author's points, but more or a greater variety need to be cited.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries generally work but occasionally interfere with the flow of the writing, seem irrelevant, or are incorrectly cited.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Uses the proper format but there are occasional errors.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing shows some logic, but it is not under complete control and may be so predictable that the reader finds it distracting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Spelling is generally correct, but more difficult words may be misspelled.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> End punctuation is correct, but internal punctuation is sometimes missing or wrong.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There are problems with grammar or usage, but they are not serious enough to distort meaning.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice and style don't quite fit with the type of paper assigned.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paragraphs occasionally lack focus or coherence.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There is no real lead-in to set up what follows and no real conclusion to wrap things up.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There is no clear thesis.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connections between ideas are often confusing or missing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Citations are infrequent or often seem to fail to support the author's points.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries tend to break the flow of the piece, become monotonous, don't seem to fit or are not cited.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Frequent errors in format or incorrect format used.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sequencing seems illogical, disjointed, or forced.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>There are frequent spelling errors, even on common words.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation is often missing or incorrect, including terminal punctuation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Errors in grammar or usage are frequent enough to become distracting and interfere with meaning.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice and style are not appropriate for the type of paper assigned.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paragraphs generally lack focus or coherence.</i></li> </ul>

Figure 5.1 Faculty-team-created rubric for shared assignments in a freshman inquiry class at Portland State University.

### Critical Thinking

- ☐ The paper displays insight and originality of thought.
- ☐ *There is sound and logical analysis that reveals clear understanding of the relevant issues.*
- ☐ There is an appropriate balance of factual reporting, interpretation and analysis, and personal opinion.
- ☐ *The author goes beyond the obvious in constructing interpretation of the facts.*
- ☐ Telling and accurate details are used to reinforce the author's arguments.
- ☐ *The paper is convincing and satisfying.*

- ☐ There are some original ideas, but many seem obvious or elementary.
- ☐ *Analysis is generally sound, but there are lapses in logic or understanding.*
- ☐ The balance between factual reporting, interpretation and analysis, and personal opinion seems skewed.
- ☐ *Paper shows understanding of relevant issues but lacks depth.*
- ☐ Generally accurate details are included but the reader is left with questions—more information is needed to fill in the blanks.
- ☐ *The paper leaves the reader vaguely skeptical and unsatisfied.*

- ☐ There are few original ideas, most seem obvious or elementary.
- ☐ *Analysis is superficial or illogical, the author seems to struggle to understand the relevant issues.*
- ☐ There is a clear imbalance between factual reporting, interpretation and analysis, and personal opinion.
- ☐ *Author appears to misunderstand or omit key issues.*
- ☐ There are few details or most details seem irrelevant.
- ☐ *The paper leaves the reader unconvinced.*

### Content

- ☐ The paper addresses a topic within the context of promoting personal, social/cultural/ political, or paradigmatic change.
- ☐ *The paper is complete and leaves no important aspect of the topic not addressed.*
- ☐ The author has a good grasp of what is known, what is generally accepted and what is yet to be discovered.
- ☐ *Appropriate significance is assigned to the information presented and irrelevant information is rarely included.*
- ☐ Connections between the topic of the paper and related topics are made that enhance understanding.
- ☐ *Specialized terminology, if used, is used correctly and precisely.*
- ☐ The author seems to be writing from personal knowledge or experience.

- ☐ The paper addresses a topic within the context of promoting personal, social/ cultural/ political, or paradigmatic change.
- ☐ *The paper is substantially complete, but more than one important aspect of the topic is not addressed.*
- ☐ The author has a good grasp of the relevant information but fails to distinguish between what is known, what is generally accepted, and what is yet to be discovered.
- ☐ *The paper often used information in a way inappropriate to its significance or includes much irrelevant information.*
- ☐ Few connections are made to related topics.
- ☐ *Specialized terminology is sometimes incorrectly or imprecisely used.*
- ☐ The author seems to be writing from knowledge or experience but has difficulty going from general observations to specifics.

- ☐ The paper needs to be substantially more closely related to promoting personal, social/ cultural/ political, or paradigmatic change.
- ☐ *The paper is clearly incomplete with many important aspects of the topic left out.*
- ☐ The author has a poor grasp of the relevant information.
- ☐ *The paper frequently uses information inappropriately or uses irrelevant information.*
- ☐ No connections are made to related topics to help clarify the information presented.
- ☐ *Specialized terminology is frequently misused.*
- ☐ The work seems to be a simple restatement of the assignment or a simple, overly broad answer to a question with little evidence of expertise on the part of the author.

Figure 5.1 Continued

## LEADING A CLASS DISCUSSION SCORING GUIDE RUBRIC

Leading a Class Discussion—Rubric Group, Points, Points 20 / Score \_\_\_\_

Category	Qualities of best work	Points	Comments
Preparation	Handed out ahead of time Focus questions—during or before reading	3	
Content	Focus of readings: explained and clear Type of readings Topics of general interest Topics relevant to Advanced Ed. Psych.	4	
Discussion/ debate methods	Teaching methods Engage students—motivating Variety of methods used Introduced clearly Balanced; small/large groups All voices heard Guide but don't dominate discussion Summarize the discussion Discussion with different viewpoints, not a presentation	5	
Discussion questions	Questions asked Challenging, thought provoking Understandable Encourage participation Encourage students to refer to Text, cite sources	5	
Communication skills	Facilitators demonstrate good communication skills Eye contact Active listening Paraphrasing Summarizing Redirecting the questions	3	

### Communication Skills Feedback for Individuals

	Name	Name	Name	Name
Eye contact				
Voice				
Gestures				
Stance				

# PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

## STUDIES PROGRAM RUBRIC:

### ETHICAL ISSUES

#### Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility

6 (highest)	<p>Portfolio creatively and comprehensively articulates approaches to ethical issues and social responsibility, in a scholarly manner, citing specific evidence. Demonstrates an ability to view multiple sides of these issues, to question what is being taught, and to construct independent meaning and interpretations.</p> <p>Portfolio presents well-developed ideas on the role of ethical issues and social responsibility in both private and public life. Demonstrates a deep awareness of how a conceptual understanding of ethical issues and social responsibility manifests concretely in one's own personal choices, including decisions on when and how to act.</p>
5	<p>Portfolio analyzes ethical issues and social responsibility in a scholarly manner and makes thoughtful connections between this area of study and its effects on lives, ideas, and events. Portfolio discusses explicitly how a deepening understanding of ethical issues and social responsibility has influenced personal opinions, decisions, and views on the role of the self in society.</p>
4	<p>Portfolio thoughtfully analyzes, in a scholarly manner, a situation or situations in which ethical issues and social responsibility have played an important role. Begins to investigate connections between areas of controversy and to extrapolate meaning from specific examples. Portfolio applies learning in ethical issues and social responsibility to issues that arise in everyday life and contemplates the impact of personal ethical choices and social action in the context of interpersonal and broader societal spheres.</p>
3	<p>Portfolio exhibits a working knowledge of major themes and scholarly debates surrounding ethical issues and social responsibility and applies this understanding to some topics but offers no independent analysis.</p> <p>References ethical issues and social responsibility as a subject of personal inquiry, begins to question established views, and contemplates in some way the value and impact of individual choices and personal action on one's broader community.</p>
2	<p>Portfolio mentions some issue(s) involving ethics or talks about social responsibility in a general fashion but does not discuss these areas in a meaningful way.</p> <p>Portfolio contains some evidence of self-reflection in the area of ethical issues or social responsibility, but this reflection is superficial and reveals little or no questioning of established views.</p>
1 (lowest)	<p>Portfolio displays little or no engagement with the subjects of ethical issues and social responsibility.</p> <p>Demonstrates little or no recognition of ethical issues and social responsibility as subjects worthy of personal inquiry.</p>
X =	No basis for scoring (Use only for missing or malfunctioning portfolios.)

*Note:* In this scoring guide, the phrase "ethical issues and social responsibility" refers to the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society—intellectually, socially, and personally.

# PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY STUDIES PROGRAM RUBRIC: HOLISTIC CRITICAL THINKING

## Inquiry and Critical Thinking Rubric

Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.

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### 6 (Highest)—Consistently does all or almost all of the following:

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- Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
- Identifies the salient arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
- Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view.
- Generates alternative explanations of phenomena or event.
- Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons.
- Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.
- Makes ethical judgments.

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### 5—Does most of the following:

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- Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
- Thinks through issues by identifying relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
- Offers analysis and evaluation of obvious alternative points of view.
- Generates alternative explanations of phenomena or event.
- Justifies (by using) some results or procedures, explains reasons.
- Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons leads.

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### 4—Does most of the following:

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- Describes events, people, and places with some supporting details from the source.
- Make connections to sources, either personal or analytic.
- Demonstrates a basic ability to analyze, interpret, and formulate inferences.
- States or briefly includes more than one perspective in discussing literature, experiences, and points of view of others.
- Takes some risks by occasionally questioning sources or by stating interpretations and predictions.
- Demonstrates little evidence of rethinking or refinement of one's own perspective.



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3—Does most or many of the following:

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- Responds by retelling or graphically showing events or facts.
  - Makes personal connections or identifies connections within or between sources in a limited way. Is beginning to use appropriate evidence to back ideas.
  - Discusses literature, experiences, and points of view of others in terms of own experience.
  - Responds to sources at factual or literal level.
  - Includes little or no evidence of refinement of initial response or shift in dualistic thinking.
  - Demonstrates difficulty with organization and thinking is uneven.
- 

2—Does most or many of the following:

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- Misinterprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
  - Fails to identify strong, relevant counter arguments.
  - Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions.
  - Justifies few results or procedures, seldom explains reasons.
  - Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views based on self-interest or preconceptions.
- 

1 (lowest)—Consistently does all or almost all of the following:

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- Offers biased interpretations of evidence, statements, graphics, questions, information, or the points of view of others.
  - Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counterarguments.
  - Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view. Argues using fallacious or irrelevant reasons and unwarranted claims.
  - Does not justify results or procedures, nor explains reasons.
  - Exhibits close-mindedness or hostility to reason.
- 

X—No basis for scoring (Use only for missing or malfunctioning portfolios.)

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