

Co-Creation of Rubrics

Overview:

By analyzing student work samples and exemplars, students will work with the teacher to co-construct a rubric. The rubric will be aligned to the learning standards and describe differing levels of proficiency, according to selected criteria. The rubric can then be used to guide student learning, for peer and self-assessment, and for teacher feedback.

Purpose:

Involving students in the co-creation of rubrics engages them in higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation. The act of creating rubrics with students clarifies the expectations of quality for the assignment, while also assuring that students understand all components of the assignment. Using students as co-creators of rubrics combines the helpful structure of a rubric to provide growth producing feedback with the responsive and equitable practice of incorporating student voice.

Application: When and where can I use it?

Rubrics can be used to provide feedback to students at any grade level and in any discipline. The developmental appropriateness of the rubric is based on the language (or pictures) used to describe quality, as well as the complexity of the task being evaluated by the rubric.

Getting Started: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

A well written rubric provides direction to both teachers and students about the quality of work expected in order to advance to the next level of learning. You can co-create rubrics with your students by sharing with them exemplars or student work samples and engaging them in discussion to derive the criteria and performance indicators based on those examples. Some things to keep in mind when developing a rubric:

- **Describe four performance levels instead of three.** When there are three choices, we make it too easy for scorers to land "in the middle".
- **Use descriptive language.** Avoid vague, subjective terms in favor of language that more precisely describes the level of proficiency.
- **Focus on quality not quantity.** The difference between one performance level and the next should not be "one more" item (example, quote, citation, etc.). More is not always better. Describe quality first.
- **Focus on the positive at all levels.** Describe what IS present at each performance level not what is missing.
- **Describe excellence, not perfection.** Avoid terms like "always" or "never"; they are absolutes and are rarely found in even the highest quality student work.

- **Be selective about the number of performance indicators, and make sure those performance indicators are anchored in the essential learning standards you are teaching.** When co-creating a rubric with students, this is a great opportunity to provide clarity on the learning targets they are striving towards.
- **Be kid-friendly.** Use language that students will understand so that they are able to use the rubric for self-assessment and peer-assessment purposes. Choose “encouraging” labels for your levels of performance such as “getting started” or “emerging” rather than “below level” or “unacceptable”. Let your students choose the labels they feel comfortable with to describe their learning journey.

Creating high quality rubrics is not easy work. As the teacher, you need to be comfortable with the process yourself before you engage your students in the process of co-creating a rubric with you. Engaging your students in this work, however, allows them to have a voice in how their performance will be assessed while also deepening their understanding of what quality work looks like.

Read more about this Instructional Move:

[Consider including students in creating rubrics - MSU Denver](#)

[Rubric Quality Review Worksheet](#) – a guide to developing high quality rubrics

References:

[Co-Creating Rubrics with Students | Center for Teaching & Learning | University of Colorado Boulder](#)

Hess, Karin. Rigor by Design, Not Chance. Alexandria: ASCD, 2023