

## Five Stages to Making a Rubric – For Majors

### ● Stage 1: Reflecting through use of eight questions:

- 1) *What are the key goals of this major?* Examples: absorb a specific body of content; develop skills, synthesize previous learning experiences.
- 2) *How well have students been achieving these goals?*

Where are points of satisfaction with the major? Where are points of concern? Will you change any goals (adding or deleting) in response to these points?

- 3) *How do the goals relate to each other?*

How will student success with some goals depend on success with prior goals? How important is it or in what ways is it important that students do well with these goals?

- 4) *What knowledge, skills, and habits of mind will students need to successfully complete this major?*

Do they currently demonstrate this knowledge, skills, and habits of mind? Are they developing these? Are they starting from scratch? What range of knowledge, skills, and habits of mind are found among your majors? Are any of these more important than others?

- 5) *What are the key tasks/ functions for each goal or outcome? (See resource handouts for this workshop for ideas.)*

Break down the goals and outcomes into components. Write a description of each component for your students.

- 6) *What evidence can students provide for each goal in this major that will show they have accomplished these goals? What evidence can students provide for each outcome for each goal that will show they have accomplished this goal? Are there different kinds of evidence?*
- 7) *What will an exemplary instance of a student fulfilling each major goal and outcome look like?*
- 8) *What will falling short on the major goals and outcomes look like? What are pitfalls the students may encounter?*

### ● Stage 2: Listing

What are the learning outcomes we hope to see in the completed major and on outcomes for each goal? Questions 4-6 above will help you identify skills and knowledge required, the exact nature of the tasks through which students will demonstrate achievement of these goals and outcomes, and types of evidence of learning that you expect for each. After you get your list, add a description of the highest level of performance for each learning outcome you have listed.

After you write your first paragraph of the highest level, circle the words in that paragraph that **can vary**. These words will be the ones that you will change as you write the less than top level performances.

### **Concept words that convey various degrees of performance**

- Depth...Breadth...Quality...Scope...Extent...Complexity...Degrees...Accuracy
- Presence to absence
- Complete to incomplete
- Many to some to none
- Major to minor
- Consistent to inconsistent
- Frequency: always to generally to sometimes to rarely

### ● **Stage 3: Refining your statements of goals and outcomes**

#### ***Are your statements concise?***

Example:

Students will gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected.

Better: Students will be able to apply factual information to a problem.

The remaining content can be addressed when creating subcategories for the scoring rubric: Relevant application? Clear? Comprehensive? Conscious of bias?

#### ***Are your statements neither too broad nor too specific?***

Example:

*Too vague:* Students will demonstrate information literacy skills.

*Too specific:* Students will be able to use institutional online services to retrieve information.

*Better:* Students will locate information and critically evaluate it. (put criteria for critical evaluation elsewhere in a rubric).

## Do your statements contain fuzzy terms?

Fuzzy terms include: *critical* thinking, *proficient* writing, *understanding* a concept, *knowing*, and *appreciating* a viewpoint.

Use handouts (especially verb chart) to delineate fuzzy terms.

### ● Stage 4: Grouping and Labeling

- Rubrics can be outcome-specific. For example, you may assess students using a critical thinking skills rubric, a reading rubric, or an oral presentation rubric.
- A single rubric may be used to assess multiple outcomes for one goal. In this case, place similar outcomes together to comprise dimensions of a rubric. Create labels for the similar outcomes. A rubric for a research project exemplifies this approach.
- A single rubric may be used to assess all program goals. This is more likely going to be the case for the assessment of portfolios or capstone experiences or for graduate program assessment.
- Orphan outcomes: if they are important, consider making the outcome a goal and unpacking the new goal with a list of related outcomes.

*See attached pages for underlined examples.*

### Checklist for Stage 4:

- 1) Are you building your rubric from the top, starting with a description of exemplary performance?
- 2) Did you write your descriptors as if you were writing for knowledgeable judges of performance, not novices? You can edit later for audience or you may choose to make a parallel student version of the rubric later.
- 3) Are you crafting the language for the lowest sector on the scale in order to make very clear what the performer must do for minimal success? Suggestion: resist the urge to describe the lowest points on the scale in deficit terms only. What *is* accomplished even at the lowest levels?
- 4) Do your criteria reflect all key components of high quality work/? If a student can achieve a high score on your rubric and still not perform well on the task, key criteria are missing from your rubric. For example, if you've addressed organization, mechanics, and accuracy on your rubric but not insight and creativity (and these are key components of high quality work) think about your rubric some more.

- 5) Does your rubric suggest only that poor or mediocre work has “less of X” than strong work? Look for unique features of poor, mediocre, or excellent work (this may take several iterations of a rubric over months or even years).

Sample: “practicing ethical standards of the profession” does not rubric into “highly ethical,” “somewhat ethical,” etc. because the profession wants its members to always act ethically.

Exemplary:	Acts congruently with and advocates for ethical standards of the profession.
Proficient:	Acts congruently with ethical standards of the profession.
Marginal:	Acts within ethical standards. Any violations are minor.
Unacceptable:	Violates standards of the profession. Violations are major.

### ● Stage 5: Application

Form the actual rubric by deploying dimensions and levels along each side of the rubric.

- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent.
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable.
- Advanced, Intermediate, Novice.
- Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice.
- Accomplished, developing, beginning.

Sources: [http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/july/rubrics/Rubric\\_Guidelines.html](http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/july/rubrics/Rubric_Guidelines.html)

[http://www.relearning.org/resources/PDF/rubric\\_sampler.pdf](http://www.relearning.org/resources/PDF/rubric_sampler.pdf)

From *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*, by Linda Suskie. Anker, 2004, p.79

*Introduction to Rubrics*, by Dannelle D. Stevens and Antonia J. Levi. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publications, pp. 29-41)

*Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses* by Mary E. Huba and Jann E. Freed. Allyn and Bacon, 2000, pp. 178-87.