RUBRIC

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Abstract
This paper deals with assessment and focuses on 'rubric' which has stemmed largely from a growing concern about the inadequacy of information provided by most present–day assessment. Rubrics have led to a shift in emphasis from labelling and grading to diagnosis and evaluation, and hence a shift from norm to criterion referencing as the basis for evaluating students' performances. The present paper attempts to answer the following questions and eventually presents some examples of rubrics.

 1 What is a rubric?
 2 Why is a rubric used?
 3 How is a rubric created?

1. Problem and significance

Evaluating students' performance forms a big concern to language teachers especially when assessment concerns free response questions (also known as subjective questions). These questions include literary appreciation, composition or essay writing, translation, or evaluating research papers, projects, oral presentation and the like. Conversely, instructors of subjects like grammar, or pronunciation may find closed-response questions (also referred to as objective questions (such as MCQ, True/False, and Gap-filling where there is normally one correct answer) much easier, and more reliable and applicable (Heaton 1988; Gronlund & Linn 1990).

The two principal marking schemes of free response questions are kinown by the terms **general impression marking** and **analytical marking.** The former implies an overall global judgement of the work as a whole, while the latter attemts to separate various features of writing for scoring purposes. Teachers, in general, are in favour of the former as it is less time consuming although it has many drawbacks. The latter seems better but it is still not sufficient..

In order to assist instructors when scoring subjective questions, a rubric may seem the solution as it serves both the examiner to record grades objectively, and the examinees to evaluate the quality of their work and have informative feedback.

2. Aims

the study aims at presenting a new method of assessing students' performance whether written or oral by using an analytical scoring guide for assessing assignments, papers or oral presentation. This method is hoped to assist teachers in scoring students' performance, and students as well to improve their performance and monitor it.

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3. limits of the study

The study is limited to university students and to open response questions whether oral or written.

4. Assessment

Assessment as illustrated below has two major stages: setting and marking. The former deals with setting the questions, which is not the main concern of this study whereas the latter concerns marking the answers to those questions, which forms the basic area of this study. Marks in themselves have no intrinsic value. They are simply symbols or grades used to give an indication, though very roughly, of a level of achievement. They are often described as tools to enable comparison to be made between students. Although students and teachers seem to relish numerical marks, marks can be very misleading. A difference of one mark between two students conveys an implication that student A is better than student B, which in fact may be totally untrue. Grades, on the other hand, whether divided into A,B,C,D,F or three classes: Excellent, Satisfactory, Poor, or just two: Pass, Fail - although recently in the United Kingdom 'ungraded' has superseded 'fail' (Frith & Macintosh, 1984) may seem a little more acceptable by language teachers.

Stages of Assessment

Setting   Marking
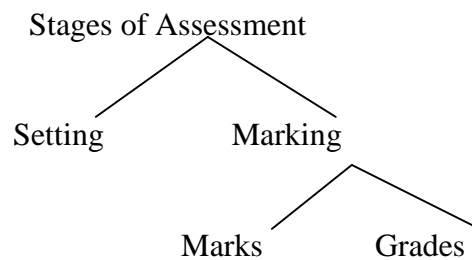
Marks   Grades

However, whether a teacher uses marks or grades when assessing students' achievement, drawing comparison between individuals and describing a learner's standing in a group has many drawbacks including:

1 Giving rise to unhealthy competition which is not preferable for learning. This may lead to cheating among learners and the marks awarded may not reflect their actual abilities.
2 Knowledge of a learner's standing relative to the achievement of others is of trivial interest compared with the knowledge of the extent to which a learner approaches a given standard of performance.
3 And finally marks and grades, no matter how objective the marking system is, merely reflect relative assessment. In other words, no marks or grades are perfect.
   (See Anastasi 1990; Gronlund & Linn 1990)

5. Alternative Assessment

The previous drawbacks have led to another type of assessment known as criterion-referenced assessment as opposed to the aforementioned one known as norm-referenced assessment. In criterion-referenced assessment, the individual's performance is compared to a pre-established criterion to make a mastery/non-mastery decision. The results provided let the learners know where they stand, and where their weaknesses are. This means that detailed statements of each performance level serve to increase the reliability of scoring. Such descriptions are now easy to

produce in the form of a rubric, which is the focus of this study.
(See Valette 1977; Berk 1984; Heaton 1988; Bachman 1990; Lynch & Davidson 1994; Al –Juboury, 2004)

In short, when the score results are interpreted in relation to the performance of a particular group of individuals, a norm-referenced interpretation is applied. If, on the other hand, the scores are interpreted with respect to a specific level or pre-determined criterion, a criterion-referenced interpretation is required.

6. What is a rubric?

In education, a rubric is an analytical writing assessment scoring guide, often in a grid or table format to assess the performances of the students. The dimensions or tasks of the performance to be evaluated, and the specific criteria used to evaluate each dimension are listed, for example, purpose, organization, details, mechanics are often what count in a piece of writing. A rubric also articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor (See Goodrich 1997).

Weaver, (online) simply defines a rubric as a grading guide which can be shared with students so that everyone can see the standards that will apply to grade an assignment. Writes, (online) states that a rubric is a very comprehensive, yet relatively easy way to provide valuable feedback so students know what needs to be done to improve their work. Rubrics are also used to let students know what is expected of them so they are prepared to submit their best work. Writes also argues that using rubrics will eliminate many of the questions students tend to have when they see their grades.

A rubric can, thus, be considered as a working guide for students and teachers. It is usually handed out before the assignment begins in order to get students to think about the criteria on which their work will be judged. The following is an example of a template for a rubric where the dimensions or criteria are in the column on the left. The three columns to the right of the criteria describe varying degrees of quality from excellent to poor and are accompanied by marks. These columns explain what makes a piece of work good or a bad one.

Dimensions/ Criteria	Best Quality 5 Marks	Average Quality 3 Marks	Lowest Quality 1 Mark
Criterion 1			
Criterion 2			
Criterion 3			
Criterion 4			

Schrock's Guide for Educators: Assessment & Rubric Information (online) and her comprehensive guide to formative and summative assessments are still going strong as an amazing collection. Schrock offers links to a treasure trove of useful evaluation tools and rubrics, as well as specific items of interest which include student Web Page rubrics, subject specific rubrics, Web sites offering tools for rubric building and support, technology assessment rubrics that measure educator skills, and much more.

7. Uses of Rubric
- Rubrics are typically used with subjective assessments (open responses) rather than objective assessments (closed responses). This means that rubrics are of great use to instructors who teach literature, composition or essay writing, translation, linguistics and the like; whereas instructors of grammar, pronunciation may find objective assessment (e.g. MCQ or True/False) more applicable.
- Rubrics can also be used to assess assignments, papers, projects, oral presentations, and the like.

8. Why are rubrics needed?
- Rubrics are performance-based assessments used to evaluate performance on any task that leads to a final product.
- Rubrics can provide valuable information about the degree to which a student has achieved a defined learning outcome based on specific criteria for evaluation.
- Rubrics use specific criteria as a basis for evaluation indicated in *narrative* descriptions which are separated into levels of possible performances related to a given task(s).
- Rubrics use analytical rating scale, which can be numerical, qualitative, or a combination of numerical and qualitative.

9. Rating scales
Rating scales can be either holistic which is rather traditional, or analytical which is a recent and detailed one.

9.1 Holistic rating scale
- Holistic scales assess several dimensions together.
- Holistic scoring is more global and does little to separate the tasks in any given product, but rather views the final product as a set of interrelated tasks contributing to the whole.
- One score provides an overall impression of ability on any given product.
- It is most commonly used with writing products.
- The disadvantage of holistic scoring is that it does not provide detailed information about students' performance in specific areas of content or skill.
- Consequently students become concerned about their scores rather than their performance.

9.2 Analytical rating scale
- Analytical scales offer a separate scale for each dimension.
- Analytical scoring breaks down the objective, or final product into components or parts, and each part is scored independently.
- The total score is the sum of the rating for all the parts being evaluated.
- When two raters score students' work which could be to assure reliability in results, the analytical scoring seems more valuable.

10.Benefits of rubrics for students and teachers
Rubrics appeal to students and teachers for many reasons as they are powerful tools for teaching, learning and assessment and can improve student's performance

and monitor it. Students, then, need to be completely aware of the rubrics the teacher is using. The following summarize the benefits of rubrics for the students and for the teachers

10.1   Benefits for students
- Rubrics make the teacher's expectations clear to the students.
- Rubrics show students how to meet the teacher's expectations.
- Rubrics help students evaluate the quality of their work as they use the rubric for self-assessment.
- Rubrics help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their own and others' work as they use the rubric for peer-assessment.
- Rubrics provide students with more informative feedback about their strengths and areas in need of improvement

10.2 Benefits for teachers
- Rubrics help teachers differentiate between the qualities of performance.
- Rubrics improve the objectivity of grading especially when more than one person or tester is evaluating the performance.
- Rubrics may reduce the time the teacher takes to grade performance.
- When clarifying their goals, expectations, and focus, teachers' paperwork is reduced because students are a part of the process of assessment development.
- Finally, rubrics are easy to use and explain.

11. How do you create a rubric?
The steps to create a rubric can be listed in a sequential order, although these steps can perform in any order as long as the rubric contains the following:
- Performance objective (learning objectives including specific knowledge, skill or attitude gained and displayed by the student)
- Dimensions to be evaluated, (specific tasks to be demonstrated by the student like content, mechanics, etc.)
- Levels of gradation of quality, defined and explained (e.g. poor, average, excellent, or beginning, developing, advanced,)
- Criterion or points for each level of quality (start with the best quality for each dimension, or the weakest).

Before creating the rubric grid, a tester needs to
- Build a full range of skills and knowledge with clear indication of each level of performance.
- Plan them in a grid.
- Share the rubric with students.
- Make it visible at all times on a bulletin board or distributed in a handout to direct attention to the key concepts and standards students must meet.
- Finally, apply it and consider if any revision or modification is required to apply to more activities.

The following is an example of a rubric with four detailed ranking descriptions.

Marks / grades	(1) Weak	(2) Basic	(3) Proficient	(4) Strong
Assessment outcomes	Little or no evidence of the outcome	Some evidence of the outcome	Detailed evidence of The outcome	Highly creative & mature presence of outcome
Outcome 1				
Outcome 2				
Outcome 3				

12. The pros and cons of using rubrics

Using a rubric is not an easy decision. Grading with a well-developed rubric could save the instructor time. But if the wrong style of rubric is used the instructor could end up with a headache. The following are some rubric pros and cons.

10.1 Rubrics Pros
- Rubrics help categorize student's work.
- Rubrics have the ability to record grades objectively.
- Rubrics save lots of time.
- Rubrics can be modified to suit more than one subject.

10.2 Rubrics Cons
- Rubrics can be too analytical for a project or essay.
- Rubrics do not always take outside circumstances into account.

13. Conclusion and Recommendations

Rubrics are an effective assessment tool in evaluating student performance in areas which are complex and vague. By involving students in the creation of the rubric, the students take more responsibility for their own learning, are empowered by being involved in the teaching/learning process, and have a clearer idea of what is expected in terms of specific performance. Similarly by clarifying their goals, expectations, and focus, teachers' paperwork and time are reduced because students are a part of the process of assessment development.

As for recommendations, it is hoped that teachers will benefit from the examples given in this paper and in the appendices, as well as the steps given for creating a rubric, for designing rubrics by themselves and with the help of their students for their own subjects and activities.

Appendices

The following are some examples of rubrics for assessing different activities. The first rubric is written in a simple checklist, i.e., not in the form of a grid and may be used to evaluate research papers; the second is a more elaborated one and may assess oral presentation; the third is a simpler oral presentation rubric, whereas the next is an essay rubric. The last is a more detailed rubric and is used by the researcher for evaluating fourth year EFL students' assignments for practicing designing tests in Language Assessment. For more examples some web sites are given in the bibliography.

Appendix (1)
A Simple Research Report Rubric

This rubric can help teachers evaluate 4th year students' research papers or any assignment. The knowledge or activities are stated first. Then the number from the following scale of five grades reflects teachers' assessment of the student's work on each activity.

    1 = Weak
    2 = Moderately weak
    3 = Average
    4 = Moderately strong
    5 = Strong

1. The topic of research was clearly defined.
        1   2   3   4   5
2. The student developed a research plan, conducted an organized research and made good use of time.
        1   2   3   4   5
3. The information researched addressed a problem.
        1   2   3   4   5
4. Concepts were accurately identified and clearly comprehended.
        1   2   3   4   5
5. The information researched addressed alternatives for solution.
        1   2   3   4   5
6. The student searched for information from the web, books, theses, etc.
        1   2   3   4   5
7. Writing was clear and the ideas were clearly presented and developed.
        1   2   3   4   5
8. Grammar, spelling and punctuation were correct throughout the work.
        1   2   3   4   5
9. The student submitted the work in time.
        1   2   3   4   5
10. The student demonstrated understanding of the topic during discussion
        1   2   3   4   5

Total Points Possible: 50 points
Total Points Earned:

Adapted and modified.
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Appendix 2
Oral Presentation Rubric

Performance element	Distinguished 3	Developing 2	Emerging 1	Mark
Awareness of Audience	☐ Significantly increasing audience understanding. ☐ Effectively convincing audience to recognize the validity of a point of view.	☐ Raises audience understanding and knowledge to some extent ☐ Points of view may be clear but lack development or support	☐ Fails to increase audience under-standing and knowledge of a topic. ☐ Fails to effectively convince the audience.	
Strength of material, organization	☐ Clear purpose and subject. ☐ Pertinent examples, facts ☐ Conclusions are supported ☐ Major ideas summarized ☐ Full understanding by the audience	☐ Attempts to define purpose and subject. ☐ Weak examples, not supporting the subject. ☐ Thin data or evidence in support of ideas. ☐ Major ideas need summary. ☐ Audience left with vague idea.	☐ Subject and purpose are not clearly defined. ☐ Weak support of subject through use of examples or facts. ☐ Totally insufficient support or ideas or conclusions. ☐ Major ideas left unclear ☐ Audience left with no new ideas.	
Delivery	☐ Relaxed and self-confident. ☐ Holds attention by direct eye contact with all audience. ☐ Volume moving up and down to maintain interest	☐ Some tension or indifference. ☐ Occasional eye-contact with audience. ☐ Uneven volume	☐ Nervous tension obvious ☐ No effect to make eye contact ☐ Low volume	

Adapted from a rubric set by Louisiana Voices Folklife in Education Project
www.louisianavioces.org

Appendix (3)
Oral Performance Rubric

The following rubric seems simpler than the one before. It assesses the students' oral performance in concern with four criteria: organization, subject knowledge, conventions, and delivery. The grade is based upon the following evaluation scale: (3 Marks) very good, (2 Marks) good, and (1 Mark) poor

Performance element	Very good 3	Good 2	Poor 1
Organization	Audience follows Information which is presented logically.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because the student jumps a round.	Audience cannot follow presentation because there is no sequence.

Subject knowledg	The student demonstrates full knowledge by answering class questions.	The student is uncomfortable with information and answers some questions.	The student does not have grasp of information, and cannot answer questions.
Conventions	No grammatical errors. Word choice is appropriate. Correct pronunciation.	Some grammatical errors, words are adequate but sometimes mispronounced.	Several grammatical errors and mis-pronounced words Limited vocabulary.
Delivery	Delivery is natural and confident.	Delivery generally seems effective.	The speaker mumbles and speaks inaudibly.

Designer: Nejat Al-Juboury

Appendix (3)
Essay Rubric

Performance elements	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Idea development (10 points)	Ideas clearly organized and supported throughout the essay (8 -10)	Ideas may be evident but the organizational structure needs to be strengthened (6 – 7)	Ideas are present but vague and do not flow smoothly (4 - 5)	Ideas not developed and lack organization (1 - 3)
Elaboration (10 points)	Well written Fully elaborated points with clear and accurate information (8 -10)	Well written. Most points elaborated with clear and detailed information. (6 – 7)	Awkward writing style. Points are general. Errors present. (4 - 5)	Poor writing with little or no specific details (1 - 3)
Mechanics (5 points)	No critical errors interfering with comprehension (4 - 5)	2-3 critical errors interfering with comprehension (3)	4-5 critical errors interfering with comprehension (2)	6 or more errors interfering with comprehension (1)

(19/6//2003) Adapted from
http://www.rubrics.com / rubrics/ Essay.html

Appendix (5)
Grammar Test Design Rubric

Criteria	Quality		
	Excellent (5)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs improvement (1)
NUMBER OF TECHNIQUES& NO. OF ITEMS IN EACH QUESTION	All the testing techniques have been attempted. Each question includes five items as required.	Several techniques are included but not all. Less than 5 items are written for each question.	Very few techniques are given. Less than three items are written for each technique
INSTRUCTIONS	Language of the instructions for each question is clear, effective and appropriate.	Language of the instructions is adequate though sometimes imprecise.	Instructions are sometimes incorrect or completely missing.
LINGUISTIC ACCURACY	Grammar and usage are correct. Word choice is specific and appropriate.	Problems with grammar areas are not serious. Words are adequate and correct	Errors in grammar are noticeable and frequent. Limited vocabulary and/or misused parts of speech
CONVENTIONS Spelling, Punctuation Capitalization	The work demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions. Spelling is generally correct. Punctuation is accurate. Consistent application of capitalization throughout is present.	The work shows reasonable control over a limited range of conventions. Spelling is usually correct on common words but not difficult words. End punctuation is usually correct but not the Internal. Most words are capitalized correctly.	The work reflects more than one problem concerning standard writing conventions. Spelling errors are frequent. Punctuation is often missing or incorrect. Capitalization is random.
CORRICULUM CONNECTION	Tasks are highly connected to the contents of the textbooks.	Tasks are somewhat connected to the contents of the textbook.	Tasks are loosely connected to the contents of the textbooks.
CONTENT QUALITY	Question items tackle distinctive and different areas so as to achieve high content coverage.	Most of the distinctive grammatical areas are tackled. One or two are unnecessarily repeated.	Items tackle few areas. Major ones are missing or inaccurately tested.
COMPLEXITY OF TASKS	Tasks require thinking and creative answers.	Tasks test moderate level of thinking.	Tasks test lower level of thinking.
INNOVATION	Internet surfing for recent techniques not cited in the textbook to include them.	One or two instances are taken from books and included in the work.	The material is confined to the examples given in the textbook.
REVISION & SCORING SCHEME	Work is revised thoroughly before submitting and a scoring scheme is supplied.	Work has been revised to a considerable extent. Scoring scheme needs rewriting	Work seems not revised. No scoring scheme is supplied.
SUBMITTING WORK ON TIME	The complete work is submitted on time.	The complete work is delayed and submitted within a couple of days.	The complete work is submitted after a week or more.

Designed by the researcher, Nejat Al-Juboury

13. Reference books and Web sites on Rubrics

Al-Juboury, N. 2004. *Measurement and Evaluation*. Baghdad: Al-Yaqdha Printing Press.

Anastasi, A. 1990. Psychological Testing, Sixth Edition. Macmillan.

Bachman, L. F. 1990. *Fundamental Consideration in Language Testing*. Oxford: OUP

Beauchamp, McConaghy, Parsons & Sanford. *Teaching From the Outside In.* Duval: 1996.

Berk, R. A. (ed.) 1984. *A guide to Criterion –referenced Test Construction*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Frith, D.S. and H.G. Macintosh 1984. *A Teacher's Guide to Assessment.* Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd.

Goodrich H. A. 1997. 'Understanding Rubrics', originally published in *Educational Leadership*, 54(4).

html: file:// H: Resources Rubric   Understanding Rubrics.mht
http://aei.uoregon.edu/de/iraq/index.html

Gronlund, N. E. and R.L. Linn. 1990 *Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching*, Sixth Edition. New York: Macmillan.

Heaton, J. B. 1988, *Writing English Language Tests*. London: Longman.

Lynch, B. K. and F. Davidson. 1994.   'Criterion-referenced tests development: linking curricula, teachers, and tests.' *TESOL Quarterly* 28,4:727-43.

Valette, R. M. 1977. *Modern Language Testing*, Second Edition. New York: Harecourt, Brace, and Jovanovich

Some Useful websites for writing rubrics

1 http://aei.uoregon.edu/de/iraq/index.html
2 Schrock, K. (1995). *Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators: Assessment and Rubric Information.*
   http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html
3 Rubrics for Teachers http://www.rubrics4teachers.com
4 2002. IDE Corp.- www.idecorp.com
5 6+1 Traits of Analytic Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (Rubric)
   Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory 1998
6 Rubric. University of Wisconsin-Stout Catalog and Schedule of Online Class
7 http://www.teach–nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/teamwork
8 http://www.rubrics.com/rubrics/Essay.html
9 Susan Weaver, CTL. 539-4325   sweaver@ucumberlands.edu
10 JanieWrights, How to create and Use a Rubric
   file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Dr.%20NEJAT/My%20Documents/How%20to%20Create%20and%20Use%20a%20Rubric%20%20eHow_com%23.htm#
11 Louisiana Voices Folklife in Education Project
    www.louisianavioces.org
2 Rubric 30 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston
3 http://teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/rubricprocon.html

اداة تقييم اختبارات غير الموضعية

الاستاذ المساعد نجاة الجبوري
كلية التربية للبنات - جامعة بغداد

ملخص البحث:
   يتنــاول البحـث موضــوع الاختبــارات و يركـز علـى طريقـه حديثـة فـي تصــحيح الاسـئلة الاختباريـة غيرالموضوعية لكون نتائج الطريقة التقليدية غير وافية بالغرض وبموجب هذه الطريقة يضع االمدرس تعليمات مكتوبة ينبغي اتباعها عند الاجابة من قبل الطالب ويجري التصحيح وتقويم الاداء بموجبها.