The Basics of Rubrics

Types of rubrics
- Rubrics can be holistic or analytic, general or task specific
- Holistic vs. analytic
  - Holistic rubrics provide a single score based on an overall impression of a student's performance on a task.
    - Advantages: quick scoring, provides overview of student achievement
    - Disadvantages: does not provide detailed information, may be difficult to provide one overall score
  - Analytic rubrics provide specific feedback along several dimensions.
    - Advantages: more detailed feedback, scoring more consistent across students and graders
    - Disadvantage: time consuming to score
- General vs. task specific
  - General rubrics contain criteria that are general across tasks.
    - Advantage: can use the same rubric across different tasks
    - Disadvantage: feedback may not be specific enough
  - Task specific rubrics are unique to a specific task.
    - Advantage: more reliable assessment of performance on the task
    - Disadvantage: difficult to construct rubrics for all specific tasks

What type of rubric works best for your purposes?
- Use a holistic rubric when:
  - You want a quick snapshot of achievement.
  - A single dimension is adequate to define quality.
- Use an analytic rubric when:
  - You want to see relative strengths and weaknesses.
  - You want detailed feedback.
  - You want to assess complicated skills or performance.
  - You want students to self-assess their understanding or performance.
- Use a general rubric when:
  - You want to assess reasoning, skills and products.
  - All students are not doing exactly the same task.
- Use a general rubric when:
  - You want to assess knowledge.
  - When consistency of scoring is extremely important.

How can I involve students in rubric development?
- After clearly defining the assignment for the students, they can follow the guidelines outlined above to create a rubric.
- Depending on your preference you may or may not want to provide the students with the key components of the assignment and the type of rubric to create.
- Students can either work in teams or as a whole class.

- If students work in teams, you may want to let the students use team based rubrics or have a class discussion about the team rubrics to reach consensus on one rubric for all students in the class.
- To ease in the development process, provide students with examples of rubrics, a rubric template and previous examples of student work if available.
- As an alternative to having students create a rubric, ask them to give feedback on or to add more detail to existing rubrics.

How do rubrics enhance student learning?
- When students are made aware of the rubrics prior to instruction and assessment, they know the level of performance expected and they are more motivated to reach those standards.
- When students are involved in rubric construction, the assignment itself becomes more meaningful to the students.

Using rubrics for assessment
- If you are providing a rubric, share it with students before they complete the assignment. This will help them understand the performance standards.
- Use rubrics for summative and formative evaluation.
- Rubrics can provide both a grade (summative) and detailed feedback to improve future performance (formative).
- Use rubrics to promote student self-assessment of their own learning and performance.

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