



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Rubrics and Checklists

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Scoring Rubrics: What, When and How?

Scoring rubrics are one of many alternatives available for evaluating student work. For example, checklists may be used rather than scoring rubrics in the evaluation of writing samples. Checklists are an appropriate choice for evaluation when the information that is sought is limited to the determination of whether specific criteria have been met. Scoring rubrics are based on descriptive scales and support the evaluation of the extent to which criteria has been met.

The assignment of numerical weights to sub-skills within a process is another evaluation technique that may be used to determine the extent to which given criteria has been met. Numerical values, however, do not provide students with an indication as to how to improve their performance. A student who receives a "70" out of "100", may not know how to improve his or her performance on the next assignment. Scoring rubrics respond to this concern by providing descriptions at each level as to what is expected. These descriptions assist the students in understanding why they received the score that they did and what they need to do to improve their future performances.

Whether a scoring rubric is an appropriate evaluation technique is dependent upon the purpose of the assessment. Scoring rubrics provide at least two benefits in the evaluation process. First, they support the examination of the extent to which the specified criteria has been reached. Second, they provide feedback to students concerning how to improve their performances. If these benefits are consistent with the purpose of the assessment, than a scoring rubric is likely to be an appropriate evaluation technique.

Analytic versus Holistic

In the initial phases of developing a scoring rubric, the evaluator needs to determine what will be the evaluation criteria. For example, two factors that may be considered in the evaluation of a writing sample are whether appropriate grammar is used and the extent to which the given argument is persuasive. An analytic scoring rubric, much like the checklist, allows for the separate evaluation of each of these factors. Each criterion is scored on a different descriptive scale.

Occasionally, it is not possible to separate an evaluation into independent factors. When there is an overlap between the criteria set for the evaluation of the different factors, a holistic scoring rubric may be preferable to an analytic scoring rubric. In a holistic scoring rubric, the criteria is considered in combination on a single descriptive scale. Holistic scoring rubrics support broader judgments concerning the quality of the process or the product.

Applications

What would you look for in a student's response to each of these prompts? How would you score it? How would you justify your score?

- Do you think there is too much fighting on TV? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is necessary to have alcohol at a party in order to have a good time?
- Does it bother you to be around someone who has bad manners?
- Should there be a dress code in places such as school, restaurants, and places of business? Why or why not?
- Should animals be used for medical research?
- Should the U.S. Government financially support Olympic teams?
- Should people be prohibited from smoking in certain places?
- Families are important because...