Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics

A STUDY GUIDE

from

Pearson Assessment Training Institute

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Purpose of This Study Guide and Learning Goals

The book, *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*, by Judith Arter and Jan Chappuis (Pearson 2006), helps educators to be good consumers and effective users of rubrics. This Study Guide is intended for use in conjunction with *the book.* It provides suggestions to promote understanding of and practice with the ideas in the book.

Rubrics are written down criteria that describe levels of quality of complex student reasoning, performances, or products. When done well, rubrics provide more than a mechanism for consistent grading. They even provide more than a tool teachers can use to track student mastery of important learning targets and plan the next steps in instruction. In their best form, rubrics help boost the very achievement they are used to assess by defining so clearly what it is students are to learn that students themselves can self-assess, plan how to perform better next time, and track their own progress over time.

Through the study of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics,* you will learn the following:

- The different types of rubrics and scoring guides and when to use each type.
- Characteristics of rubrics that make them most useful as instructional tools.
- How to develop rubrics that are useful as instructional tools.
- Characteristics of effective tasks given to students to elicit the performances or products to be evaluated by rubrics.
- How to convert rubric scores to grades.
- How to use rubrics instructionally to boost student achievement.
- How to communicate with parents about the reasons for using rubrics and how they will be used to boost achievement.

Use in Collaborative Learning Teams

We recommend that, if possible, you team with at least one other person to discuss the ideas presented, the actions you have taken, and effects on student motivation and achievement. Throughout the study guide you will find suggestions related to working through the book with a team, but you can use or modify most of the activities to suit your learning if you are working alone or with a partner.

Our recommendation to work with others to develop classroom assessment expertise is based on best practice as reflected in professional development literature and research: adults learn most productively when the experience is collaborative, provides active learning opportunities right in the classroom, and focuses on student learning. In addition, the positive impact of structured reflection for both students and adults is well documented; few activities are more powerful for professional learning than reflection on practice.

For further explanation of the learning team concept and rationale, refer to the article Supporting Teacher Learning Teams published in the February 2009 issue of Educational Leadership and available on our website at http://www.assessmentinst.com/publication/supporting-teacher-learning-teams.

Connection to Other Pearson ATI Products

Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics is designed as a stand-alone product—you do not need to have read other books about classroom assessment to understand it. However, using rubrics for assessment and student learning is most effective when it is part of a classroom assessment system that effectively utilizes all forms of assessment and balances assessment *of* and *for* learning. The broader picture of classroom assessment is provided in *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning—Doing It Right, Using It Well (CASL)* (Jan Chappuis, Steve Chappuis, Rick Stiggins, Judith Arter, Pearson, 2012). Specific chapters in *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics* reference *CASL* at points where you might want additional detail on related topics.

Another Pearson ATI resource, *Seven Strategies of Assessment* for *Learning* (Jan Chappuis, Pearson, 2009), provides additional ideas on using rubrics and other types of assessment materials and results as tools for learning. This supplements Chapter 6 in *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*.

There is a DVD that accompanies *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics—Designing Performance Assessment* for *Learning*. The DVD provides additional practice in evaluating rubrics and performance tasks for quality.

Summary of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*

The table below provides an overview of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*. This overview, which provides the key ideas in each chapter, and the table of contents in the book, which provides the topics in each chapter, will assist in planning the study of the book.

Also, please note the following important features of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*:

- Appendix A is a Rubric for Rubrics that enables you to evaluate rubrics you want to use for their potential instructional usefulness. The Rubric for Rubrics summarizes the features of a quality instructional rubric as illustrated in Chapter 2. The Rubric for Rubrics is also included on a CD that accompanies the book.
- The CD accompanying the book includes 26 sample rubrics for various learning targets in various grade levels. Appendix B is a table of contents for the rubrics included on the CD. Appendix C is a hard copy of 11 of these rubrics—those that are specifically described and discussed in the book. Not all of the rubrics in Appendix C and on the CD are recommended for use. Some of them are used as weak examples to illustrate common problems. On the CD we have provided our evaluations of each rubric using the Rubric for Rubrics.
- Appendix D is a Rubric for Tasks that enables you to determine the quality of the activities and exercises you give students to perform.

Overview of Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics

Chapter	Key Ideas
Chapter 1: "Defining *Rubric*," pp. 1–28	• In addition to being aids in assessing student performances, rubrics, if done well, can help teachers track student progress and plan instruction, and can help students understand what it is they are to learn. These assessment *for* learning uses can dramatically improve achievement. • Rubrics and scoring guides come in different flavors—holistic and analytic, task-specific and general; all are viable if used well. • Not all learning targets require a rubric. Rubrics are most useful for complex learning targets such as reasoning, performance skills, and products. • The most instructionally useful type of rubric for complex learning targets is general analytic.
Chapter 2: "What a Good Rubric Looks Like," pp. 29–63	• Rubrics for instructional purposes are most effective when they reflect the intended targets of learning, are organized in a way that facilitates understanding the important dimensions of the learning target, and provide descriptive detail on what it looks like when performance of the learning target is of various levels of quality or proficiency.
Chapter 3: "How to Develop a General Rubric," pp. 65–85	• Rubrics take time to develop. Therefore, choose a learning target that is important yet unclear, that students always have trouble with, and/or that can be used across teachers and subjects. • Don't begin from scratch if you don't have to. Seek out rubrics developed by others, but make sure they adhere to the standards of quality described in Chapter 2. • Rubrics are developed by brainstorming features of performance at various levels of proficiency, organizing these features into a useful structure, verifying this structure by looking at student work, and building in lots of descriptive detail. • Assessment *for* learning uses are enhanced when there are student-friendly versions of the rubric illustrated by samples of student work.
Chapter 4: "Quality Performance Tasks," pp. 87–108	• The task given to a student to perform must elicit evidence of the desired performance or product, as defined by the rubric. • Effective tasks relate directly to the learning target, provide enough information to students so they know what to do, and avoid problems that might compromise students' ability to do their best work.
Chapter 5: "How to Convert Rubric Scores to Grades," pp. 109–129	• Avoid converting rubric scores to grades, especially on individual pieces of work, if the rubric is to be used instructionally. The rubric provides better information to students on how to improve than a grade does. • When you convert rubric scores to a grade, don't determine the grade by calculating the percentage of points received. Instead develop a table that relates a grade to a logical range of rubric scores.

Chapter 6: "Tasks and Rubrics as Assessments for Learning," pp. 131–146	• Tasks can be structured to scaffold the learning. • Rubrics can be used to help students get a clear vision of the learning target, to provide descriptive feedback to students on what was done well and to structure instruction, to help students focus on revision, and as a mechanism for students to track, reflect on, and share learning.
Chapter 7: "Communicating with Parents about Rubrics," pp. 147–159	• Parents will support the use of rubrics in the classroom if they understand what rubrics are and how they can improve learning.

How To Use This Study Guide

Contents of Each Chapter's Study Guide

The study guide for each chapter is organized the same way, with the following five features:

- Key Ideas—summarizing the chapter's big ideas
- Prereading Questions—accessing your prior knowledge and leading into the chapter's main concepts
- During- or After-reading Questions—processing key ideas
- Closure Questions—reflecting on your learning from the chapter
- Activities—increasing understanding and applying key ideas to your classroom

Independent Work: Read, Respond, Try

Regardless of your mode of study (independent, partner, or team) we encourage you to read and respond individually to the ideas in each chapter. To assist, the study guide includes questions that follow the progression of ideas through each chapter. We also encourage you to apply information from each chapter in your classroom; the study guide includes activities to help you do so.

Collaborative Work: Discuss, Share, Do

If you are working with a partner or a team, in addition to the independent work, we suggest that your collaboration center on a combination of discussing the ideas in the text to deepen your understanding of key points, discussing the ideas that were "muddiest" for you, sharing what you tried in the classroom and your observations about how it worked, and doing one or more activities that help you prepare materials or activities to use in your classroom. You and your partner or team together can determine how much of each of the three (discuss, share, do) will be most helpful to you for each chapter, but consider making the sharing part a feature of each meeting. Discussing how you each are using these ideas in your classroom may be the most valuable part of the collaborative process.

There are forms in the appendix of this study guide to help you plan team meetings. The forms include:

- Team Meeting Schedule—when and where you'll meet
- Team Meeting Planning Template—the agenda for each meeting
- Sample Learning Team Log—to capture the main activities and key learning from each team meeting

Tracking Your Learning

You may find it helpful to keep track of your thoughts, questions, activities, and revisions as you proceed. If so, you can select one or more of the following options:

- Copy the Reflective Journal form in the appendix of this study guide (or modify it) and complete one copy for each reading that you do.
- Keep a collection of your written responses to any Study Guide discussion questions or activities you may have completed.
- Keep a collection of the materials and protocols you reproduce, modify, and/or create for use in the classroom along with some examples of students' use of the materials.
- Observe the impact of your activities on students. Save samples of student work from the beginning, middle, and end of your study of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*. Collect the samples from the same students—some who are struggling, some who are in the mid-range of achievement and some who are high achievers.

At the end of study you can use the key ideas from each chapter to reflect on your own learning. Compare what you did before to what you do now and note the impact it has had on yourself, your colleagues, your students, and your students' parents. Also describe your next steps and how you intend to gather information on the impact on students.

Chapter 1 *(pages 1 to 28)*

Defining *Rubric*

The topic of rubrics is complex and best practice is continually evolving. Chapter 1 attempts to provide an organizing framework and vocabulary for talking about rubrics to facilitate decision-making about the type of rubrics most useful for different purposes and learning targets.

In preparation for reading Chapter 1, gather examples of the rubrics you have used.

Key Ideas

- In addition to being aids in assessing student performances, rubrics, if done well, can help teachers track student progress and plan instruction, and can help students understand what it is they are to learn. These instructional, assessment *for* learning uses can dramatically improve achievement.
- Rubrics and scoring guides come in different flavors—holistic and analytic, task-specific and general; all are viable if used well.
- Not all learning targets require a rubric. Rubrics are most useful for complex learning targets such as reasoning, performance skills, and products.
- The most instructionally useful type of rubric for complex learning targets is general analytic.

Prereading Questions

1. What does the word "rubric" mean to you?
2. What brings you to the study of rubrics? What do you hope the study of rubrics will do for you, your colleagues, and/or your students?

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

3. After reading pages 1 to 5 of the book, revisit your response to Question 2. Which statement on page 4 (and repeated below) reflects what you said in response to Question 2? Has your thinking changed?
   a. "Rubrics, what a wonderful way to be consistent in marking, keeping track of student progress over time, and planning instruction."
   b. "Rubrics, what a wonderful way to let students know what it looks like when work is good, and get students involved in their own learning to boost achievement."

4. After reading pages 6 to 10 of the book, look at the examples of rubrics you have used and determine which are holistic (one overall judgment of quality) and which are analytic (separate judgments of quality for each important dimension of performance). If you don't know, write down the source of your confusion.
5. Jot down your answers to the questions in Activity 1.1 on page 10 of the book to prepare for the discussion later in the chapter. The intent of these questions is to prompt thinking about different types of rubrics and the circumstances under which each type would be most useful.
6. After reading pages 10 to 13 of the book, look at the examples of rubrics you have used and determine which are task-specific and which are general. A single rubric might have both task-specific and general parts. If you don't know, write down the source of your confusion.
7. Jot down your answers to the questions in Activity 1.2 on page 13 of the book to prepare for the discussion later in the chapter. Once again, the intent of these questions is to prompt consideration of different types of rubrics and the circumstances under which each type would be most useful.
8. After reading pages 14 to 25 of the book, jot down your answers to the questions in Activity 1.4 on page 25. A form is provided in Activity 1B, below. The intent of this activity is to begin the process of refining the rubrics you use so that they will help you accomplish what you want.

Closure Questions

9. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
10. What one action might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 1?
11. What is your muddiest point?

Activities

1A. What's the Target?

1B. Case Study: Developing Multiple Criteria

1C. Case Study: Match Between Learning Targets, Task, and Rubric

1D. Analysis of My Own Rubrics

1E. What Are My Targets?

Activity 1A

What's the Target?

All instructional activities should be designed to help students practice or demonstrate proficiency on specific learning targets. For example, in the context of a social studies report you might want students to practice critical thinking: identifying and clarifying issues, identifying the various points of view on the issues, evaluating the quality of evidence, identifying the information needed to inform a decision on the issue, gathering the information needed, evaluating information for credibility, and choosing a position and defending it with evidence and reasons, and refuting alternative positions. In the context of the same social studies report you might also want students to practice giving an oral presentation.

The assessment materials would then emphasize the same learning targets: a general rubric for critical thinking and another for oral presentations. These rubrics would be used to help students understand what good critical thinking and oral presentations look like through examples, descriptive feedback on drafts, and peer- and self-assessment on drafts—assessment *for* learning. Then the rubrics could also be used to evaluate the final performances and products—assessment *of* learning.

But, it's not always clear what the learning targets are for an instructional activity. What do we want students to know and be able to do as the result of writing a state report, preparing a science fair exhibit, designing a travel brochure, creating a diagram, or making a poster? In other words, is it always clear what you want a product or performance to tell you about students? If the targets aren't clear then it's impossible to know what you want the rubric to cover.

To illustrate this point, consider the 7th grade book report rubric on page 9 and discuss the questions below.

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do as the result of doing a book report? In other words, what is it that this product will tell you about students?
2. How well does the scoring guide on page 9 reflect the important learning targets?
3. Reflect on some of the activities and their associated rubrics and scoring guides you've used in the past. Is it clear what students were to know and be able to do as the result of the activity? To what extent do the rubrics or scoring guides reflect these learning targets?

7th Grade Biographical/Autobiographical Book Report Rubric

You have an excellent "starter" (topic sentence) and introductory paragraph that captures the reader's attention	_____ (10)
You have included your title, author, copyright date, publisher, and number of pages	_____ (5)
You have included a time line	_____ (10)
Your book report/descriptive essay meets the requirements of the assignment	_____ (40)
Your concluding paragraph expresses your opinion of the book	_____ (5)
Your punctuation, capitalization, grammar, spelling, and verb tense are correct	_____ (30)
TOTAL	_____ (100)

Activity 1B

Case Study: Developing Multiple Criteria

(Adapted from Kathleen U. Busick & Richard J. Stiggins, *Making connections: Case studies for student-centered classroom assessment, second edition*, Assessment Training Institute, Portland: OR, 1998, pp. 24–25.)

This activity reinforces (a) the need to have clear learning targets and use rubrics that reflect these targets, and (b) the need to match rubric design to the purpose for using the rubric. Read the case study on page 11 and discuss the questions below.

1. Was the original purpose for the common assessments assessment *for* learning or assessment *of* learning? How do you know?
2. Was the use described by the department chair in the final paragraph assessment *for* learning or assessment *of* learning? How do you know?
3. What type of rubrics was the team member in the second to final paragraph describing—task-specific or general? How well does this type of rubric match to the proposed uses for the rubrics (assessment *of* or *for* learning) and the learning targets (content knowledge, critical thinking, and writing) discussed by the teachers?
4. What suggestions on rubric design might you have for this team of teachers?

Case Description

A high school social studies meeting was called to formulate plans for a new series of common course-end tests. As they began their discussion it became clear that teachers valued three types of learning targets: content knowledge, critical thinking, and writing. As the teachers discussed their common assessments, they decided they would ask students to write essays to assess these targets.

Several teachers protested that the use of essays would result in the need to evaluate each student's response to each essay exercise in terms of three different sets of scoring criteria. One would center on the student's success in demonstrating mastery of required content knowledge, the second would focus on the quality of student critical thinking, and the third would have to reflect standards of writing proficiency.

"That's true," said yet another team member. "But, think about it. It might be possible for us to devise a set of performance-rating criteria or checklists for each of these facets that would be generally applicable to whatever essay question we pose. If we succeeded in developing such general rubrics, once the students all learned to apply them, the scoring process would become very efficient."

The department chair reflected briefly and added, "And if our students could learn those criteria, our teaching job would become a whole lot easier, too. Not only would their achievement targets become clear, we could use the criteria during instruction to help students practice."

Activity 1C

Case Study: Match Between Learning Targets, Task, and Rubric

(Adapted from *Making Connections*, Busick & Stiggins, 1998, pp. 55–57.)

This activity reinforces the need to have clear learning targets and use rubrics that reflect these targets. Read the case study below and discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think might be the learning target being assessed by the question presented to students?
2. How well does the rubric assist teachers to decide on student proficiency on this target?
3. What should the teachers do?

Case Description

You're part of a group of middle school teachers scoring student responses to the question:

A farmer lost his entire crop. Why might this have happened?

The scoring guide uses a continuum that combines numeric scores (5-1) and descriptive words (Exemplary, Proficient, Developing, Emerging, Beginning). Here are two samples responses.

Sample 1:

- Drought

Sample 2:

- Floods and heavy rains destroyed them.
- Drought destroyed them.
- Was demolished for business construction.
- Went bankrupt, unable to look after his crop.
- Unsuitable soil/land, so the crop died.
- Birds ate all the seeds.
- He didn't take proper care of his crop.
- Unsuitable environment for growing his crops.

It seems fairly obvious that the second response was a much fuller and more complete answer. Then someone at the table raises the question of whether the exercise communicated clearly to students that multiple reasons were required for an excellent answer. He says, "How would we respond if the student pointed out that the question was answered and the answer is correct? I know that some of my students would think it was really unfair to demand more than the task prompts."

Another teacher argues that we had to be honest about the quality of the answers. She says, "The first student's answer is OK but not sufficient to be scored exemplary. It isn't even a complete sentence. Any student would know that such a minimal answer is not going to get a high score."

A third teacher calls everyone back to the rubric and the learning targets. She says, "I'm confused. I'm not even sure what it is we're assessing here. How can we judge the quality of an answer if it's not clear what we want responses to tell us about students?"

Activity 1D

Analysis of My Own Rubrics

This activity asks you to apply information from the chapter to examine several of the rubrics you currently use to see if there is anything that needs adjusting. Individually complete the chart below and discuss it with your partner or team. If you have trouble identifying your learning targets and their types, do Activity 1E first.

Rubric	Type of Rubric task specific, general holistic, or general analytic	Learning Targets knowledge, reasoning, performance skill, or product	Rubric Use assessment *for* learning or assessment *of* learning	How well does the rubric type match up to the learning target and intended use?

Activity 1E

What Are My Targets?

In order to develop good rubrics it's essential to know what you want students to know and be able to do—the learning targets—for instructional activities. It's also essential to understand what type of target you're looking at—knowledge, reasoning, performance skill, or product. If you're unsure of either of these, read Chapter 3 in the book *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well.* Use the chart below to identify the learning targets and their types for an instructional unit.

Rubrics are appropriate for your reasoning, performance skill and product learning targets—those that you'll overlay repeatedly on whatever content you're teaching. However, it's very easy to "over rubric." Set priorities on learning targets for which you'll search out or develop a rubric. Choose those targets that students have the most trouble with and that you'll use over and over again to help students perform better.

Instructional Unit: _____

Learning Target	Type	Priority for a Rubric
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No
	❑ Knowledge ❑ Reasoning ❑ Skill ❑ Product	❑ Yes ❑ No

Chapter 2 *(pages 29 to 63)*

What Does a Good Rubric Look Like?

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of features of quality rubrics. The emphasis is on instructional rubrics (those used for assessment *for* learning purposes) of complex learning targets (reasoning, performance skills, and products). The chapter includes a Rubric for Rubrics and many sample classroom rubrics that illustrate various levels of quality on the Rubric for Rubrics. (Note: A rubric developed for instructional purposes can also be used to grade. The opposite is not always true.)

Key Idea

- Rubrics for instructional purposes are most effective when they reflect the intended targets of learning, are organized in a way that facilitates understanding the important dimensions of the learning target, and provide descriptive detail on what it looks like when performance of the learning target is of various levels of quality or proficiency.

Prereading Questions

1. If you want to use a rubric for instructional purposes in the classroom, what features does it need? We discussed the need for general rubrics rather than task-specific scoring guides in Chapter 1. Brainstorm additional features.
2. Compare the oral presentation rubrics on pages 56 (Figure 2.4, second example) and 244 to 246 of the book. Do these examples remind you of anything else that should be added to your brainstormed list of features of strong instructional rubrics?

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

3. After reading pages 31 to 34 of the book, compare your brainstormed list of features of a quality instructional rubric to the list in Figure 2.1, page 33. Where are the matches? Any surprises?
4. After reading pages 34 to 42 of the book, think back to the misconception alerts.
   a. The misconception alert on page 36 relates to number of levels. How many levels do the rubrics you use have? What's the rationale? Might it be more useful instructionally to have more or fewer levels—how many levels are needed to help students track their growth while still allowing users to distinguish among them?
   b. The misconception alert on page 40 relates to the need to base a performance task and rubric on clear and important learning targets, as previously discussed in Chapter 1. One common pitfall is to develop a nice, rich task for students to perform (for example designing a museum exhibit, travel brochure, or cafeteria, or planting a garden, testing water quality, or

tracking migratory birds) without considering what learning targets the task is supposed to develop in students. (For example, what are students supposed to know or be able to do as the result of planting a garden?) When this happens, the scoring guide can easily include features of performance unrelated to mastery of the designated learning targets. Are there any examples of this in your context?

c. The misconception alert on page 43 relates to rubric usability. Reflect on the rubrics you use. How have you balanced length versus the need for descriptive detail?

5. After reading pages 43 to 53 in the book, do Activity 2.1 on page 52. This activity asks you to apply your understanding of the Rubric for Rubrics criterion of *Coverage/Organization* to examples on the book CD. You can use the form provided in Activity 2A, below.
6. After reading pages 54 to 60 in the book, do Activity 2.2 on page 60 of the book. This activity asks you to apply your understanding of the Rubric for Rubrics criterion of *Clarity* to examples on the book CD. You can use the form provided in Activity 2A, below.
7. After reading the whole chapter, do Activity 2.3 on page 60 of the book. This activity asks you to apply your understanding of the Rubric for Rubrics to your own rubrics. You can use the form provided in Activity 2A, below.
8. After reading the whole chapter, consider the misconception alerts on pages 61 and 62. These alerts relate to the need to base rubrics on clear and important learning targets for students. Are there any examples in your context of the pitfalls described?

Closure Questions

9. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
10. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 2?
11. What is your muddiest point?
12. Revisit your muddiest point from Chapter 1. Jot down new thinking.

Activity

2A. Audit Sample Rubrics for Quality

Activity 2A

Audit Sample Rubrics for Quality

Use the following form to audit rubrics for quality. You can use the sample rubrics in the book, on the book CD, or your own rubrics. Our evaluations of the rubrics in the book are provided on the CD in the book.

Rubric Evaluation Form

Rubric for Rubrics Criteria		
1. Coverage/Organization: A. Criteria cover the right content 1. Represents best thinking 2. Aligns 3. Ring of truth		
1. Coverage/Organization: B. Criteria (traits) are well organized 1. Good criteria (trait) structure 2. Descriptors put together, go together 3. Relative emphasis is right 4. Criteria (traits) are independent		

1. Coverage/Organization: C. Number of levels fits targets and uses		
2. Clarity: A. Levels defined well 1. All levels defined 2. Descriptive detail; avoids vague words 3. Can get rater agreement 4. Avoids counts		
2. Clarity: B. Levels are parallel		

Chapter 3 *(pages 65 to 85)*

How to Develop a General Rubric

Rubrics are developed to define and assess complex learning targets such as reasoning, performance skills, and products—those on which students can perform at various levels of quality and so require a human judgment of that level of quality. Chapter 3 describes a process for developing high quality general rubrics for these complex learning targets.

Key Ideas

- Rubrics take time to develop. Therefore, choose a learning target that is important yet unclear, that students always have trouble with, and/or that can be used across teachers and subjects.
- Don't begin from scratch if you don't have to. Seek out rubrics developed by others, but make sure they adhere to the standards of quality described in Chapter 2.
- Rubrics are developed by brainstorming features of performance at various levels of proficiency, organizing these features into a useful structure, verifying this structure by looking at student work, and building in lots of descriptive detail.
- Assessment for learning uses are enhanced when there are student-friendly versions of the rubric illustrated by samples of student work.

Prereading Questions

1. Reflect on how you have developed rubrics and scoring guides in the past. Note issues or concerns you've had with previous processes.

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

2. After reading page 67 in the book, reconsider the learning targets in your context most in need of a rubric. (You made a first shot at this in Activity 1E.) Activity 3A below includes a form on which you can jot down your ideas.
3. After reading pages 82 to 84 in the book, decide which of the rubrics you use would benefit from student-friendly versions. Jot your notes on the form in Activity 3A. The forms in Activity 3C can be used to generate student-friendly versions.
4. After reading the whole chapter, decide which learning targets are the highest priority for finding and developing rubrics. Use the form in Activity 3A to plan your next steps.

Closure Questions

5. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
6. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 3?
7. What is your muddiest point?
8. Revisit your muddiest points from previous chapters. Jot down new thinking.

Activities

3A. What I Might Do. . .

3B. Forms for Developing General Rubrics

3C. Forms for Developing Student-friendly Versions of Rubric Language

Activity 3A

What I Might Do. . .

Decision	Notes
1. Select a learning target: a. Reasoning, skill, product. b. Important c. Fuzzily defined d. Students always have trouble with it e. Useful to have consistency across teachers	
2. Can I find a rubric or will I need to develop one? Where will I look?	
3. What student work will I need? Where will I get it?	
4. Who needs to be involved in the development?	
5. How will we produce student-friendly versions?	

Activity 3B

Forms for Developing General Rubrics

The next two pages provide forms to help with developing general rubrics.

The **Student Work Sorting Form** can be used to write down the reasons that sample work is placed in the "strong," "middle," or "weak" categories. Follow the procedures on pages 69 to 71 of the book. Remember that the goal for sorting is not to get every sample in exactly the correct stack. The goal is to develop as long a list as possible of the reasons why you place each sample in its respective stack (book, page 69). Be as descriptive as possible in your reasons—write down what you are saying to yourself as you place a sample in a category.

The **Draft Rubric Form** can be used to begin grouping indicators to form the initial "trait structure" of your rubric. Follow the procedures on pages 73 to 74 of the book.

Student Work Sorting Form

Learning Target: _____

	Strong	Middle	Weak
Sample(s)			
Reasons: Be as descriptive as possible			

Draft Rubric Form

Learning Target: _____

Trait (Criterion)	Strong	Middle	Weak

Activity 3C

Forms for Developing Student-friendly Versions of Rubric Language

To be most useful instructionally, there should be student-friendly versions of rubrics that use vocabulary and wording understood by the students who will be using them. Some rubrics already have student-friendly versions (see the book CD). Most rubrics, however, don't have student-friendly versions. The form below can be used to develop student-friendly versions.

Select one of the statements from any rubric—one with wording you think would be UNCLEAR to many students at the level you teach. Write it in the box below, identify and define the key elements, then turn it into one or more student-friendly statements using the suggestions in the book on pages 82 to 84.

Rubric Statement	Key Elements IDENTIFIED AND DEFINED

CLARIFYING rubric statements FOR STUDENTS. Turn the KEY ELEMENTS into one or more student-friendly statements:

Student-friendly STATEMENT(S)

Chapter 4 *(pages 87 to 108)*

Quality Performance Tasks

The tasks (activities, exercises) given to students to perform provide the context for practicing or demonstrating proficiency on one or more learning targets. When the purpose is practice (that is, assessment *for* learning), the rubric is used to provide feedback to improve performance. When the purpose is to demonstrate proficiency, assessment *of* learning, the rubric is used to report level of proficiency or a grade. Regardless of which use, the task must elicit the desired performance; there must be a match between learning targets, task, and rubric. This chapter provides guidelines for increasing the chances that the tasks given to students will, indeed, result in the desired performance.

The chapter includes a Rubric for Tasks that summarizes features of effective tasks.

Key Ideas

- The task given to a student must elicit evidence of the desired performance or product, as defined by the rubric.
- Effective tasks relate directly to the learning target, provide enough information to students so they know what to do, and avoid problems that might compromise students' ability to do their best work.

Prereading Questions

1. Have you ever given students an activity to do and they did something other than what you expected and wanted? What went wrong?

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

2. After reading pages 89 to 92 of the book, compare the list you generated in response to Question 1 above with the list of features of a high quality performance task in Figure 4.1 on page 93. Which of the requirements for an effective task describe what was missed in your tasks that went awry?
3. After reading the chapter, review either one of the performance tasks you have used with students or the tasks in Activities 4A and 4B. How would you make these tasks better? There is a form in Activity 4C you can use to note your ideas.

Closure Questions

4. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
5. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 4?

6. What is your muddiest point?
7. Revisit your muddiest points from previous chapters. Jot down new thinking.

Activities

4A. Name the Graph

4B. Case Study: Match Between Learning Targets, Task, and Rubric (revisited)

4C. Audit Performance Tasks for Effectiveness

Activity 4A

Name the Graph

(Adapted from *Making Connections*, Busick & Stiggins, 1998, pp. 19–20.)

Use the Rubric for Tasks to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the task described in the case study below. Use the form in Activity 4C below to jot down your ideas. Rewrite this task to make it better.

Case:

To help teachers better understand how open-ended assessment exercises can give insights into student learning, a district science specialist decided to use a graph-based task. The students were given a bar graph with no labels, numbers, or title. The teacher wanted students to decide what this might be a graph of, label the graph appropriately, and describe the information that could be obtained from the graph. Here are the draft directions to students:

Directions: NAME THE GRAPH is an activity that requires you to think creatively and remember important things that you learned in science in the past. There is no one right answer for this activity. Your score will be based on:

- How well you name the graph in relation to a science lesson you have learned in the past. Put names and numbers properly to show what you mean.
- How good a story you tell about your graph. Write down everything you know from your graph (make connections as to why, what, when, how, etc.).
- The clarity of your work.

Activity 4B

Case Study: Match Between Learning Targets, Task, and Rubric (revisited)

(Task taken from *Making Connections*, Busick & Stiggins, 1998, pp. 55–57.)

In Activity 1C above, we asked you to comment on the learning targets for the following task and how well they were reflected in the scoring guide.

> A farmer lost his entire crop. Why might this have happened?

Now that you've finished the chapter on quality performance tasks, what additional comments would you have about this task? Use the Rubric for Tasks and record your thoughts in the form in Activity 4C.

Activity 4C

Audit Performance Tasks for Effectiveness

Use the following form to audit performance tasks for effectiveness. You can use the sample tasks in previous activities or your own. Additional task evaluations are provided on the DVD that accompanies the book—*Performance Assessment for Student Learning.*

Task Evaluation Form

Rubric for Tasks Criteria	
Content of the task: • Requirements relate directly to targets • Specifies knowledge to use, what to create, materials, timeline • Skill tasks specify conditions • Specifies help allowed • Includes criteria (rubric) • Provides guidance without over-scaffolding	

Rubric for Tasks Criteria	
Sampling: • Number of tasks or performances is sufficient for purpose and target	
Distortion due to bias: • Instructions are clear • Task is narrow enough • If choice, options are equivalent • Necessary resources are available to all • Success does not depend on unrelated skills • Success does not depend on cultural experience or language	

Chapter 5 *(pages 109 to 129)*

How to Convert Rubric Scores to Grades

Research suggests that grading too early in the learning process is counterproductive. The potential for rubrics, instead of grades, to assist in providing descriptive feedback to improve current and later work is the focus of *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*. However, eventually grading happens. Chapter 5 describes procedures for turning rubric scores into a grade that accurately reflects level of student achievement at the time the grade is given.

Key Ideas

- Avoid converting rubric scores to grades, especially on individual pieces of work, if the rubric is to be used instructionally. The rubric provides better information to students on how to improve than a grade does.
- When you must convert rubric scores to grades, don't determine the grade by calculating the percentage of points received. Instead, develop a table that relates a grade to a logical range of rubric scores.

Prereading Question

1. How do you currently convert rubric scores to grades? What concerns, if any, do you have with this process?

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

2. After reading pages 111 to 114 in the book, think about the three grading caveats. Which reflect your current thinking? What concerns do you have? For more information about sound grading practices in general see *CASL*, Chapter 10, and *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades* (Ken O'Connor, Pearson, 2011).
3. After reading pages 114 to 120 in the book:
   a. Summarize why calculating a strict percentage (number of points obtained divided by the number of points possible) doesn't work.
   b. Summarize your understanding of what a "logic rule" is for generating grades.
   c. Explain how to generate a table for converting ranges of rubric scores to "logical grades."
4. After reading pages 120 to 125 in the book, think about the issues presented—don't average in zero for missing work and use the most recent work. How do these ideas square with your cur-

rent thinking? What concerns do you have? If you would like more information on these issues, see *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning*, Chapter 10, and *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*.

5. After reading the entire chapter, decide which method you prefer to convert rubric scores to grades: average scores (pages 116 to 128) or pattern of scores (shaded box on page 127). If you decided to use average scores, do Activity 5A for more practice developing conversion tables to determine "logical grades" and "logical percents" and Activity 5B to apply the steps to your own rubric.

Closure Questions

6. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
7. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 5?
8. What is your muddiest point?
9. Revisit your muddiest points from previous chapters. Jot down new thinking.

Activities

5A. Practice with "Logic Tables" Using a Science Investigation Rubric

5B. Apply Information to Your Own Rubrics

Activity 5A

Practice with "Logic Tables" Using a Science Investigation Rubric

The following case description relates the sequence of steps a science teacher might go through to develop a defensible grading plan for a rubric (book, pages 212 to 213) she uses to teach and assess science investigation reasoning and skills. Read the case description and respond to the discussion questions as they occur. This case touches on all the issues and considerations presented in *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics*, Chapter 4.

Case:

You are a science teacher. You and the other science teachers in your middle school use the rubric in the book on pages 212 to 213 to help students understand quality science investigation by relating anonymous examples of strong and weak investigations to the rubric, having students practice evaluating anonymous investigations, giving students descriptive feedback on what was done well and what to work on for next time, and having students give each other feedback—all assessment *for* learning uses.

After 5 investigations, however, it's time to calculate grades for the reporting period. To do this, the teachers converted "novice" to 1 point, "apprentice" to 2 points, "practitioner" to 3 points, and "expert" to 4 points. Then for each student the teachers added up all the points received, divided by the total possible points (5 experiments x 4 traits x 4 points per trait = 80), and converted the percentage to a grade using the district's grading scale.

Over the 5 investigations one student (see below) received a total of 47 points out of 80, resulting in a percentage of 58.75. Using the district's grading scale, the student received a failing grade.

But this doesn't seem right. The ratings themselves typically fell between "apprentice" ("2") and "practitioner" ("3") and the descriptions of these levels on the rubric don't indicate failing work. If the goal of a grade is to accurately depict student level of achievement at a given point in time, calculating the percentage of points earned didn't seem to work.

(Case continues through page 45.)

Jen's scores:

Investigation	Procedures	Strategies	Communication	Concepts	Total
1	2	2	1	2	7
2	1	3	2	2	8
3	2	2	2	2	8
4	2	3	3	3	11
5	3	3	3	4	13
Total	10	13	11	13	47

Discussion Question:

Look at the rubric descriptions of "apprentice" and "practitioner." Using the discussion on pages 114 to 116 of the book, explain why calculating a strict percentage didn't result in an accurate depiction of student achievement as described by the rubric.

As the result of the realization that calculating strict percentages didn't result in an accurate portrait of student achievement, the teachers decided to develop a table to convert average rubric scores to "logical grades" and "logical percents." Here's what they did:

Step 1: For each student, they calculated the average rating. The average rating was the total number of points received by a student divided by the total number of scores.

For example, for Jen, on page 37:

The total number of points received by the student is 47.

There are 20 scores (5 experiments x 4 scores per experiment).

The average score is 47 ÷ 20 = 2.35

Step 2: The teachers looked at the rubric and decided the range of scores that would match to each grade. They decided:

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion
3.5–4.0	A
2.9–3.4	B
2.3–2.8	C
1.7–2.2	D
1.6 and below	F

Using this table to determine the "logical grade" for Jeremy's scores on page 42, whose average score is 2.35, Jeremy would get a grade of C.

Discuss:

How well does a grade of C reflect the student's achievement, as described by the rubric, at this point in time?

Discuss:

In general, how well would the ranges in the table result in grades that would provide an accurate depiction of student achievement at a point in time? How might you adjust the ranges?

Step 3: The teachers realized that they would need a "percent" in addition to a grade because they needed to combine the rubric scores with other test scores. Here is how the team determined their "logical percents."

To develop "logical percents" the teachers looked at their district's percentage to grade conversion table and decided their "logical percents" would be the midpoint of each range.

Grade	If the district's percentage range is:	Then the midpoint of the range would be:
A	90–100%	95%
B	80–89%	85%
C	70–79%	75%
D	60–69%	65%
F	59% or below	55%

Therefore, their entire conversion table for the science rubric became:

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion	Logical Percentage Conversion
3.5–4.0	A	95%
2.9–3.4	B	85%
2.3–2.8	C	75%
1.7–2.2	D	65%
1.6 and below	F	55%

So, for Jen, on page 37, if the logical grade is C, the logical percentage is 75.

Discussion Question:

This group of teachers used the mid-point of each percentage range for their "logical percents." Do you have other ideas on how to do it?

Discussion:

If another student, Jeremy, received the scores below, determine the "logical grade" and "logical percent" using the teachers' conversion table.

Jeremy's scores:

Investigation	Procedures	Strategies	Communication	Concepts	Total
1	2	2	2	2	8
2	3	3	2	3	11
3	2	2	3	4	11
4	4	3	2	4	13
5	4	4	4	4	16
Total	15	14	13	17	59

First, calculate the average score.

The average score = total number of points received divided by the number of scores.

_____ ÷ _____ = _____

Total number of points *Total number of scores*

Second, determine the "logical grade" using the conversion table.

The logical grade for this average score is _____.

Third, determine the "logical percent" using the conversion table.

The logical percent for this average score is _____.

Step 4: Upon reflecting on their decisions so far, the teachers realized that a refinement was needed. Since the ability to design and conduct scientific investigations improves with practice, they decided that they would base grades on only the final two student investigations.

Discussion Question:

Do the final two investigations provide enough information to be confident of the level of student proficiency to plan and conduct science investigations? Why or why not? What would you do? Why?

Discussion Question:

Sometimes grading tables include A+, A, A-, B+, etc. Below is an example of a "logical" conversion table with a finer grain.

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion	Logical Percent Conversion
3.9–4.0	A+	98
3.7–3.8	A	95
3.5–3.6	A–	91
3.2–3.4	B+	88
3.1–3.2	B	85
2.9–3.0	B–	81
2.7–2.8	C+	78
2.5–2.6	C	75
2.3–2.4	C–	71
2.1–2.2	D+	68
1.9–2.0	D	65
1.7–1.8	D–	61
1.0–1.6	F	55

Using this table, Jen's "logical grade" would be C- and "logical percent" would be 71.

Using this table, Jeremy's "logical grade" would be _____ and his "logical percent" would be _____.

How do the ranges in this table match up to the rubric descriptions? What modifications might you make? Which grain level would you find most useful?

Finally, the middle school teachers discussed how to combine the rubric portion of the grade for the grading period with information from their knowledge tests. They decided that the non-rubric portion should count twice as much as the rubric portion. So the weighting factor is 2 for the non-rubric portion of the grade.

Assume that Jen earned 87% from combining all the non-rubric test information. We previously determined that she got a "logical percent" of 71 using the finer grain conversion table. Combining these:

$$(71 + 87 + 87) \div 3 = 245 \div 3 = 81.7\%$$

Using the district's grading scale, 81.7% converts to a B-.

Discussion:

Assume that Jeremy got 90% after combining all his non-rubric tests. Jeremy's final grade would be:

(_____ + _____ + _____) ÷ 3 = _____

Grade = _____

Optional Discussion:

You might consider using the median rather than the average score to calculate "logical grades." More information on this option is provided in *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*. If appropriate, consider this option with your team.

Activity 5B

Apply Information to Your Own Rubrics

Planning Form—Average Scores Method

Rubric:_____

Number of Levels (score points):_____

Grain: ❑ Coarse Grained (A, B, C, D, F) ❑ Fine Grained (A+, A, A-, etc.)

For Coarse Grain:

Examine your rubric to decide the rubric score range corresponding to each grade.

Rubric Score Range	Logical Grade Conversion
	A
	B
	C
	D
	F

Decide on how you'll determine the logical percent corresponding to your district's grading scale. Midpoint? Something else? If you decide on the midpoint, use the table below.

Grade	If the district's percentage range is:	Then the midpoint of the range would be:
A		
B		
C		
D		
F		

Then your entire conversion table would be:

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion	Logical Percentage Conversion
	A	
	B	
	C	
	D	
	F	

For Fine Grain:

Examine your rubric to decide on the rubric score range corresponding to each grade.

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion
	A+
	A
	A–
	B+
	B
	B–
	C+
	C
	C–
	D+
	D
	D–
	F

Decide on how you'll determine the logical percent corresponding to your district's grading scale. Midpoint? Something else? If you decide on the midpoint, use the table below.

Grade Range	District Percentage Range	Midpoint of Range
A+		
A		
A–		
B+		
B		
B–		
C+		
C		
C–		
D+		
D		
D–		
F		

Then your entire conversion table would be:

Rubric Score Average	Logical Grade Conversion	Logical Percent Conversion
	A+	
	A	
	A–	
	B+	
	B	
	B–	
	C+	
	C	
	C–	
	D+	
	D	
	D–	
	F	

Chapter 6 *(pages 131 to 146)*

Tasks and Rubrics as Assessment *for* Learning

In *Creating & Recognizing Quality Rubrics* we emphasize designing rubrics to maximize their usefulness as assessment *for* learning tools. Although the emphasis in the book is design, Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of assessment *for* learning strategies using rubrics to show why the design features we suggest are essential if rubrics are to be used instructionally. Additional information on this topic is available in *CASL*, Chapter 7, and *Seven Strategies of Assessment* for *Learning*.

Key Ideas

- Tasks can be structured to scaffold the learning.
- Rubrics can be used to help students get a clear vision of the learning target, to provide descriptive feedback to students on what was done well and to structure instruction, to help students focus on revision, and as a mechanism for students to track, reflect on, and share learning.

Prereading Question

1. How do you currently use rubrics to help students learn? Consider both the ways you use rubrics to inform instruction and the ways you ask students to use rubrics. Use the form in Activity 6A to jot down your ideas.

Questions to Consider During or After Reading

2. After reading the chapter, discuss the following questions:
   a. Which of the seven strategies are new to you? Which are not?
   b. What from this collection might you try in the classroom or encourage others to try?
   c. For the uses described, why is it essential to have a good quality rubric, i.e., one that covers that right content, is organized well, etc.?

3. Go back to the list you generated in Question 1, above. To which of the seven strategies does each of your own examples relate? Use the form in Activity 6A.

Closure Questions

4. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
5. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 6?
6. What is your muddiest point?
7. Revisit your muddiest points from previous chapters. Jot down new thinking.

Activities

6A. My Own Assessment *for* Learning Activities Using Rubrics

Activity 6A

My Own Assessment *for* Learning Activities Using Rubrics

Consider both those activities where you, as the teacher, are using the rubric, and those where your students are using the rubric. An example of each is provided in the table below. Complete uses (columns 1 and 3) before reading the chapter. Complete columns 2 and 4 after reading the chapter.

Assessment *for* Learning Uses of Rubrics in My Classroom			
My Uses (Complete before reading chapter)	Strategy (Complete after reading chapter)	Student Uses (Complete before reading chapter)	Strategy (Complete after reading chapter)
Give descriptive feedback to students	Strategy 3	Peer feedback	Strategy 4

Chapter 7 *(pages 147 to 159)*

Communicating with Parents about Rubrics

Key Idea

- Parents will support the use of rubrics in the classroom if they understand what rubrics are and how they can improve learning.

Prereading Questions

1. How do you currently communicate with parents about rubrics?
2. What issues or concerns do you think might come up with parents about the use of rubrics?

Question to Consider During or After Reading

3. After completing the chapter, use the form in Activity 7A to plan what, how, and when you will communicate with parents about the use of rubrics..

Closure Questions

4. Which ideas from this chapter were most significant to you?
5. What actions might you take based on your reading and discussion of Chapter 7?
6. What is your muddiest point?
7. Revisit your muddiest points from previous chapters. Jot down new thinking.

Activity

7A. Planning Communication with Parents

Activity 7A

Planning Communication with Parents

Information for parents	When I'll deliver this information	How I'll deliver this information

Appendix

Team Meeting Schedule

Team Meeting Planning Template

Sample Learning Team Log

Reflective Journal

Team Meeting Schedule

Meeting	Date	Time	Location	Facilitator	Assignment Before Meeting
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					

Source: Reprinted with permission from J. Chappuis, S. Chappuis, R. Stiggins, and J. Arter, *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well* (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2012), CD-ROM.

Team Meeting Planning Template

Date: **Start Time:** **End Time:**

1. Discussion of Prior Reading

Chapter/pages read: Time allocated:

Points to address:

2. Discussion of Classroom Applications

Time allocated:

Points to address:

3. Activity/-ies (optional)

Time allocated: Materials needed:

Activity # ____:

Activity # ____:

4. Set up for Next Assignment

Reading:

Activity/-ies to try before next meeting:

Next Meeting Date: **Time:**

Facilitator: **Location:**

Source: Reprinted with permission from J. Chappuis, *Learning Team Facilitator Handbook: A Resource for Collaborative Study of* Classroom Assessment *for* Student Learning (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2007), p. 60.

Sample Learning Team Log

Log No. _____

Date: _____ Facilitator: _____

Time: _____ to _____ Location: _____

Group Members Present:

Group Member(s) Absent:

Summary of Discussion and Activities:

Classroom applications since last meeting—what we've tried:

For the next meeting we need to do the following:

Next scheduled meeting:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____ Facilitator: _____

Source: Adapted with permission from J. Chappuis, S. Chappuis, R. Stiggins, and J. Arter, *Classroom Assessment* for *Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well* (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2012), CD-ROM.

Reflective Journal

Creating and Recognizing Quality Rubrics

Name: Date:

Chapter: Pages read:

Thoughts, questions, reactions to what I read:

Activity(ies) tried:

Observations, questions, possible revisions to what I tried:

Source: Adapted with permission from J. Chappuis, *Learning Team Facilitator Handbook: A Resource for Collaborative Study of* Classroom Assessment *for* Student Learning (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2007), p. 128.