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## Module 7 – Rubrics Activities 2a & 2b

These activities will help you answer the essential question:

- What kinds of rubrics are there?
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### Activity 2a

*You may complete this activity individually or in groups.*

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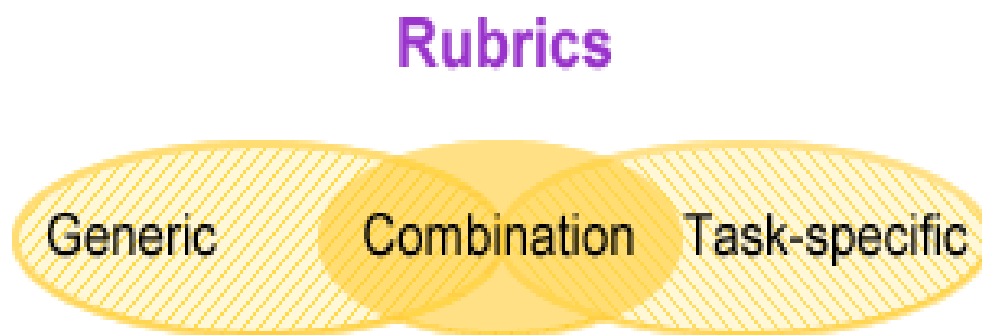
Read the following explanation of the two types of rubrics<sup>1</sup> and then respond through discussion or in writing to the questions related to each of the three rubrics below:

Rubrics are generally categorized as **generic** or **task-specific**. As is so often the case in assessment, the line between the two categories may blur so that rating instruments appear *more or less* generic or task-specific. Indeed, many task-based rubrics are adaptations of generic scales. It is also possible to design hybrid rubrics that combine features of both types.

**Generic rubrics** can be applied to a number of different tasks. In language assessment, one frequently finds generic rubrics used with assessment tasks within a modality (generally writing and speaking) or mode (interpersonal and presentational). A truly generic rubric could be applied to *any* task within the same modality or mode.

**Task-specific rubrics** are used with particular tasks, and their criteria and descriptors reflect specific features of the elicited performance.

Rubrics that combine features of generic and task-specific rubrics are very useful in classroom assessment because they provide feedback to learners on broad dimensions of learning along with their performance on the particular competencies and knowledge targeted by course content and aligned assessments. When adapting the rubrics for other tasks, teachers may keep the generic language production elements as they are and change one or two categories to focus on task expectations.



### #1 Task Specific Bridge Building Structure Rubric

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from University of Minnesota The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, available at: [http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/evaluation/p\\_6.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/evaluation/p_6.html).

Retrieved January 9, 2011 from: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>

- How is this rubric “Task Specific?”
- Could this rubric be easily modified to evaluate another process? If so, how could it be modified?
- What benefits are there to the design of this rubric? What are the negatives to the design of this rubric?
- How could this rubric be helpful to teaching? How could it be helpful to learning?
- Have you ever used this type of rubric? What specific teaching goals do you have in which using a rubric of this type would be appropriate?

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Plan</b>	Plan is neat with clear measurements and labeling for all components.	Plan is neat with clear measurements and labeling for most components.	Plan provides clear measurements and labeling for most components.	Plan does not show measurements clearly or is otherwise inadequately labeled.
<b>Information Gathering</b>	Accurate information taken from several sources in a systematic manner.	Accurate information taken from a couple of sources in a systematic manner.	Accurate information taken from a couple of sources but not systematically.	Information taken from only one source and/or information not accurate.
<b>Construction -Materials</b>	Appropriate materials were selected and creatively modified in ways that made them even better.	Appropriate materials were selected and there was an attempt at creative modification to make them even better.	Appropriate materials were selected.	Inappropriate materials were selected and contributed to a product that performed poorly.
<b>Modification/ Testing</b>	Clear evidence of troubleshooting, testing, and refinements based on data or scientific principles.	Clear evidence of troubleshooting, testing and refinements.	Some evidence of troubleshooting, testing and refinements.	Little evidence of troubleshooting, testing or refinement.
<b>Scientific Knowledge</b>	Explanations by all group members indicate a clear and accurate understanding of scientific principles underlying the construction and modifications.	Explanations by all group members indicate a relatively accurate understanding of scientific principles underlying the construction and modifications.	Explanations by most group members indicate relatively accurate understanding of scientific principles underlying the construction and modifications.	Explanations by several members of the group do not illustrate much understanding of scientific principles underlying the construction and modifications.

## #2 Combination Task Specific / Generic Rubric for a Research Paper

Retrieved January 9, 2011 from:

[http://web.njit.edu/~ronkowitz/teaching/rubrics/samples/rubric\\_apa\\_research.pdf](http://web.njit.edu/~ronkowitz/teaching/rubrics/samples/rubric_apa_research.pdf)

- How is this rubric both “Task Specific” and “Generic?”
- Could this rubric be easily modified to evaluate another type of writing? If so, how could it be modified?
- What benefits are there to the design of this rubric? What are the negatives to the design of this rubric?
- How could this rubric be helpful to teaching? How could it be helpful to learning?
- Have you ever used this type of rubric? What specific teaching goals do you have in which using a rubric of this type would be appropriate?

Performance Criteria	Score Scale and Indicators of Performance			
	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
<b>Purpose</b>	The writer's central purpose or argument is readily apparent to the reader.	The writing has a clear purpose or argument, but may sometimes digress from it.	The central purpose or argument is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose or argument is generally unclear.
<b>Content</b>	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.	Information provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Information supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.
<b>Organization</b>	The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.	The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.
<b>Feel</b>	The writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout.	The writing is generally engaging, but has some dry spots. In general, it is focused and keeps the reader's attention.	The writing is dull and unengaging. Though the paper has some interesting parts, the reader finds it difficult to maintain interest.	The writing has little personality. The reader quickly loses interest and stops reading.

### #3 Generic Rubric for Speeches

Retrieved January 9, 2011 from

[http://www.sites4teachers.com/links/redirect.php?url=http://content.scholastic.com/content/collateral\\_resources/pdf/lessonplans\\_pdf\\_june05\\_RubricForSpeeches.pdf](http://www.sites4teachers.com/links/redirect.php?url=http://content.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/lessonplans_pdf_june05_RubricForSpeeches.pdf)

- How is this rubric “Generic?”
- Could this rubric be easily modified to evaluate a specific type of speech? If so, how could it be modified?
- What benefits are there to the design of this rubric? What are the negatives to the design of this rubric?
- How could this rubric be helpful to teaching? How could it be helpful to learning?
- Have you ever used this type of rubric? What specific teaching goals do you have in which using a rubric of this type would be appropriate?

Performance Criteria	Score Scale and Indicators of Performance			
	4	3	2	1
<b>Audience</b>	You knew your audience and how to address them.	There were a few people to which your speech did not apply.	You knew little about your audience.	You did not know your audience at all.
<b>Posture and Eye Contact</b>	Excellent posture and you kept eye contact with your audience.	You maintained good eye contact most of the time.	Little eye contact and your posture needs improvement.	No eye contact and poor posture.
<b>Word Choice</b>	Your word choice was excellent and appropriate for the audience. You avoided “ums,” “ers,” and “likes.”	Some of the words you chose could be replaced, but for the most part, your speech was good.	Your audience seemed confused at times.	Poor word choice.
<b>Content</b>	Your content was always accurate.	Your content was Essentially accurate.	Your content was mostly unclear.	Not enough information was presented or was not relevant.
<b>Use of Time</b>	Maintained time frame.	You mostly stayed within the time frame.	You exceeded the time frame, but that's okay.	Your message was too short or too long.
<b>Confidence</b>	Your confidence was contagious!	Your confidence was good, no wonder everyone likes you!	Your confidence was okay.	You lacked confidence.
<b>Sources</b>	You disclosed 3 sources.	You disclosed 2 sources.	You disclosed 1 source.	You did not disclose any sources.

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**Activity 2b**

*You may complete this activity individually or in groups.*

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Read the following excerpt from the article “What’s Wrong – and What’s Right – with Rubrics.”

Write about or discuss:

Do you agree with everything Dr. Popham says? Why or why not? How can his concerns be addressed in your classroom? Have you shared his experiences of “flawed” task-specific criteria? What was the result?

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**What's Wrong—and What's Right—with Rubrics<sup>2</sup>**

*W. James Popham*

What's Wrong with Rubrics?

Although rubrics are receiving near-universal applause from educators, the vast majority of rubrics are instructionally fraudulent. They are masquerading as contributors to instruction when, in reality, they have no educational impact at all. Here are four flagrant flaws that are all too common in teacher-made and commercially published rubrics.

*Flaw 1: Task-specific evaluative criteria.* A rubric's most important component is the set of evaluative criteria to be used when judging students' performances. The criteria should be the most instructionally relevant component of the rubric. They should guide the teacher in designing lessons because it is students' mastery of the evaluative criteria that ultimately will lead to skill mastery. Moreover, teachers should make the criteria available to students to help them appraise their own efforts.

But what if the evaluative criteria in a rubric are linked only to the specific elements in a particular performance test? Unfortunately, I've run into a flock of such task-specific rubrics these days, especially in the most recent crop of nationally standardized tests that call for constructed responses from students.

Consider, for example, a task that presents a cross-section picture of a vacuum bottle, then calls on students to identify the materials that had to be invented before vacuum bottles could be widely used. Such tasks are interesting, often inventive, and may even be fun for students to do. But the accompanying rubric has evaluative criteria that are totally task-specific. Each criterion is linked to the students' proper interpretation of the features of the picture that accompanies the test item. Each is exclusively based on a specific task in a single performance test.

How can such task-specific criteria help guide a teachers' instructional planning? How can they help students evaluate their own efforts? Perhaps the commercial test publishers are eager to install task-specific evaluative criteria because such criteria permit more rapid scoring with a much greater likelihood of between-scorer agreement. But such criteria, from an instructional perspective, are essentially worthless. Teachers need evaluative criteria that capture the essential ingredients of the skill being measured, not the particular display of that skill applied to a specific task.

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from What’s Wrong—and What’s Right—with Rubrics? October 1997 | Volume 55 | Number 2 **Schools as Safe Havens** Pages 72-75. Retrieved January 9, 2011 from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct97/vol55/num02/What's-Wrong%E2%80%94and-What's-Right%E2%80%94with-Rubrics.aspx>