



Time: 16 minutes 1 second

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Lesson Overview

In this lesson you'll be introduced to:

- the importance of scoring rubrics in promoting fairness, focus, and efficiency;
- two uses of general rubrics: scoring significant pieces of student work and guiding the development of item-specific rubrics;
- considerations for the use of general scoring rubrics, including tough score decisions, formative use, and score point range;
- suggestions for teachers and instructional leaders to improve the evaluation of student work using general scoring rubrics; and,
- recommended activities and resources to deepen your understanding and use of general scoring rubrics.

Video Outline

- Introduction (00:00-02:41)
- Types of Scoring Rubrics (02:42-07:11)
- Concerns and Considerations (07:12-13:58)
- Tips for Your Role (13:59-15:08)
- Activities and Resources (15:09-16:01)
 - Recommended Activities
 - Suggested Resources

Your Learning Objectives

Record your objectives and points to focus on.

Your Stops

Make notes on stopping points and content discussion you would like the participants to take part in.

Stopping Point	Content Discussion	Notes

Suggested Discussion Questions

- What are two uses for general scoring rubrics?
- What is a teacher/scorer to do when a student's essay exhibits traits associated with two different score-point descriptors in a general writing scoring rubric?
- Why is it advisable in scoring to get more than a maximum of 4 to 6 points out of a significant piece of student work?
- How might one award more than 4 to 6 points for a student's research or project report?
- What are some ways that general scoring rubrics can be used for formative assessment purposes?

Recommended Activities

- Create or find and adapt general scoring rubrics that are appropriate for use in your assigned teaching area.
 - Existing rubrics can be found in this lesson and in resources identified in this lesson.
 - Keep in mind trait or component scoring rubrics for such things as book reports, lab reports, research papers, etc.

- Since history and science teachers sometimes ask students to take a position on an issue, they might find parts of writing rubrics relevant, particularly ones for argumentation or persuasive writing.
- Share your rubrics with your colleagues at department or team meetings and seek their input.
- Use the rubrics to score student work from significant tasks or as a starting point for the development of item-specific rubrics for constructed-response items. Modify your rubrics appropriately.
- Share with your colleagues your rubrics and samples of student work you scored using them.
- Do some experimenting. Give your students an assignment without showing them the general rubric you'll use to score their work. Then for a similar assignment, share your rubric first.
- Have teams of students score each other's work using a general rubric you provide.

Suggested Resources

Taylor, C. S. and Nolen, S. B. (2008). *Classroom Assessment: Supporting Teaching and Learning in Real Classrooms (2nd edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

[Performance Task Writing Scoring Rubric](#) by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

[Mathematics General Scoring Rubric](#) by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Script

Slide 1

- Welcome to Lesson 7 on evaluating student work.

Slide 2

- When scoring students' responses to a constructed-response test question, have you ever realized that you gave two students different scores for the same response?
- In scoring students' responses to a test question, have you ever awarded more points to a student for something that wasn't asked for or penalized a student for something unrelated to the learning target or objective being measured?
- Have you ever relied heavily on multiple-choice items for a unit or marking period test because scoring actual student work would take too long?
- These three scoring issues can be addressed by teachers' use of effective rubrics when they score student work.

Slide 3

- Evaluating student work is one of the most important tasks teachers must perform.
- In this lesson and in Lesson 8, we will be talking about the process of awarding points to student responses and about the tools that can help teachers with this process – scoring rubrics.

Slide 4

- A scoring rubric describes student responses to an item or task that earn different point values. This helps a teacher assure three important qualities in his or her scoring process.
 - First, it's important that the teacher be consistent, applying the same criteria across student responses to the item or task. This is fairness – and a matter of reliability.
 - Second, a scoring rubric will help a teacher maintain a focus on the learning target or objective intended and not let his or her scoring be influenced by irrelevant factors or information. This is a matter of validity.
 - Third, the use of scoring rubrics enables teachers to accurately score sets of responses faster. This is efficiency.
- Additionally, scoring rubrics can have instructional or formative uses by communicating expectations and assisting students in evaluating their own work.

Slide 5

- This lesson has three main parts.
- The first defines scoring rubrics and elaborates on two uses for general rubrics (as opposed to item-specific rubrics, the subject of Lesson 8).
- Part 2 deals with some challenges and pitfalls associated with the use of general scoring rubrics.
- Then Part 3 offers tips for teachers and instructional leaders.

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- While scoring rubrics come in many shapes and forms, in this lesson we will be focusing on two types of general rubrics that serve two different purposes. They are general in that they are not topic- or item-specific.

Slide 7

- General scoring rubrics can be applied across different tasks or assignments.
- They can be used to score significant pieces of student work such as an essay or project report. The same rubric can be used for student work addressing different topics or problems.
- Another type of general rubric is used to guide the development of item-specific rubrics. These spell out the general characteristics of student responses to questions – characteristics representing different levels of students' understanding of concepts and skills and therefore, different levels of response quality.
- Item-specific scoring rubrics clarify the subjective terms in a general rubric as they apply to specific test questions. An item-specific scoring rubric can only be used to score responses to the specific item for which it was developed.
- Item-specific scoring rubrics are the focus of Lesson 8.
- Let's look at some examples.

Slide 8

- The most commonly used general rubrics for scoring student work are applied to student writing samples or essays. An example is shown here.

- A holistic rubric is a general rubric used by a scorer to assign a single score to a student’s writing. It describes in general terms the characteristics of student writing representing different levels of quality. Such rubrics can be applied to student work in response to different writing prompts – for example, essays on different topics. This is called holistic scoring because the scorer is making a single overall judgment about each student essay.
- Take a closer look at one of the score-point descriptors. *[pause]*
- Notice several different aspects of writing are discussed in the score point descriptors – topic development, organization, support, and grammar. Teachers sometimes use separate rubrics for each of these traits. This is called trait or analytic scoring of writing.
- Sometimes different general rubrics are used for different types of writing – for example, narrative writing or persuasive writing.

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- This general or generic scoring rubric could help teachers develop item-specific rubrics in different subject areas. Take a good look at it. *[pause]*
- Some folks have developed general rubrics specifically for mathematics, or for conceptual understanding as opposed to applications of skill sets.
- These general scoring rubrics would not be particularly useful in the scoring of responses to a particular test question. There are a lot of subjective terms used, and a teacher’s interpretation of them could vary during the course of scoring a set of responses.
- The general rubric identifies general characteristics of responses reflecting different levels of student knowledge or competence. This helps teachers separate out different levels of quality in rubrics they develop for specific items or tasks. Some people call item-specific rubrics rating scales.

Slide 10

- While Lesson 8 deals with item-specific rubrics, for illustrative purposes, here’s an example of one used for a question on a reading comprehension test. The question pertains to a reading passage about the behaviors and movements of a pesky raccoon.
- Notice the real “answers” to the question are contained in the scorer notes, an integral part of this rubric. Sometimes for more simplistic questions, the key ideas could be embedded in the score point descriptors. But this question required at least two generalizations and supporting evidence for each, so the use of scorer notes to minimize the complexity of the score point descriptors seemed appropriate.

Slide 11

- Take a minute to study the rubric to see how responses earning the different score points are consistent with the general rubric shown in the previous slide. *[pause]*
- Can you see how the specific information in the item-specific rubric “operationalizes” the general rubric by clarifying the subjective terms as they apply to this specific test question?

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Slide 13

- Here's a portion of a general rubric used by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to score narrative essays for organization and purpose.
- You'll notice that for each score point, there are several bulleted descriptors for different aspects of organization and purpose. It is quite common for a particular student paper to exhibit some characteristics identified for one point value and others associated with another point value.
- Thus, in assigning a score, the scorer should go with the preponderance of evidence. That can be challenging sometimes, particularly when bullets describing a particular essay are fairly evenly spread across two score points.
- Teachers have come up with some good ways to deal with this. For example, they could allow half points – scores like 2.5 or 3.5 – when the evidence is fairly evenly split between two score points.
- An equivalent solution is the use of a 7-point scale, but with descriptive bullets provided only for score points 1, 3, 5, and 7. Even score points, then, would be used when the evidence does not clearly match one set of descriptors. Looking at the descriptors in the displayed rubric, you can see that it would be very difficult to come up with descriptors for seven score points that are clearly distinct from one another.
- Early in a scoring effort, identifying exemplary responses for each score point, or perhaps “borderline” responses, can provide helpful reference points for scoring the full set of responses.

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- General rubrics, like the one we saw before, can be useful in other areas besides writing.
- When each student produces a significant product, but not necessarily pertaining to the same topic or activity, then general rubrics can apply.
- Such products can include book reports, science lab reports, historical research papers, oral presentations, and other types of reports.
- Many of these products or activities could have distinct components to which separate general rubrics can apply. For example, if students design, conduct and report on different scientific investigations, their reports could provide evidence pertaining to the quality of different steps or components of their work. Just as there can be separate rubrics for different writing traits, so too could there be separate rubrics for aspects of experimental design and implementation -- for example, quality of design (including control of variables) and appropriateness of data gathered and their analyses.
- The nice thing about general scoring rubrics, whether for guiding the development of item-specific rubrics or for actual scoring of significant works, is that many already exist and are readily available. Also, you only need to find or create them once. They are reusable.

Slide 15

- For constructed-response questions requiring eight to ten minutes and a half page of space to answer, four points seems a reasonable number of points to award. However, the amount of evidence students provide in response to different types of tasks should have a bearing on “how much a question or task is worth” in terms of number of score points.

- Writing provides a good example of this. A student can spend an hour or more planning, drafting, and polishing an essay that provides a great deal of evidence of his or her writing ability. Yet scored holistically on a 4-point scale, that essay contributes no more to test reliability than an 8-minute, 4-point constructed-response question or four multiple-choice items. Some holistic scoring rubrics for writing are 6-point rubrics, but even that may not be enough, yet six distinct sets of descriptors for six score points are not easy to come up with.
- Trait scoring and component scoring using multiple rubrics is one way to get more score points out of a significant piece of work. This can help address the decision making related to grading borderline responses.

Slide 16

- Scoring rubrics can also be used instructionally, for instance, during the formative assessment process shown here.
- Sharing a general rubric with students before they begin to generate evidence of learning can sometimes be a good way to clarify learning targets or instructional objectives and criteria for success. This is particularly true with respect to writing assignments. Some English teachers have been known to produce writing scoring rubrics in poster size for permanent display in their classrooms.
- Sharing item-specific rubrics before evidence gathering (either formative or summative) would likely not be a good idea because these rubrics give away the correct or best answers or responses to questions or tasks.
- After instruction and evidence gathering, sharing rubrics may or may not provide a good means of providing feedback to students. A general rubric may not pinpoint specific strengths and weaknesses of a particular piece of work. Teachers' more specific feedback through annotations could be much more beneficial.
- Asking students to use a general or item-specific rubric to evaluate and discuss each other's work in pairs or small groups, however, can be a very worthwhile instructional activity.

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Slide 18

- Scoring rubrics help make teacher scoring of student work fairer, focused on what's important, and more efficient.
- General rubrics can be used to guide the development of item- or task-specific rubrics or to directly score significant pieces of student work.
- Score points represented in a scoring rubric should be limited in number so that descriptions of student work earning different score points can be as distinct from one another as possible.
- A student's scorable product (an essay, for example) might show characteristics that correspond to different score point descriptors in the rubric. In this case, the scorer must assign a score based on a preponderance of evidence.
- Student work on a significant task (for example, an essay, investigation, or report) is worth more than a few points. For greater scoring accuracy and reliability, a wide range of possible points can be accomplished by trait or component scoring using multiple rubrics.

- Scoring rubrics can have formative assessment uses – particularly in clarifying learning objectives and criteria for success and in providing feedback to students.

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Slide 20

- Some nice general scoring rubrics are readily available in textbooks and in assessment websites, including the Smarter Balanced website. Find the ones that apply to your teaching assignment and use them appropriately.
- Use constructed-response and performance tasks. They provide the best evidence of students' thinking and address higher order thinking skills.
- Scoring rubrics will help you score student work more accurately and faster.
- Sharing general scoring rubrics with students early in the instructional process and item-specific rubrics after they've generated scorable work can be effective formative assessment practices.

Slide 21

- School leaders should assure that teacher professional development addresses the subject of evaluating student work.
- You should assure that at some team meetings, teachers share and discuss questions and tasks given to students, along with associated scoring rubrics and sample student work.
- Those same artifacts should also provide material for discussion at informal and formal reviews.

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- These activities are consistent with the tips for teachers shown in an earlier slide.
- Suggested resources for this lesson will assist you with the first activity.
- Discussing items or tasks, rubrics, and student work at team meetings is a valuable professional development activity.
- The facilitator's guide for this lesson describes some creative ways to involve students in the use of general rubrics.

Slide 23

- These two resources are websites for programs that make their general scoring rubrics available to all.
- Textbooks on classroom assessment that have been recommended in other lessons also include sections on evaluating student work, rubrics, etc.