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Workshop Series on the
Development, Design and Use of Rubrics

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Session 2:
Rubric Design for Common Assessment Tasks at PolyU

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Outline:

1. The PolyU Rubric Policy
2. What is a rubric?
3. Group Activity – Reconstructing a rubric
4. Collection and Review of Sample Rubrics in Use at PolyU
5. Group Activity – Assessing the qualities of sample rubrics
6. Roundup, Q&A

reflect   ?

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The Rubric Policy in 2016

Policy on the use of rubrics [See notes]

Rubrics must be specified for all 'major' assessment items at the subject level, made available to students before the assessment, and used for grading the assessment. Departments have the flexibility to determine what is 'major'. As a rule of thumb:

- For subjects without examinations, rubrics should be required for single assessment items with a weighting of 30% or above of the subject's overall assessment.

- For subjects with examinations, rubrics should be required for single assessment items with a weighting of 20% or above of the subject's overall assessment.

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What is a Rubric?

1. Task description aligning with the intended learning outcomes
3. Levels of Performance
   - Numerical (i.e. 1-4 or actual points value)
   - Qualitative (e.g. fail-pass-satisfactory-good-excellent)

	1	2	3	4
Criterion 1				
Criterion 2				
Criterion 3				
Criterion 4				

2. Criteria/ Dimensions — Elements that characterize performance of tasks

4. Grade descriptors
- Specify the meaning of each criterion
- Describe levels of performance

Source: Working Group on Subject Quality Assurance (https://www.polyu.edu.hk/wgsqa/)

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What is a Rubric?

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Analytic Rubric

Holistic Rubric

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Activity 1

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Work together in groups (of 3 or 4) to reconstruct the rubric from its constituent cells and identify the criteria. Report back on the thinking processes that the group went through while completing the task.

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Collection and Review of Sample Rubrics in Use at PolyU

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► Rubrics collected from 29 departments / centres / schools in May 2018 and August 2020.

► 133 rubrics analysed for:

► Alignment to Institutional Level Subject Grading Descriptors

► Quality as assessment instruments

► Quality as academic documents

► Recommendations made for further staff development.

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Institutional Level Subject Grading Descriptors

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Subject grade	Short description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A+ A A-	Excellent	Demonstrates excellent achievement of intended subject learning outcomes by being able to skilfully use concepts and solve complex problems. Shows evidence of innovative and critical thinking in unfamiliar situations, and is able to express the synthesis or application of ideas in a logical and comprehensive manner.
B+ B B-	Good	Demonstrates good achievement of intended subject learning outcomes by being able to use appropriate concepts and solve problems. Shows the ability to analyse issues critically and make well-grounded judgements in familiar or standard situations, and is able to express the synthesis or application of ideas in a logical and comprehensive manner.
C+ C C-	Satisfactory	Demonstrates satisfactory achievement of intended subject learning outcomes by being able to solve relatively simple problems. Shows some capacity for analysis and making judgements in a variety of familiar and standard situations, and is able to express the synthesis or application of ideas in a manner that is generally logical but fragmented.
D+ D	Pass	Demonstrates marginal achievement of intended subject learning outcomes by being able to solve relatively simple problems. Can make basic comparisons, connections and judgments and express the ideas learnt in the subject, though there are frequent breakdowns in logic and clarity.
F	Fail	Demonstrates inadequate achievement of intended subject learning outcomes through a lack of knowledge and/or understanding of the subject matter. Evidence of analysis is often irrelevant or incomplete.

Source: Handbook on Academic Regulations (April 2021)

Alignment of Sample Rubrics to Institutional Level Subject Grading Descriptors

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Element of ILSGDs	Direct reference	Indirect reference	No reference
Achievement of intended subject learning outcomes	26 (20%)	61 (46%)	46 (34%)
Use of appropriate concepts for problem solving	22 (16%)	62 (47%)	49 (37%)
Critical analysis and judgement	36 (27%)	75 (56%)	22 (16%)
Synthesis and application of ideas	26 (20%)	73 (55%)	34 (25%)
Logic and comprehensiveness	22 (16%)	81 (61%)	30 (23%)

- When surveyed, out of 66 respondents (academic staff at PolyU), 44 (67%) said that they drew on the ILSGDs when designing rubrics.

- This would seem to be an area that needs to be strengthened.

Source: Review of sample rubrics provided by PolyU departments/centres/schools

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Qualities of Sample Rubrics as Assessment Instruments

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Positiveness - It is common for assessment descriptors aimed at lower levels of achievement or ability to be negatively worded, as it is more difficult to formulate descriptions of what learners are able to do at these levels. But for rubrics to help provide feedback to learners on what they have shown that they can do and what they should aspire to improve, positive wording is desirable wherever possible.

Definiteness – Descriptors should describe concrete tasks and concrete degrees of skill in performing them. Vague descriptions should be avoided, as should the replacement of qualifiers such as "some" with "many" or "fairly broad" with "very broad" and so on.

Clarity – Descriptors should be clearly written and free from jargon so that both teachers and students understand them.

Qualities of Sample Rubrics as Assessment Instruments (cont.)

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Brevity – To achieve definiteness of description of a learner or a performance, it is sometimes considered that detailed (and therefore lengthy) descriptors are needed. However, research has shown that teachers and students prefer short, concise descriptors as they are more practical when used for assessment. A balance must be found between the two.

Independence – Descriptors should clearly describe performance or ability at particular levels and on particular criteria. In this respect they should be independent of each other within the rubric. Short and concrete descriptors can be used as independent criteria

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Qualities of Sample Rubrics as Assessment Instruments

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Quality	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Missing / not addressed
Positiveness	14 (10%)	119 (90%)	0
Definiteness	18 (14%)	84 (63%)	31 (23%)
Clarity	22 (16%)	84 (63%)	27 (21%)
Brevity	21 (15%)	91 (70%)	21 (15%)
Independence	17 (13%)	81 61%)	35 (26%)

Each *Quality* is considered in terms of use by all stakeholders – teachers, students and administrators.

Only a minority of sample rubrics proved to be satisfactory in terms of their quality as assessment instruments.

Source: Review of sample rubrics provided by PolyU departments/centres/schools

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Activity 2

reflect

In your groups, look at the sample rubrics provided and rate them on their qualities as assessment instruments. Report back on the ratings that the group gave for each rubric and why.

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Qualities of Sample Rubrics as Academic Documents

Quality	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Needs total revision
Language	37 (28%)	93 (70%)	3 (2%)
Coherence	24 (18%)	99 (74%)	10 (8%)
Format	12 (9%)	81 (61%)	40 (30%)

Most sample rubrics in need of improvement.

Rubrics are written in English – not the first language for most stakeholders.

Source: Review of sample rubrics provided by PolyU departments/centres/schools

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Roundup

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Please provide us with your feedback!

Thank You For Your Time Today

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ANY QUESTIONS?

https://forms.gle/rkaSNgfHXZjnmtUeA