

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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**USAGE OF RUBRICS FOR EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM EVALUATION****DR. MD. ABBAS ALI****PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT, & DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL & MEDIA RELATIONS  
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MUSCAT****ABSTRACT**

*Classroom evaluation of the students has become a key aspect in modern educational system. It has become much more complex with the usage of qualitative evaluation components such as case studies, projects and assignments. The evaluators must be cautious while evaluating qualitative components as there is a scope for bias. 'Rubrics' can be used for a better and fair evaluation of projects, assignments, classroom presentations, class participation and such qualitative contributions of the students. This paper highlights the importance of designing and usage of Rubrics by the evaluators. The term 'Rubrics' is introduced with various benefits and a sample rubric is also presented for a hypothetical project assigned to the students of Management program.*

**KEYWORDS**

Rubrics, Evaluation, Assessment, Rating, Plagiarism, Evaluation, Components.

**INTRODUCTION**

Assessment of students in higher education is shifting from merely testing the knowledge to testing learning abilities of the students (Dochy et al., 2006 & Messick, 1996). Earlier it used to be that the teacher completes the given syllabus in the stipulated time and at the end of the academic period (either semester or year) the students are evaluated by conducting a common examination (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). But after adopting the method of continuous evaluation of the students, the issue has taken a dynamic turn (Marzano, 2002). Today, in various academic and training programs, the students and participants are evaluated by the teacher or trainer using multiple evaluation components such as quizzes, class tests, projects, case studies, assignments, class participation, etc. While evaluation of components like quizzes and class tests, is not very critical as the keys can be prepared and used (Marshall, 2006), evaluation of qualitative components like projects, assignments, class participation and case studies has become very crucial as a fixed key cannot be prepared for the given component (Keiser et al., 2004). In such components, there may be several issues like, plagiarism, review of literature, analysis and interpretation of the topics, etc. which can vary from submission to submission and still need to be evaluated on common grounds. Hence, there is a possible threat of bias and surprise to the students either for scoring high or low marks (Luft, 1999). In such situations, there is a need for proper scientific instrument that guides the evaluation process and helps both the evaluators and the evaluated (Tombari & Borich, 1999). Not having a proper instrument may give rise to bias and ultimately defeat the very purpose of continuous evaluation (experience of the authors).

**INTRODUCTION TO 'RUBRICS'**

Rubrics are commonly and popularly used across the world in evaluating the qualitative components. Literature is available supporting the usage of rubrics. Available literature mentions that the rubrics add to the quality of assessment (Perlman, 2003; Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Busching, 1998). A 'Rubric' helps in assessing the student works and reveals the 'scoring rules'. It explains the criteria of evaluating and judging the components like projects and assignments (Huba & Freed, 2000). According to Perlman (2003) assessment of performance (specifically qualitative performance) essentially consists of two key issues, a) the description of the task and b) the evaluation criteria (with a rubric). The term 'Rubric' is generally referred to a testing tool particularly used in testing the performance of qualitative components (Arter & McTighe, 2001). A rubric clearly indicates the student and the teacher, the lines in which the given component has to be evaluated (Busching, 1998).

**ADVANTAGES OF USING RUBRICS**

Available literature strongly supports the usage of rubrics in classroom evaluation, as there are several advantages of using rubrics. According to Wiggins (1998), a rubric provides consistency in evaluation and also reduces in differences in rating students as well as differences between raters. Morrison & Ross (1998) opine that rubrics help evaluators in assessing complex competencies in the students' performances. The evaluation rubric, if given along with the task, it reduces the confusion among the students and guides the whole process of meeting the task. For example, if the teacher mentions clearly that the task needs review of literature from at least two pieces of literature, then the students will search for the related literature and include the same in their submission. This will not only help them conceive a better project but also enhances their knowledge in the given area (experience of the authors). Experiences of the users indicate that usage of rubrics will reduce surprises in the students. Many teachers might have noticed students expressing their surprise for scoring low in a project or assignment. In such cases, if the teacher uses a rubric, the students can be persuaded on their scorings by referring to the given rubrics. Beyond testing the performances, rubrics also help to increase learning abilities of the students while adding to the teaching abilities of the teachers (Arter et al., 2004 & Dochy et al., 2006). The issues mentioned in the rubric can be used as standards of performance for the given semester or the academic period.

**HOW TO DESIGN RUBRICS**

It is suggestible for the beginners to seek guidance from either the experts or the ones who have been using rubrics. A lot of information is available on the internet and in the form of books where the beginners can get a sample rubric and start using it. But the problem would be, the collected rubric may not fit into their specific requirements. Hence, they need to tailor it according to their requirements. Once an evaluator starts using rubrics, he/she can learn how to design rubrics in his/her subject or for his/her type of projects and assignments. However, following are some guidelines for designing rubrics (Arter et al., 2004; Mertler, 2001; Montgomery, 2000):

- Identify the learning outcomes of the given topic. Ex: Understanding the important issues involved in marketing to women.
- Focus on key skills to be tested or developed. Ex: Ability of the students to browse through the literature related to marketing to women along with a deep understanding of the given topic.
- Indicate clearly, specific measurement of each sub-component of the given task. Ex: Introduction – 2 marks, Literature review – 5 marks, Evaluation of the topic – 5 marks, conclusions – 4 marks.
- Further very clearly indicate the levels of measurement of each sub-component. Ex: conclusions based on the literature – 4 marks, conclusions not fully substantiated by the literature – 3 marks, no conclusions made – 0 marks.

• Other criteria such as cohesiveness, neatness, substantiation of facts & figures, citation, referencing, etc. can be included in the rubric. Thus there are certain guidelines that need to be followed while designing evaluation rubrics. However, the criteria presented here is not exhaustive and the users can get more information by referring to the available literature.

**SAMPLE RUBRIC**

For the sake of clarity for the readers, it would be appropriate to include a sample rubric. As mentioned earlier, many sample rubrics are available in various sources like books and internet. However, the sample rubric presented below would throw some light on the better understanding:

**Task:** Project

**Marks:** 25

**Description of the task:** Marketing to women has become a key ingredient of modern marketing. Identify various products & services that can be marketed to women. Collect at least two case studies and analyze. Identify crucial communication issues while marketing to women.

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Task: Marketing to women Class/Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction	The project starts with proper introduction of the topic, underlying issues and initial addressing of the important aspects of the project – 4 marks	Key issues of the topic not introduced – 3 marks	No introduction – 0 marks
Objectives & scope	The student(s) identified at least three objectives relevant to the given topic & mentioned the issues covered in the project – 6 marks	Objectives not clearly defined & scope not clearly mentioned – 3 marks	No objectives & scope for the project – 0 marks
Literature review	Four and above pieces reviewed – 5 marks	Fewer than four – 3 marks	No literature review – 0 marks
Analysis of the topic	Analysis is substantiated by the literature reviewed – 6 marks	Analysis not fully justified using the literature reviewed – 3 marks	Analysis incomplete or not relevant – 1 mark
Conclusion	The project is concluded properly with citations from the analysis part and from the literature – 3 marks	Conclusion does not address the important aspects of the project or incomplete conclusion – 1.5 marks	No conclusion – 0 marks
Other aspects	Completion of sentences, cohesiveness, neatness, clarity in presentation – 1 marks	Topics presented haphazardly and not tied up together, clarity is missing – 0 marks	

The sample rubric presented above is not a standard rubric but can certainly provide a sufficient idea to the enthusiastic beginners. These types of rubrics help the users in rating the sub-components of the project. Like this, the evaluators can design their own rubrics for various components like, case studies, class presentations, class participation, assignments, etc.

**CONCLUSION**

It is the sole responsibility of the evaluators to reduce bias and conduct a fair evaluation of their students. And though it can be achieved while evaluating quantitative components like, multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, question papers, etc., it is tough achieving the same while evaluating the components like projects, assignments, class participation, etc. In such cases, it is suggestible to use 'Rubrics' which will help both the evaluators in conducting fair evaluation and the evaluated to improve the learning. Thus this attempt will contribute to the overall benefit of the society.

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