

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Rubric Building

A rubric is an authentic assessment tool used to measure students' work. Generally speaking, it is a scheme for classifying products or behaviors into categories along a continuum. They can be used to classify any product or behavior, including essays, research reports, portfolios, works of art, recitals, oral presentations, performances, etc. Rubrics are extremely useful in providing formative feedback to students, to grade students, and to assess courses and programs. It is a scoring guide that seeks to evaluate a student's performance based on the sum of a full range of criteria rather than a single numerical score. A rubric is a working guide for students and teachers, usually handed out before the assignment begins in order to get students to think about the criteria on which their work will be judged.

Rubrics have Multiple Strengths:

1. Complex products or behaviors can be examined efficiently
2. Developed rubrics help to precisely define expectations
3. Rubrics are based on criteria (as opposed to norms/comparisons to the larger group)
4. Ratings can be done by students to assess their own work, or they can be done by others (peers, fieldwork supervisors, or faculty)

Assessment vs. Grading

Rubrics are most useful for assessing learning outcomes. Grading and assessing can be done at the same time as long as the assessment findings are separated from grading criteria that do not relate to the learning outcome. Rubrics can:

1. Speed up grading
2. Provide routine formative feedback to students
3. Clarify expectations so that students can display what you want them to demonstrate
4. Reduce student grade complaints
5. Improve the reliability and validity of assessments and grades
6. Make grading and assessment more efficient

Sample Analytic Rubric

Rubrics can be used for assessment and grading by simply assigning points to the categories. Below are sample analytic rubric with three dimensions for assessing oral presentation skills and a second example for use of the rubric when adapted for grading:

Example - The following rubrics take student learning outcomes (SLO) about oral presentations and assesses the student's work.

	Below Expectation	Satisfactory	Exemplary
SLO about Organization	No apparent organization. Evidence is not used to support assertions.	The presentation has a focus and provides some evidence to support conclusions	The presentation is carefully organized and provides convincing evidence
SLO about Content	The content is inaccurate or overly general. Listeners are unlikely to learn anything or may be misled.	The content is generally accurate, but incomplete. Listeners may learn some isolated facts, but they are unlikely to gain new insights about the topic.	The content is accurate and complete. Listeners are likely to gain new insights about the topic.
SLO about Delivery	The speaker appears anxious and uncomfortable, and reads notes, rather than speaks. Listeners are largely ignored.	The speaker is generally relaxed and comfortable, but too often relies on notes. Listeners are sometimes ignored or misunderstood.	The speaker is relaxed and comfortable, speaks without undue reliance on notes, and interacts effectively with listeners.

Rubric Resources

AAC&U Value Rubrics: <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org



The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and therefore is the focus for the application of this rubric.

Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Framing Language

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Central message:** The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.
- **Delivery techniques:** Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).
- **Language:** Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- **Organization:** The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.
- **Supporting material:** Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speaker's credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.

