

## Using Rubrics for the Graduate Assessment: Is It an Effective Tool?

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## Background of UMUC

- University of Maryland University College (UMUC)
  - Second largest public university in Maryland
  - Over 90,000 students throughout the world
  - Distance education
  - Working adults

## Background of GSMT

- Graduate School of Management and Technology (GSMT)
  - 18 graduate degree programs, including two doctor of management programs; 30+ specializations, and 30+ certificate programs
  - Online education
  - Working professional adult learners
  - Adjunct faculty
  - Multiple locations

## How's GSMT Assessment Done?

- Three-year Cycle (3 Rounds)/Timeline

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
1 <sup>st</sup> 9 Credits	After 18 credits	Final semester
Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
COMM, INFO, TECH, KNOW, THIN	COMM, INFO, TECH, KNOW, THIN	COMM, INFO, TECH, KNOW, THIN

## How's GSMT Assessment Done?(Cont.)

- Five Student Learning Expectations (SLEs)
  - Written Communication (COMM)
  - Critical Thinking (THIN)
  - Technology Fluency (TECH)
  - Information Literacy (INFO)
  - Content Knowledge (KNOW)

## Using Rubrics for Assessment

- What is a rubric?
  - A scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment.
  - Divides an assignment into its component parts and provides a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts.

Stevens, D. D., & Levi, A. (2005). *Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback, and Promote Student Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

## Using Rubrics for Assessment (Cont.)

- Types of rubrics:
  - Analytic:** more specific and easier to apply; break down the objective into dimensions (criteria) and judge them individually
  - Holistic:** more general; assess the entire objective on one scale

## Example: GSMT Writing Rubric

University of Maryland University College  
Graduate School of Management and Technology  
Writing Rubric for Outcomes Assessment Spring 2011

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Label: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Section Number: \_\_\_\_\_

CRITERIA	EXEMPLARY 4	COMPETENT 3	MARGINAL 2	UNSATISFACTORY 0-1	SCORE
<b>Content/Purpose</b> Considers the audience, purpose, and the requirements surrounding the writing assignment(s).	Shows superior understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is extremely appropriate for the assignment(s).	Shows good understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is mostly appropriate for the assignment(s).	Shows fair understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is somewhat appropriate for the assignment(s).	Shows insufficient or poor understanding of context, audience, or purpose of the assignment(s).	_____
<b>Content/Ideas/Support</b> Articulates and supports a main idea(s) that is consistent with context and purpose.	Highly original main idea(s) is clearly articulated and strongly supported by research-based, relevant evidence that may be research-based. Main idea(s) is generally consistent with context and purpose.	Mostly original main idea(s) is generally well-articulated and sufficiently supported by research-based, relevant evidence that may be research-based. Main idea(s) is generally consistent with context and purpose.	Main idea(s) is vague, and/or inadequately supported and/or inconsistent with context and purpose.	Main idea(s) is hardly or not evident and/or lacks support and/or scarcely relates to context and purpose.	_____
<b>Organization</b> Uses logical sequencing including introduction, transitions between paragraphs, and summary/conclusion to develop main idea(s) and content.	Uses highly logical sequencing including introduction, transitions between paragraphs, and summary/conclusion to fully develop main idea(s) and content.	Uses mostly logical sequencing including introduction, transitions between paragraphs, and summary/conclusion to generally develop main idea(s) and content.	Uses partially logical sequencing. Makes inadequate use of introduction and/or transitions between paragraphs, and/or summary/conclusion. Main idea(s) and content are incompletely developed.	Uses little or no logical sequencing. Lacks introduction, and/or transitions between paragraphs and/or summary/conclusion. Main idea(s) and content remain undeveloped.	_____
<b>Sources</b> Incorporates use of and identifies source and/or research, according to APA and/or instructor guidelines.	Demonstrates superior judgment in selection, incorporation, and identification of relevant, appropriate research and/or research that fully meet or exceed established guidelines.	Demonstrates good judgment in selection, incorporation, and identification of mostly appropriate research and/or research that mostly meet or exceed established guidelines.	Demonstrates little or no judgment in selection and/or identification of sources and/or research. Quality and/or quantity and/or appropriateness do not meet established guidelines.	Demonstrates little or no judgment in selection and/or identification of sources and/or research. Quality and/or quantity and/or appropriateness do not meet established guidelines.	_____
<b>Word Usage/ Grammar/Spelling/ Mechanics</b> Uses standard grammar, spelling and punctuation accurately and correctly.	Demonstrates virtually error-free grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Demonstrates very few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Demonstrates numerous errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Demonstrates unacceptable amount and/or type of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.	_____
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					_____

## Using Rubrics for Assessment (Cont.)

- Why use rubrics?
  - Provide an objective guide for assessment.
  - Articulate the criteria against which student learning is judged
  - Low cost, reusable, and efficient
  - Faculty are familiar with rubrics for grading

## Using Rubrics for Assessment (Cont.)

- Rubrics development process in GSMT
  - Assessment Liaisons
  - External experts
- Establish validity- whether we assess what we are supposed to assess? The accuracy with which the rubric assesses the objective or purpose
  - Pilot test
  - Regularly review

## Using Rubrics for Assessment (Cont.)

- Establish reliability- whether the results and uses of scores are consistent? How consistently the rubric assesses the objective or purpose over time and across raters
  - Inter-rater
  - Intra-rater

## What We Have Learned

- Rubrics development is a collaborative work
- Pilot and constantly rubric review process is important (validity)
  - Self-check
  - Assessment Liaisons review
  - Faculty review
  - Student review

## What We Have Learned (Cont.)

- Norming rubric process helps establish the inter-rater reliability
- Good assignments design can enhance the assessment process

## What Challenges We Have

- Engage adjunct faculty to actively participate in assessment activities
- Assessments are conducted with several faculty members teaching multiple sections of the same course and using different tests, and assignments in different teaching models (online, face-to-face, hybrid)

## What Challenges We Have (Cont.)

- Raters' training (reliability)
- Recent studies report that the use of rubrics may not improve the reliability of assessment if raters are not well trained on how to design and employ them effectively.

Lovorn, Michael G., & Ali Reza Rezaci (2011). Assessing the Assessment: Rubrics Training for Pre-service and New In-service Teachers. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 16(16). Available online: <http://paronline.net/getvn.asp?v=16&n=16>

## What Challenges We Have (Cont.)

- Raters' training Models

### Traditional Classroom Model:

**Strengths:** (1) Long history of successful use (2) Group dynamic leads to building a community of consensus

**Limitations:** (1) Requires up-front training time for faculty (2) Requires skilled trainers to manage problematic personalities (3) Raters move at group pace—some will need more time, others less

Johnson, R. L., Penny, J. A. & Gordon, B. (2009). *Assessing Performance: Designing, Scoring, and Validating Performance Tasks*. New York: The Guilford Press.

## What Challenges We Have (Cont.)

### Electronic Classroom Model:

**Strengths:** (1) Raters can move at their own pace (2) Individual rater data are stored and available for trainer review (3) Rater monitoring can be easily concealed and delivered on an individual, as-needed basis

**Limitations:** (1) Require equipment and technology support (2) Instant messaging to ask questions can discourage inquiry (3) Instant messaging to reply to rater questions can require more time than face-to-face contact

Johnson, R. L., Penny, J. A. & Gordon, B. (2009). *Assessing Performance: Designing, Scoring, and Validating Performance Tasks*. New York: The Guilford Press.

## Questions?

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