Basic Steps for Developing and Using a Rubric for Assessment

Preliminary Steps:

1. Identify the SLO you wish to assess.
2. Determine how you will assess students’ achievement of that outcome. Is the most appropriate assessment tool a(n):
   - Objective exam? An objective test receives a score or percentage, so you don’t need a rubric unless the exam is part of a larger assessment.
   - Essay exam?
   - Project?
   - Presentation?
   - Skill(s) demonstration?
   - Performance?
   - Written report, essay, research paper, etc.?

   If you don’t have a single assignment or set of assignments that assesses that outcome, you probably need to create one.

3. Look at examples of other rubrics to determine the degree of detail, the actual form of scoring (e.g., range of numbers), and format that would be appropriate for the assessment tool, student feedback, and data collection.

How do I develop a rubric?

1. List main traits, criteria, or areas that you consider when assessing a student’s performance. For a writing assignment, areas of assessment might include content, style, mechanics, and critical thinking. For a skills demonstration, areas of assessment might be knowledge/understanding, technique, style, and attitude.

2. Describe the specific action, product, or behavior that would represent fully successful achievement of the SLO (the highest score). Include that wording in your description of the assignment as well as in your rubric. This helps students connect elements of the assignment to the grading process.

3. Consider ways of using a grid or list and the scoring mechanism. This could be:
   - A simple yes/no checklist.
   - Numeric scores to represent levels of specific criteria (e.g., a score of 0-3 on “mechanics” for a writing assignment)
4. Choose your scoring system. Consider what fits the purpose of the assignment, what provides the most effective feedback for students, and what would best lend itself to data analysis for useful conclusions. This could be:
   • One overall score summing up multiple criteria
   • Sub-scores in each area added up for a final score or grade

5. If using a scoring grid, provide descriptors for each level.

**How do I use a rubric?**

1. Share with students before giving them the assignment.
2. Use for grading.
3. Use to collect numeric data for assessment of course SLO.
4. Use to provide useful information for you, your colleagues, and your students.