Make it and Take it: Rubrics for Graduate Outcomes Assessment

Goals:

- Review graduate SOA process.
- Learn how faculty are using rubrics to facilitate improvements in graduate learning.
- Examine rubrics used in graduate programs at other universities.
- Construct one or more rubrics for use in assessing and enhancing the quality of student work in graduate programs at UNI.

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Review of Fall 06 Workshop:

- Introduced key principles and processes of graduate level assessment.

- Shared a strategy and framework for faculty engagement with graduate assessment.

Outcomes: The Driving Questions

- What do we want our master's students to learn before they graduate?
- What skills and knowledge will they be able to demonstrate at the conclusion of their master's program?

Examples of Outcomes

- Oral Communication Skills

- Written Communication Skills

    - for Researchers/scholars
    - for Professionals

- Research/Creative Skills

Next steps in Spring 2007

1. Refine graduate outcomes in departments in a meeting of interested graduate faculty working from drafts started in Fall workshop.

    *   Achieve consensus on 3-5 program goals.
    *   Select 3-5 outcomes for each goal.

Next steps in Spring 2007

2. Attend rubrics workshop for help on answering key questions about outcomes:

*   How will we know the level of graduate student learning has been achieved? *Identify levels of excellence on a rubric.*

*   How will students demonstrate knowledge/skill acquisition? *Document levels of acquisition using a rubric.*

Next steps in Spring 2007

3. Artifact Selection for SOA:

Looking at graduate goals/outcomes, interested graduate faculty and the graduate coordinator will identify program activities in which students would acquire this knowledge or practice these skills.

Ex. Writing sample from application; graduate seminar artifact, comprehensive exams, thesis prospectus, thesis.

Next steps in Spring 2007

4. Establish a Mechanism for SOA

Have a consultation among SOA graduate coordinator, dept. head, and office staff to develop mechanism for collecting SOA artifacts and storing them in department or on department computer.

Next steps in Spring 2007

5. Implementing Process.

- Start collecting artifacts.
- Start storing artifacts.

Ex. Maintain a file for each student. Staple a check list to folder to record submissions. Review each file once a year and collect missing data.

Ex. List: writing or creative work sample at application, artifact from graduate seminar, comprehensive exams, thesis prospectus, thesis (on file in office).

Fall 2007

- Artifact collection continues.

- Interested graduate faculty hold meeting to complete method of analysis for artifacts (e.g., rubrics).

Fall 2007 continued: Plan a calendar for SOA review:

- Sub-committee of interested graduate faculty determine calendar for graduate SOA assessment.

- Possible scenarios: All programs will collect data for SOA each year. Large programs will analyze data yearly; small programs will analyze data 2-3 times between each Program Review.

- Goal: Close the "feed-back loop" (example on next slide) at least once before a program review.

An example of "closing the feedback loop":

An analysis of a set of oral presentation rubrics shows some low scores on some areas of oral communication. In response, graduate faculty decide to implement some of the following:

- Require that international students earn a score of 20 on the TOEFL speaking subscale.
- Re-sequence existing coursework to facilitate a developmental approach to oral communication skills.
- Add an oral presentation assignment in the Graduate Seminar.
- Offer a research symposium at which graduate students critique others' oral presentations of their research.
- Ask Communication Studies faculty to offer a workshop on strategies they could pursue in order to enhance their graduate students' oral communications skills.

Key assumptions about graduate-level rubrics that will expedite the assessment process:

1) Graduate faculty concur that the rubrics represent shared views about program goals and outcomes.
2) Graduate faculty are willing to use the rubrics at the time they are reviewing student work for grades.
3) Graduate faculty grade student work using their own grading methods/scales; however, while this work is fresh in their minds, they also "rubric it" with the SOA rubric(s).
4) Graduate faculty send completed rubrics for safekeeping to the repository selected in their departmental plan.
5) Graduate faculty meet periodically to establish interrater reliability (see handout) for graduate rubrics.

A Rubrics Glossary

- Rubrics
- Goals
- Outcomes
- Criteria

- Validity
- Reliability
- Analytic Rubrics
- Holistic Rubrics

Developing a Rubric:

- **Task Description**: What is the student supposed to do?

  - Examples: write a comprehensive exam, perform a concerto, make an oral presentation.

  - At the top of a sheet of paper, place the full description of the assignment.

  - Begin a grid that is headed by a descriptive title and blocks out dimensions of the assignment.

Assign a Scale.

How well or poorly has the student done on the task?

- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent.
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable.
- Advanced, Intermediate, Novice.
- Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice.
- Accomplished, developing, beginning.   (Huba and Freed, 2000)

Note:
Consider whether a scale needs more than three levels. Some research indicates that information about student learning obtained from a three-level scale is comparable to that obtained from a five-level scale.

Work on Dimensions of the Rubric

- Dimensions

  - Dimensions break down a task into components and identify the importance of these components.
  - Dimensions are descriptive, not evaluative (e.g., "organization" not "good organization."

- Description of the Dimensions

  - Rubrics should contain at least a description of the highest level of performance.
  - Students need not fit cleanly into a single category. On oral presentation skills, a student might speak in a clear voice but lack eye contact.

To Remember:

- Rubrics are written on paper, not stone.

- Start with a basic rubric and improve it with each use.

- Discover new dimensions for the rubric while grading current student work.

Constructing a Rubric in Five Stages:

- Stage 1: Reflecting

  - What are key goals for this MA program (thesis, or comprehensive exam)? How do the goals relate to each other? What knowledge, skills, and habits of mind will students need to successfully complete this MA (thesis, or comprehensive exam)? What does an exemplary instance of a student fulfilling the goals of this MA (thesis) look like?

- Stage 2: Listing

  - What are the learning outcomes we hope to see students in this MA program achieve? What are the learning outcomes for this thesis or comprehensive exam?

- Stage 3: Refining statements

  - Are your statements concise? Are they not too broad or too specific? Have you clarified fuzzy terms?

- Stage 4: Grouping and Labeling

  - Place similar outcomes together to comprise dimensions of the rubric.

- Stage 5: Application

  - Form the actual rubric by deploying dimensions and levels along each side of the rubric.

Workshop bibliography

- *Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom.* By Judith Arter and Jay McTighe. Corwin Press, 2001.

- *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses* by Mary E. Huba and Jann E. Freed. Allyn and Bacon, 2000. *

- *Introduction to Rubrics*, by Dannelle D. Stevens and Antonia J. Levi. Stylus Publications, 2005. *

- *Assessing for Learning*, by Peggy L. Maki. Stylus Publications, 2004.

- *Assessing Student Learning* by Linda Suskie. Anker, 2004.

- http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/glossary.htm

  * = most helpful sources.