

Rubrics and Its Importance

The word 'rubric' comes from the Latin word for 'red'. The online Merriam - Webster dictionary lists the first meaning of rubric as "an authoritative rule" and the fourth meaning as "a guide listing specific criteria for grading or scoring academic papers, projects, or tests." A rubric is a coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria. It should be clear from the definition that rubrics have two major aspects: coherent sets of criteria and descriptions of levels of performance for these criteria.

The genius of rubrics is that they are descriptive and not evaluative. Of course, rubrics can be used to evaluate, but the operating principle is you match the performance to the description rather than "judge" it. Thus rubrics are as good or bad as the criteria selected and the descriptions of the levels of performance under each. Effective rubrics have appropriate criteria and well - written descriptions of performance.

Purpose of Rubrics

- Like any other evaluation tool, rubrics are useful for certain purposes and not for others. **The main purpose of rubrics is to assess performances.** For some performances, you observe the student in the process of doing something, like using an electric drill or discussing an issue. For other performances, you observe the product that is the result of the student's work, like a finished bookshelf or a written report. Some common kinds of school performances that can be assessed with rubrics. This by no means covers every possible school performance. It is just meant to help you think of the types of performances you might assess with rubrics.