2017

Rubrics as a Method for Assessing & Improving Library Instruction

Megan Hodge
Virginia Commonwealth University, mlhodge@gmail.com

Laura W. Gariepy
Virginia Commonwealth University, lwgariepy@vcu.edu

Jenny Stout
Virginia Commonwealth University, jastout@vcu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/libraries_pubs

Part of the Information Literacy Commons

Recommended Citation

Hodge, M., Gariepy, L., & Stout, J. (2017). Rubrics as a Method for Assessing & Improving Library Instruction. In A. Dobbs (ed.), The Library Assessment Cookbook. Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Rubrics as a Method for Assessing & Improving Library Instruction

Like soba noodles, salad greens, or extra-firm tofu, a good rubric can be the foundation of a healthy assessment meal! A single rubric can be adapted and modified to assess information literacy in a variety of instructional environments. Start with the basics and add your own spices to suit your library's instruction program.

Megan Hodge, Virginia Commonwealth University, mlhodge@vcu.edu; Laura Gariepy, Virginia Commonwealth University, lwgariepy@vcu.edu; Jenny Stout, Virginia Commonwealth University, jastout@vcu.edu

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Efficient assessment of course-integrated instruction is problematic for librarians, as course-integrated (one-shot) instruction by its nature is limited in time. This model provides a method for assessing one-shot instruction that not only works within the confines of a fifty-minute class, but is scalable regardless of class time or size. Because of its use of a grading rubric, this model is also useful for courses in which librarians teach numerous sections each semester (such as freshman-level English).

DIETARY STANDARDS

ACRL *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* (2011) Principle 1, Indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4; Principle 3, Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4; Principle 5, Indicator 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016) Information Has Value; Research as Inquiry; Searching as Strategic Exploration

Locally developed learning outcomes may also apply

COOKING TIME

Depending on intended scope, cooking time could take between weeks and months from start to finish.

COOKING TECHNIQUE

Assessment instrument and rubric

INGREDIENTS

- A learning exercise that captures evidence of student learning for each of the session's learning outcomes
- A rubric to measure mastery of each learning objective; see Sample Rubric below

PREPARATION

1. Librarians collaborate with faculty to determine what the instruction session's learning objectives will be. It is important that the learning objectives be measurable. For example, "the student will understand truncation" is too vague; how will "understanding" be assessed? "The student will correctly truncate all words in their search query that should be truncated," on the other hand, provides the specificity and measurability that will be important when developing the rubric.
2. Develop a learning exercise that addresses each learning outcome and that can be used to guide student learning while in class.
3. Use the learning exercise to develop a rubric for scoring. Given the subjective nature of the data to be collected, a rubric is essential for this assessment in order to ensure consistent scoring across subjects and evaluators. Without such a rubric, evaluators may find their standards changing during the scoring process, or evaluators may have different ideas as to what warrants a given score. Please refer to the references for resources on developing rubrics.

ASSESSMENT STEPS

1. Teach the class, using the learning exercise.
2. Collect a sample of completed learning exercises (worksheets). Collect and scan all worksheets, return them within a business day to the professor, and use a random number generator to select three worksheets from each class to score.

3. Complete a norming process if there are multiple evaluators. Each evaluator scores a limited number of worksheets other than those selected for the evaluation sample; any score differences are discussed and resolved. Rubric modifications and clarifications are made as needed before "official" scoring begins.
4. Assess the sample of learning exercises.
5. Learn from the data and make necessary changes to instructional methods.
6. Repeat. This assessment can be used iteratively to improve instruction over time.

ALLERGY WARNINGS
If a team of librarians teaches the class to be assessed, bear in mind that librarians may use different techniques to teach the same concepts, which could result in score variances.

CHEF'S NOTE
This model could easily be adapted for use in most instructional environments: one-shot instruction, embedded instruction, or in credit-bearing courses. Its usefulness is not limited to higher education but could be applied wherever instruction takes place, including other types of libraries.

This model could also be used to gauge the effectiveness of one instructional technique over another.

REFERENCES
Knight, Lorrie A. "Using Rubrics to Assess Information Literacy." *Reference Services Overview* 34 (1) (2006): 43-55. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00907320610640752.

Taggart, Germaine L., and Marilyn Wood. "Rubrics: A Cross-curricular Approach to Assessment." In *Rubrics: A Handbook for Construction and Use*, edited by Germaine L. Taggart, Sandra J. Phifer, Judy A. Nixon, and Marilyn Wood, 57–74. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing, 1998.

Wiggins, Grant. *Educative Assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

SAMPLE RUBRIC

Criterion/Learning Outcome	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
A: Student states research topic.	N/A	Student states research topic.	Student states an unclear or vague research topic.	Student does not state a research topic.
B: Student identifies key words/phrases from research question.	Student correctly identifies all or most key concepts in research topic.	Student correctly identifies some key concepts in research topic.	Student identifies topic's key concepts, but they are incorrect/unlikely to generate relevant search results.	Student does not identify any key concepts.
C: Student generates similar key words/phrases for each key concept that will enhance search strategy.	Student produces related words/phrases for each key concept. The phrases are likely to generate relevant results.	Student produces related words/phrases for a few key concepts; or, produces related words/phrases for each key concept, but only some are likely to generate relevant results.	Student produces minimal related words and phrases; or, produces related words/phrases, but few or none are likely to generate relevant results.	Student does not produce any related words/phrases for key concepts.
D: Student cites scholarly sources relevant to research topic.	Student cites 2 scholarly sources relevant to topic.	Student cites 1 relevant scholarly source.	Student cites 1 minimally relevant scholarly source; or student cites 1 relevant non-scholarly source.	Student does not cite a relevant source; or, student does not complete question.