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# Culturally Responsive Feedback

Stephen Gladson  
*Montgomery College*

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# Culturally Responsive Feedback

...y before  
...beth an example  
...gedy because it is an old  
...ee. That's wat makes it a class

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# Perceptions of Bias in Society

How do these work in school and in society?

culture

ethnicity

immigration status

gender

Age

(dis)ability

sexual orientation



# Barrier of Mistrust

This in turn could lead them to see **bias** as a possible factor motivating their instructor's critical feedback.



# Stereotype Threat

**Stereotype threat** is a phenomenon in which a person's concern about confirming a negative stereotype can lead that person to underperform.





# Situational Cues

**Situational cues** may trigger a stereotype threat. Students may recognize a threat when they walk into a classroom where their identity group is underrepresented or on the basis of interpersonal interactions.

# Cultural Expectations



What we consider “good” writing in a discipline may be at odds with cultural expectations and norms for some second language (L2) students.

- Using personal voice
- Citing sources
- School diction (register)

# What is culturally responsive feedback?

...y before  
...abeth an example  
...gedy because it is an old  
...ee. That's what makes it a class

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# Discover Your Students

Start the semester with a getting-to-know-you exercise.

- Questionnaire
- Connecting Learning to Students' Lives
- Cultural Iceberg

# Foster a Sense of Belonging

When students learn that it is common to experience academic struggle and that they do belong at the institution, they have improved academic outcomes when compared with students who do not receive these messages.





# Foster a Growth Mindset

Foster a **growth mindset** by conveying the idea that intelligence is not fixed, but can grow incrementally, with practice and exercise.

- Assign writing-to-learn assignments
- Informal, often not graded, and typically completed in class



# Writing to Learn

The **minute paper** (from Biology 101)

At the beginning of class, she asks students to summarize the three main points of the previous class. She gives them five minutes to write and then has them compare answers with a neighbor. She doesn't grade the work but picks them up and scans them for misconceptions.

Here's one from a health class: "Explain to a grade school child who has just been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes what is meant by the glycemic index of foods."

Students must put the concepts into their own language (using a lexicon that would be appropriate for a fifth grader). This approach is particularly useful for English language learners, many of whom feel pressure to reproduce both the material and the formal language of the discipline. Sometimes they do so without fully comprehending the concepts.



# Provide “Wise” Feedback

When commenting on student work, provide wise feedback:

1. assurance that you are providing critical feedback because you have high standards
2. specific commentary indicating where the students’ work does and does not meet the standards
3. confidence that students can meet those standards



# Eliminate the Ambiguity



Make your expectations clear.

Avoid **comfort feedback**, which demotivates students, in favor of wise feedback or **strategy feedback** for greater motivation and better results.

# What do your students think?

*I think, if a professor walked in on a conversation with my friends about comments, they would probably be really stunned as to how much we were analyzing them.*

-Molly Booth, BHCC student  
From "Beyond the Red Ink:  
Teachers' Comments through Students' Eyes"  
(Nancy Sommers)



# What's in Your Rubric?

## Rubrics & the Secret to Grading

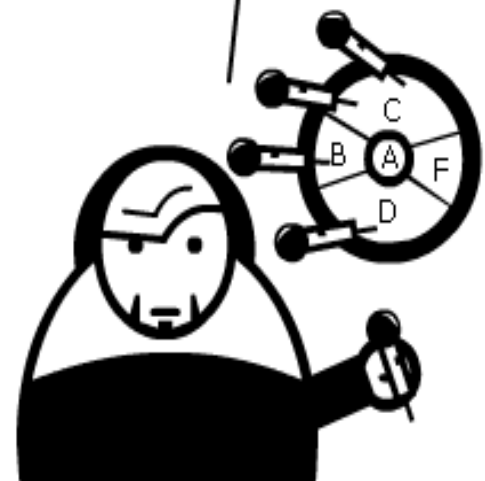
Rubrics?! I never give my students rubrics! That's equivalent to cheating! I might as well write their essays for them!



College students should understand that they're expected to perform certain undisclosed outcomes. The point of learning is to keep them guessing about the criteria, so they'll work harder in their desperation not to fail. Stress facilitates success.




Besides, if I gave them a rubric, I'd have to admit that I decide their grades with a dart board.



# Tips for Responding



Discuss the kinds of feedback you will be giving. Mitigate perceptions of bias by using a common rubric geared toward common outcomes—no favoritism and no bias.



Have students submit something early in the writing process:

- Prospectus
- Question-plus-thesis
- Outline
- Rough draft

Offer comments that students can act upon.




## Alternate feedback modalities.

- Written (typed) comments on a draft
- Peer review
- Workshop
- Individual writing conference



Praise students for their success just as much or more than you fault them for their errors.



Identify resources and support services that can help students on your assignment or on future assignments in other classes.

- Writing center
- Achieving the Promise Academy (ATPA)
- Disability Support Services (DSS)
- Counseling and Advising
- Libraries





Teach the student, not the paper.

Avoid the urge to edit or to rewrite a student's paper. Make revision-oriented comments instead.

# Tips for Rubrics



Discuss the rubric in class:

What does it mean when we say,  
“*Adopt* language appropriate to the  
discipline...tone...standard English...?”

# Tips for Rubrics



Emphasize “global” or large-scale issues:

- Quality of ideas or creativity
- Use of evidence
- Development of ideas
- Understanding of course concepts

# **What's in Your Rubric?**

**Holistic Scoring  
vs.  
Analytic Scoring**



- *State* central idea/purpose clearly
- *Organize* ideas and information logically in support of central idea or purpose
- *Apply* scientific method accurately: (framed testable questions, designed experiment, gathered and recorded data, analyzed data, and verified results)
- *Incorporate* evidence from a variety of sources
- *Avoid* plagiarism
- *Adopt* appropriate voice, tone, and/or level of formality
- *Use* appropriate syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling so that words accurately convey the writer's meaning
- *Employ* specialized technical language, format, and documentation appropriate to the discipline

# Holistic Rubric

- Score written work as a whole to determine how well a student has achieved content knowledge.
- Relatively easy to develop and quick to score.

# Analytic Rubric

- Identifies and assesses discrete elements of a student's written work.
- Used to indicate the level of skill with which a student has performed on a variety of significant learning outcomes.
- Often requires more attention to detail and offers students more substantive feedback.



# What Can Rubrics Do?

- Eliminate ambiguity and the threat of bias
- Motivate students to work hard on key areas
- Specify where student's work does and does not meet expectations
- Reveal the pathway to success
- Guide future teaching



# Students Want Feedback

Your feedback may be the most individualized instruction, tailored to specific needs and cultural expectations, that a student receives.



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