

Authentic Rubrics

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Time Frame 90-120 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- Do rubrics guarantee more authentic learning?
- Does the use of rubrics promote college readiness?

Summary

In this professional development session, participants will engage in embedded instructional strategies that will allow them to examine the criteria for authentic assessments. Participants also will explore connections between the “whys” and “hows” of creating and using rubrics for authentic assessment and as a tool to promote rigor and college readiness.

Learning Goals

- Identify the “whys” of using rubrics for authentic assessment to promote college readiness.
- Participants will brainstorm and identify connections between the "whys" and “hows” of using rubrics for authentic instruction and assessment in the classroom.
- Participants will create a T-chart to illustrate the connections between the “whys” and “hows” of using rubrics in the classroom.

Attachments

- Authentic Learning and Teaching—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- Authentic Rubrics Presentation—Authentic Rubrics.pptx
- Authentic Rubrics Samples—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- Authentic Rubrics Samples—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- Authentic-Rubrics.pdf
- Evaluating the Rubric with Six Components—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- Evaluating the Rubric with Six Components—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- Rubrics Traditional vs. Authentic—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- Rubrics Traditional vs. Authentic—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- The Trouble with Rubrics Excerpt—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- The Trouble with Rubrics Excerpt—Authentic Rubrics.pdf
- Why and How T-Chart—Authentic Rubrics.docx
- Why and How T-Chart—Authentic Rubrics.pdf

Materials

- Presentation Slides (attached)
- Authentic Rubric Samples handout (attached)
- Authentic Learning and Teaching handout (attached)
- The Why and How T-chart handout (attached)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet handout (attached)
- Rubrics Traditional vs. Authentic handout (attached)
- Evaluating the Rubric With Six Components handout (attached)
- The Trouble With Rubrics excerpt handout (attached)
- Scratch paper
- Poster paper
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Sticky notes

Engage

Presenter's Note: Preparation

Before beginning this session, have all handouts and materials available on the tables for participants. Each participant should receive a copy of the attached Instructional Strategy Note Sheet handout, Rubrics Traditional vs. Authentic handout, Evaluating the Rubric With Six Components handout, and the Why and How T-Chart handout.

Welcome participants, and briefly introduce yourself and the professional development session using the attached **Presentation Slides**. Inform participants that several new instructional strategies will be introduced to them throughout the session. Explain that these strategies are tools to support higher-order thinking in an authentic way.

Make sure each participant has a copy of the attached **Instructional Strategy Note Sheet**, and encourage participants to use it to jot down their ideas for personalizing a strategy to be used as an instructional tool in their classrooms. Once all the new strategies are modeled, the presentation will allow time for participants to reflect on how to use the strategies.

Display **slide 3** to share the session objectives with participants. This will provide a road map of where you will go together during the session and let them know what to expect from the session. Inform them: *Today, you will have protected time to engage in hands-on activities evaluating how and why we use rubrics to promote authentic instruction. I will provide time for you to brainstorm and create rubrics to use in a lesson of your choosing.*

Go to **slide 4**, "Strike Out." From the large group, have participants get in groups of four and make a list of why teachers use rubrics. Each list should have at least seven items or statements listed. Have each group pass the list clockwise to the next group. Each group will evaluate the new list they received and strike out the least important piece of information. Have groups continue to pass their lists to the right until only the most important information remains. There should be only one or two key ideas or statements remaining on the list.

Presenter's Note: Smaller Group

For smaller participant groups, you may have small groups compile a list on provided poster paper. Groups will then move around the room and strike out the least important information until they reach their original paper (or have them strike out the three least important items). If numbers are low, you can pass the papers or posters two to three times.

As a whole group, have participants share the most important items that were left remaining on the papers/posters. Discuss as a large group the similarities and differences found among groups for why teachers use rubrics.

Possible Responses

- "Rubrics create clear expectations for students."
- "Rubrics promote choice."
- "Rubrics encourage independent thinking and create meaningful learning."

Go to **slide 5**, "Why We Use Rubrics," and ask: *Do your remaining ideas about rubrics fit under traditional assessment or authentic assessment?* Explain that rubrics are a form of authentic assessment only if they follow the criteria of the authentic side of the chart.

Transition to **slide 6** and give each group a chance to "revive" one of the original items or statements that were struck out in the last activity. Take a moment and then ask participants to share why they picked that item or statement. Ask them: *How does this fit under authentic assessment?*

Explore

Once participants have finished sharing which statement or idea they would revive on their list, go to **slide 7**, which is another copy of "Why We Use Rubrics." Participants will refer to the right side of this chart on the slide and the **Rubrics Traditional vs Authentic** handout.

In this activity, all participants will vote on the three components they believe are the most important in developing a rubric. Make sure each participant has a copy of the attached **Evaluating the Rubric With Six Components** handout.

Presenter's Note: Facilitation

You will read through the statements and provide brief explanation as needed. Participants will have to vote more than once to narrow down the choices to the three most important components. After voting is completed, move participants to content-related groups, depending on the size of each represented content area. You may use the different content areas for small groups to focus on. You may instead choose one content area to focus on as a whole group.

Once the three most important components have been identified, have all participants write them on the handout. Go to **slide 8**, "Building It Together." Participants will use their three components of authentic assessment and work together in a small group to evaluate a given rubric and discuss what could be done better.

At this time, pass out the attached **Authentic Rubric Samples** handout for each content area (the handout has four examples of rubrics to choose from). Allow time for participants to work in small groups to evaluate the rubrics based on the three attributes they voted on.

Transition to **slide 9**. Ask the group to rate the rubric on a scale of 1–3 using the "Attributes of Authentic Assessment," including the work from McTighe and O'Conner (2005).

After they have evaluated the sample rubric, have participants come up with ways to make the rubric more authentic.

Explain

Presenter's Note: Preparation

Before beginning this activity, post signs in each corner or location of the room to identify each represented viewpoint.

Once participants have had ample time to analyze and share the attributes of the given rubrics, go to **slide 10** and present the following statement: *The use of rubrics guarantees more authentic learning.*

Introduce the Four Corners strategy. Give participants a moment to think about all the types of assessments they use in the classroom and how much they agree or disagree with the statement on the slide. Once they have a had a moment to evaluate where they stand on that statement, ask them to move to one of the following four corners: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

After all participants have made their decisions and moved to their chosen corners of the room, allow them to discuss their decision with their group members. Then, allow the groups to share out why they agree or disagree with the statement. Once finished, they may return to their seats.

Transition to **slide 11**, "What does the research say?" Give each participant a copy of the attached reading, **The Trouble With Rubrics**. Provide an explanation of Kohn's rationale in the short excerpt, and ask participants to quickly read through the excerpt using Why Lighting.

After they have read the article, have participants identify the three problems Kohn addresses in the excerpt. Lead a short discussion about what participants highlighted and annotated in the last three paragraphs.

Possible Responses

- "One problem is some teachers may use a rubric to prove to parents why their child is preforming the way they are in class."
- "A second problem is that some teachers rely on rubrics solely to give a number/letter grade, without really assessing how a student is learning and using the rubrics to gauge their performance."
- "Teachers often just use them as a quick and easy way to grade assignments. Yes, they can be used to make the grading portion easier, but teachers need to be aware that authentic rubrics should be used to gauge a student's understanding of a concept taught."

After participants share a few key problems from Kohn's excerpt, click slide 11 again and briefly share the research listed, affirming what participants have shared.

1. Dropout statistics show that numerous so-called "normal" students are not succeeding because they are not treated as individuals.
2. Active learning embraces teaching and learning strategies that engage and involve students in the learning process.
3. When educators show different ways to learn, students find new and creative ways to solve problems and achieve success, becoming lifelong learners.
4. There is a correlation between high truancy rates and low academic expectations.

Go to **slide 12**, "Beware the Rubric Traps." Remind participants that rubrics are *not* assessments to be used for self-justification, as replacements for number/letter grades, or only because they can be quick and efficient. Authentic rubrics promote and encourage divergent thinking, develop meaningful skills, emphasize cooperation, and guide curriculum and instruction. Also, not all lesson assessments lend themselves to the use of a rubric, as discussed in the Four Corners activity.

Presenter's Note

It is highly important to stress the difference between simply using a rubric and creating one that lends itself to authentic teaching and assessing.

Transition to **slide 13**, "Why and How T-Chart." Begin by quoting Alfie Kohn: *When the how's of assessment preoccupy us, they tend to chase the why's back into the shadows.* Ask participants: *What does this mean to you?*

Possible Response

"Sometimes, I get wrapped up in how I am going to get things done with my students, and the why's become overlooked. I need focus on the why's, and the how's will form and better benefit my students."

Make sure each participant has a copy of the attached **Why and How T-chart**. Have participants use the T-chart to brainstorm thoughts about why we use rubrics and how we use them to address the why.

Possible Responses

- *Why*: "To encourage divergent thinking among students."
- *How*: "By providing choice in solving or presenting projects. By allowing students to explore different methods of learning."

Once participants have filled out their charts, discuss the focus of "why" we use rubrics as a whole group.

Possible Responses

- "We use rubrics to create divergent thinking among students."
- "We use rubrics to drive instruction and design curriculum."
- "We use rubrics to promote and provide examination of learning over time."

Extend

Go to **slide 14**, "Authentic Teaching." Ask participants to discuss the following question with an elbow partner: *Which of these four components do you see represented from authenticity in the use of authentic rubrics for assessment?*

Refer to the attached **Authentic Learning and Teaching** document to support participants' answers.

Possible Responses

- "Rubrics promote skills such as analyzing and explaining concepts or knowledge learned."
- "Rubrics can create an opportunity to build dialogue among peers and lead to questions that simulate higher-order thinking skills."
- "Rubrics can promote the application of ideas and help students make connections to actual situations and experiences."
- "Rubrics allow students ownership, with shared control and choice in how they present their learning and knowledge."

Place participants in content-related groups, and allow time for them to discuss what types of lessons best fit with the use of rubrics. Have group representatives share out to the large group.

Transition to **slide 15**, "Explore RubiStar." Go to the Rubistar website and demonstrate how easy and quick it is to create a rubric. Then, have participants use the URL on the slide to explore the site on their own.

Presenter's Note

Participants can get in small groups, based on content area or grade level, and begin creating rubrics they could use for specific lessons they currently teach.

If time allows, have participants pick a lesson they believe might benefit from the use of a rubric. Create and develop a rubric using the website and the tools from the Rubrics Traditional vs Authentic handout. As participants work to create their own rubrics for a lesson, walk around and help those with questions.

Evaluate

Presenter's Note

TREK evaluations will be used in place of the evaluation activity when available. If you don't have access to a TREK evaluation, continue with the activity below.

To wrap up the session, go to **slide 16** and have participants individually use the 3-2-1 strategy. Participants will write three things they learned from this session, two questions they still have about writing/creating rubrics, and one lesson that lends itself to the use of a rubric.

Presenter's Note

The 3-2-1 strategy is a great closing strategy. It can be used as an exit ticket and an evaluation tool.

At the end of the session, if time allows, participants may share out one of their two questions. This provides an opportunity for you, as the presenter, to clear up any misunderstandings or misconceptions about authentic rubrics. It also provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their learning.

Finally, remind participants to finish filling out the Instructional Strategies Note Sheet if they haven't already done so. Explain that this will be a great reference tool for planning lessons once they are back in the classroom.

Follow-up Activities

Presenter's Note: Follow-Up

Anywhere from a week to a month after the session, schedule and host an informal reflection with small groups of participants who attended the formal professional development session (this can be one session with all participants or multiple sessions with different participants each time). These follow-up sessions can be held during a PLC or teacher-planning period since they are to be short and informal.

To begin the follow-up session, display **slide 17** from the **Presentation Slides**. Transition to **slide 18** and ask participants to jot down notes from their experiences using one of the strategies in a lesson. The SCORE questions on the slide will help guide the discussion. Ask each question and allow each attendee a moment to share about the strategy they used and their experience with how it went.

Encourage attendees to try a different strategy next time and continue to follow up with each participant if you can, as this will create a safe environment of accountability.

Research Rationale

Rubrics are used for assessing student performance on authentic learning tasks. They allow for student ownership and empowerment. Rubrics challenge learners to focus on knowledge that could be applied in a real-world environment. This ownership and empowerment can lead to higher levels of engagement and participation, which can lead to more motivation to attend school. Attendance is imperative to academic success for career or college readiness, and rubrics for authentic assessment support this aspect of college readiness (Reimer and Smink, 2005).

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5059a7b
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- Lombardi, M. M. (2008, January). Making the grade: The role of assessment in authentic learning (ELI Paper 1: 2008). EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative. https://library.educause.edu/~/media/files/library/2008/1/eli3019-pdf.pdf
- McTighe, T., & O'Conner, K. (2005, November). Seven practices for effective learning. Educational Leadership, 63(3), 10-17.
- Reimer, J., & Smink, M.S. (2005). Fifteen effective strategies for improving student attendance and truancy prevention. National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.