

Chapter 6

Effective Use of Rubrics in Student Evaluation: Best Practice E-Portfolios

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ABSTRACT

This chapter clarifies first a number of concepts such as evaluation, traditional evaluation methods, alternative evaluation methods, process-centered evaluation, and evaluation of student progress and portfolios as an alternative evaluation method. The authors will approach the concept of rubrics as a very useful evaluation tool, highlighting design and exemplification ways for some more commonly used evaluation methods. Their advantages and disadvantages will be analyzed. After taking into consideration the most important issues and controversies, the authors will analyze an example of good practice, namely the use of rubrics in the evaluation of students with the help of e-portfolios, as an alternative method of evaluation. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to discussions and recommendations for using rubrics in evaluation. Aspects regarding the usefulness, but also the limits of the instrument, as well as ways of further development, will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

One of the students' main concerns is the grade they obtain. The first meeting with students is often marked by their desire to know how they will be assessed and how they can get the maximum or sometimes the minimum grade. This student concern is a problem that teachers must address to help students meet personal goals and expectations, as well as the subject's goals or competencies.

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Effective Use of Rubrics in Student Evaluation

In this context, evaluation methods and tools must be clearly indicated at the beginning of the courses, as they offer a guide and formative support for students. Furthermore, discussing the proposed rubrics for the main evaluation method in conjunction with the presentation of the syllabus offers greater opportunities for structured, clear, and comprehensive learning. The presentation and discussion of rubrics and the choice of an evaluation method focused on the student's learning process (e.g., portfolio, project) offer the definite advantage of continuous, formative feedback capable of leading the student to in-depth learning.

This chapter proposes the following:

The background clarifies a number of concepts such as evaluation, traditional evaluation methods, alternative evaluation methods, process-centered evaluation, evaluation of student progress, and portfolios as alternative evaluation methods.

The Student Evaluation Using Rubrics contains two parts: *Rubric Design and Implementation* which approaches the concept of rubrics as a very useful evaluation tool, highlighting design and exemplification ways for some more commonly used evaluation methods. Their advantages and disadvantages are also analyzed and *Using Rubrics with e-Portfolios to Enhance Learning* in which an example of good practice, the use of rubrics in evaluating students with the help of e-portfolios as an alternative evaluation method is analyzed. Step by step, the authors highlight the way to build and implement rubrics for computer-assisted training (a compulsory subject in the students' curriculum for students preparing for a teaching career).

The last part of the paper is dedicated to the *discussions and recommendations* as a result of using rubrics in evaluations. Aspects regarding the usefulness and the limits of the instrument, as well as ways of further development, are discussed.

BACKGROUND

Evaluation is the "activity by which information is collected, processed, and interpreted, regarding the condition and operation of a system and the results obtained, the activity that leads to its evaluation based on some criteria and influences the evolution of the system" (Radu, 2000, p. 18). Similarly, evaluation is regarded as the systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to assess the worth, value, or effectiveness of a program, project, policy, product, or process. It involves making judgments about the quality, relevance, efficiency, and impact of the subject being evaluated. The goal of evaluation is to provide evidence-based insights and recommendations for decision-making, improvement, and accountability (Patton, M. Q., 2008).

Evaluation is the process of determining the extent to which intended outcomes are achieved and the factors contributing to the results. It involves gathering data, assessing progress, and making informed judgments about the merit, worth, and significance of a program or intervention. Evaluation helps stakeholders understand the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability of the initiative and informs future planning and decision-making. (Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E., 2004).

Numerous terms are used to describe different types and approaches to learning evaluation. Different authors (e.g., Scriven, 1991; Manolescu, 2005; McAlpine, 2002; Radu, 2000; Stoica, 2003) analyze the following: formative (it is a continuous process) versus summative evaluation (at the end of a training sequence), informal (performed in a familiar context, without a stake, is a current assessment) versus formal (assessment context is formal, certifying, or external evaluation), and process (focuses on the learning process) versus product (aims at evaluating the products of the activity).

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