

TechMatters: Creating Online Rubrics with ForAllRubrics

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Instruction librarians teach a wide variety of classes, from single shot sessions to semester-long, for-credit courses. Regardless of the type, we get especially excited, and challenged, when library instruction allows for a formal assessment component, as students are more likely to pay attention to material for which there is a grade or a score. But with this power to evaluate students' written assignments and other class work comes great responsibility; we need to be sure we evaluate in a fair and understandable manner. A useful tool to aid in a fair grading process is the rubric, which lays out the assessment criteria and standards we will use to judge the quality of the work.

We use rubrics because they allow us to share our performance expectations with students up front, and then help us to evaluate their resulting work in a more objective and consistent manner. When well-formulated, rubrics can improve the feedback that we provide to students, making it easier for them to identify the areas of strength and weakness in their output. Developing effective rubrics is a skill in and of itself, and one that is beyond the scope of this article. If you are looking for a starting place to find more information and guidance on how to create and construct a quality rubric, I have provided a couple of options in the "Resources" section at the end of this article.

Once you know how to create a rubric, the next challenge is what tool to use to create it: Excel, Word, Google Docs and even pen and paper are some of the most commonly used. But none of these are designed explicitly for rubric creation and analysis of its resulting scores. What we will look at in this article is ForAllRubrics (<https://www.forallrubrics.com/>), a tool for creating online rubrics that can be accessed and used from a variety of devices (including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones) to evaluate student work, share assessments, and analyze student performance.

Getting Started

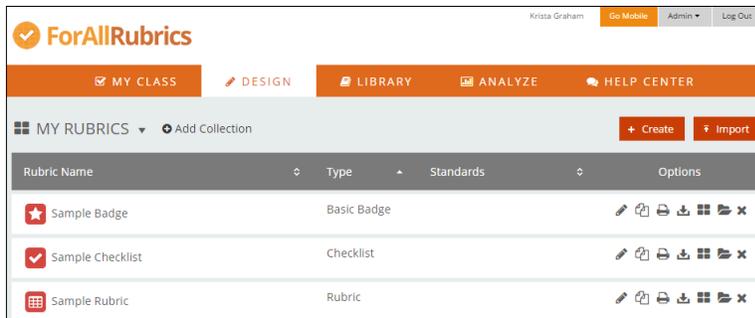
ForAllRubrics is free to use for individual teachers and their students, just requiring an account to be setup for access. To sign up, you must provide your name, school or organization, email address, and create a password. Alternately, you can sign in with your Google account. Once logged in, you will find on the welcome page links to brief tutorials to help you get oriented to the tool and how it works. Also, while ForAllRubrics works in any browser, it works best in either Chrome or Safari, so use those browsers if reasonably possible.

Creating a Rubric

To start developing your rubric, select the "Design" option from the main navigation bar (see Figure 1). Then, if you plan to start building your rubric manually, choose the "Create" button.

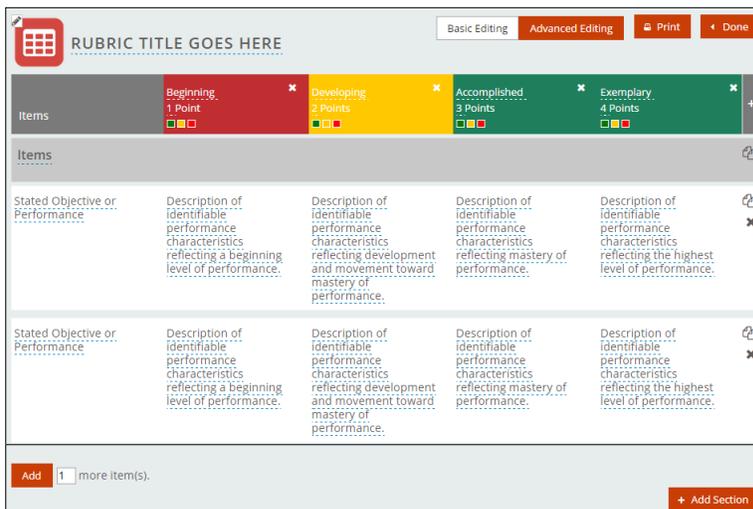
You will then be presented with three options for how you want to score student work: rubric, checklist, or basic badge.

Figure 1: Create and edit rubrics in the "Design" section



For a classic grid-based rubric, choose "Rubric", and you will be taken to a generic template (see Figure 2) that you can then start to edit by customizing the title, performance objectives, as well as criteria and points assigned to each to each item. Alternately, you can import a rubric from an Excel file, but it must be formatted according to a template provided by ForAllRubrics. The software lets you determine which level denotes that the student "accomplished" an objective through a color code scheme that you assign to each column: anything red and yellow is not accomplished ("Beginning" and "Developing" in Figure 2), while anything green is ("Accomplished" and "Exemplary").

Figure 2: Blank rubric template for editing and customization



Once your rubric is complete, you can easily download a PDF copy or print it out to share with your students. Of course, the real power of the application lies in the ability to use the online version of the rubric to complete and store your assessment directly online.

Setting Up a Class

If you plan on using the online version of your rubric(s) to evaluate student performance, you first need to input student information into the application. Assuming you intend to reuse

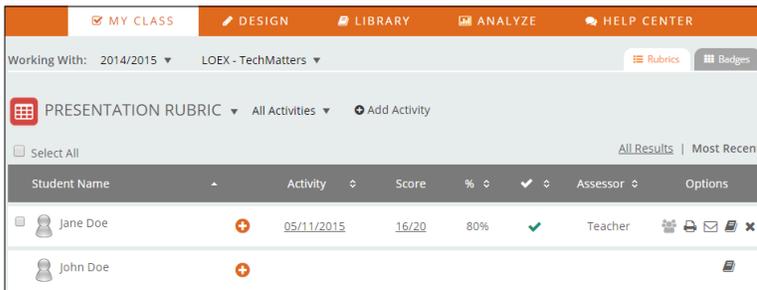
your rubrics, your best option will be to create a class roster. To do so, navigate to the drop down “Admin” menu in the upper right-hand corner of the site, and select “Manage Students”. Next, click on the “Add Class” link and provide a name for your course. Once you have created a class, you can add students manually or upload your roster using an Excel template provided by ForAllRubrics. The only information required to add a student is a name.

Alternately, you can have students sign-up for their own accounts by providing them with a system generated class code or link. The advantage of requiring students to create their own accounts is that they can then login to view the feedback that you provide from within the application.

Using the Rubric to Assess Students

In order to assess your students using your online rubric, navigate to the “My Class” section of the site (see Figure 3). Use the drop-down menus to select a class (e.g., “LOEX – TechMatters”) and a rubric (e.g., “Presentation Rubric”), and then press the orange “+” button next to the name of the student you wish to assess. This will bring up a blank rubric copy.

Figure 3: Instructor can select rubrics and students to assess, as well as view assessment results for each student



Once you have the rubric template you need, you score the student’s work by simply clicking on the appropriate box in the rubric (see Figure 4). As you make your selections, the overall score will be tallied automatically. To add additional comments for a section (e.g., “Content” in Figure 4) click on the comment icon. Doing so will bring up a comment box that you can populate with any additional feedback that you wish to provide.

When your grading is complete, you have the option to publish, print, or email in order to share results with students. If you wish to allow students to view their results online, you need to “publish” the scored rubric(s) which you can do from the “My Class” screen. Until you do so, the results are not available to be viewed when students login to their accounts. Alternately, you can email full versions of the completed rubrics to your students, or print them out to distribute in class.

Going Mobile

The “mobile” version of the ForAllRubrics site is actually web-based version that allows you to work offline. To access it, you click on the “Go Mobile” button in the upper-right-hand corner of the application. This will take you to a “mobile apps” page from which you can follow a link to “Go Offline in Your Web Browser”. You can actually do this from any device that

Figure 4: Dark grey boxes indicate assessment level assigned to each of the criteria for a specific student

Items	Beginning (1 Point)	Developing (2 Points)	Accomplished (3 Points)	Exemplary (4 Points)
Content	Thesis is not clear; information included that does not support thesis in any way	Presentation contains a great deal of information that is not clearly connected to the thesis	Sufficient information that relates to thesis; many good points made but there is an uneven balance and little variation	Material presented clearly relates to topic; points are clearly made and all evidence supports thesis; varied use of materials
Organization	Presentation is choppy and disjointed; does not flow; development of thesis is vague; no apparent logical order of presentation	Concepts and ideas are loosely connected; lacks clear transitions; flow and organization are choppy	Most information presented in logical sequence; generally very well organized but better transitions from idea to idea are needed	This is clearly stated and developed; specific examples are appropriate and clearly develop thesis; conclusion is clear; good transitions; well organized

has the Chrome or Safari web browser on it, including smartphones, tablets, and laptops. When you do so, the content from the full version of your site is synced to the device. Following synchronization, you can access your class lists and rubrics and use them to assess student work on that device regardless of whether you have an internet connection. When you are ready (and connected to the Internet), you simply sync your work back to your web account and the updated assessments will appear in the online version where they can be edited and/or shared in all the standard ways.

Statistics & Reports

From the “Analyze” tab on the main menu, you can access a variety of reports to help you assess student progress. ForAllRubrics provides a variety of preset reports that allow you to view and/or aggregate result by item, student, and/or class. You can also download assessment results should you wish to do your own analysis using another software application, such as Excel.

Rubric Library

If you need some inspiration when developing a rubric(s), ForAllRubrics provides the option to consult a library of rubrics created by other users and shared via a Creative Commons license. To access these resources, select “Library” from the main menu. From that point, you may either browse the rubrics, or search for a topic. When you identify a rubric you are interested in using, you can add it to your collection using the “Copy Rubric” button. Once added, you may edit and use the rubric just as you would with any you authored yourself.

If you wish to contribute to the Creative Commons library, you do so by first assigning your rubric(s) to a “Collection” you create (e.g., English 100), an option that you will find in the “Design” section of the site. Navigate to that Collection’s page, where you will find a “Share With” link. Choose “World (Creative Commons License)” from the drop-down menu, and your rubric will appear in the Library for others to use.

Conclusion

If you use, or plan to use, rubrics to assess student perfor-

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We are also using a range of response actions, which are the ways that students record their answers to the questions. We're taking advantage of the newest browser capabilities to create interactivity (like selecting text and moving items on the screen) that we believe will increase students' engagement with the test.

At the same time, we're keeping an eye on accessibility. We have spoken with an assistive technology specialist and students with vision impairments to learn about the current state of educational technology. And as we developed item prototypes, we returned to these consultants to learn more about how the items worked with common assistive software and how students with different skills and challenges perceived the items. We have also found guidance in the growing literature about accessibility and computer-based testing. Two sources with useful advice:

- Almond, P. et al. (2010). Technology-enabled and universally designed assessment: Considering access in measuring the achievement of students with disabilities—A foundation for research. *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, 10(5).
- Dolan, R. P et al. (2013). *A universal design for learning-based framework for designing accessible technology-enhanced assessments*. http://images.pearsonclinical.com/images/tmrs/DolanUDL-TEAFramework_final3.pdf

For content of the items, our advisory board members drew from the Framework and research about learners' information literacy development, like the [Project Information Literacy](#) reports. We collaborated to compile a list of learning outcomes, dispositions, performance indicators, and research scenario topics that our test-item writers use. These allow us to ask questions that are relevant across students' varied experiences and environments. The test items require students to demonstrate their knowledge, dispositions, critical thinking, and problem solving.

What would your advice to librarians be with respect to assessing information literacy initiatives through the new lens of the Framework?

The Framework challenges us to think in new ways about students' development of information literacy practices and dispositions. It reinforces what most of us have believed for a long time, which is that information literacy is a powerful set of skills and values for students to develop not for its own sake but for the ways that it facilitates learners' participation in discourse

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mance, I would urge you to give this tool a try. Although you still need to do the intellectual work of identifying and establishing the criteria and standards that meet your assessment goals, this tool makes the process of constructing and then using the resulting rubric to evaluate student learning a snap. It eliminates formula errors that you might make in Excel, and after grading is complete, ForAllRubrics makes it easy to share well-formatted feedback with students, as well as to analyze the trends in student performance. Overall, it has the potential

communities. Acknowledging that learning is not a solitary activity but that we still work within an educational system that prioritizes evidence of individual achievement, my advice is to try out a variety of approaches to assessment. This way, you can do assessments that not only inform your own instruction but can also provide insight into student learning that will be relevant at the institutional level and influence decisions and instructional approaches across campus. That often means something as simple as making sure to collect student ID numbers along with evidence of their learning so that you can relate their results to other data that the institution collects about their educational experiences. Or something as complex as re-envisioning the instruction program so that students engage in emerging forms of information creation as well as information use, or getting a seat at the table when institutional learning outcomes are being defined/revised/assessed so that you can influence them in the direction of the Framework. A test like the Threshold Achievement Test of Information Literacy should be just one tool in a full array of assessment techniques.

It is hard to see into the future, but what might be your best guess as to the impact of Carrick Enterprises' efforts in the area of outcomes assessment using the new Threshold Achievement Test of Information Literacy?

Even for librarians at institutions that won't choose to use our new test right away, the work the advisory board has done to define the information literacy construct will be valuable. When they are complete, we will share the outcomes and performance indicators that we have written. These will be an asset to the profession as we work in the coming years to make meaning from the Framework in our own educational practices.

For institutions that do use the new test, the results will provide new evidence to consider internally when making decisions about the library's instruction as well as results to share with institutional leaders. Tests like this one allow educators to consider their students' performance in comparison with the results of students at other institutions. As long as the circumstances under which the assessments are administered are similar, this comparison can inspire new collaborations. Because of my close ties to our nearest popular transfer institution, Cal State San Marcos, I'm interested in how the results of a test like ours could facilitate research about the skills of transfer students and help us to make decisions that will make them even more successful when they begin their upper division courses.

to be a very useful tool for instruction librarians teaching classes where they intend to assign and formally evaluate student work.

Additional Resources

- Brookhart, S. M. (2013). *How to create and use rubrics for formative assessment and grading*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Stevens, D. D., & Levi, A. J. (2011). *Introduction to rubrics: An assessment tool to save grading time, convey effective feedback, and promote student learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.