



# Grading in the Humanities and Social Sciences

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# Introduction Activity

**Why choose this workshop?**

What is your department?

What class are you teaching?

What are your challenges and concerns about grading?

**What are three things you know about the topic?**



# Workshop Objectives

- 1) Examine the dual role of assessment in courses
- 2) Develop criteria and standards for grading
- 3) Identify strategies to deal with Plagiarism



# The Dual Role of Assessment

- **Summative** – *what* have they achieved in terms of learning outcomes (milestones, domain knowledge)
- **Formative** – *how* are they learning (meta-cognition, critical thinking, feedback, self-evaluation)



# Summative Strategies

**Give some examples of summative assessments that apply to your field. (Hint: think about the learning outcomes of one of your courses)**



# Formative Strategies

- 1. Clarify what good performance is**
2. Facilitate self-assessment
- 3. Deliver high-quality feedback information**
4. Encourage teacher and peer dialogue
- 5. Encourage positive motivation and self esteem**
6. Provide opportunities to close the gap
- 7. Use feedback to improve teaching**

Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in higher education, 31*(2), 199-218.



# Formative Strategies

**Give some examples of formative assessments that apply to your field. (Hint: how would you help someone move towards the learning outcomes)**



# Establishing Criteria & Standards for Grading

- Criteria (minimum requirements)
- Standards (levels of performance)



# What is a Rubric?

A tool for assessment

## Why are they important?

- ✓ Scoring “rules”
- ✓ Make assessment transparent
- ✓ Guide students in bringing their work to a higher standard

# Undergraduate-Level Writing Rubric

	Masterful (A, A-/3.7-4.0/80-100%)	Skilled (B+, B/3.0-3.3/70-79%)	Able (B-/2.7/65-69%)	Developing (C+, C/2.0-2.3/55-64%)	Novice (D, F/0-1.0/0-54%)
Thesis (Ideas)	Engaging and full development of a clear thesis as appropriate to assignment purpose.	Competent and well-developed thesis; thesis represents sound and adequate understanding of assigned topic.	Mostly intelligible ideas; thesis is weak, unclear, too broad, or indirect.	Mostly simplistic and unfocused ideas; little or no sense of purpose to control thesis.	Ideas are extremely simplistic, showing confusion or misunderstanding of the topic; thesis is missing or undiscernible.
Content (Support/ Evidence)	Consistent evidence with originality and depth of use; content works together as a unified whole; main points are supported with valid and specific evidence.	Ideas supported sufficiently; support is sound, valid, and logical.	Main points and ideas are indirectly supported; support isn't sufficient or specific, but is loosely relevant.	Insufficient; non-specific, and/or irrelevant support.	Lack of support for main points; frequent and illogical generalizations without support.
Structure/ Organization	Organization is sequential and appropriate to assignment; paragraphs are well developed and appropriately divided; ideas linked with smooth and effective transitions.	Competent organization, without sophistication. Competent paragraph structure; lacking in effective transitions.	Limited attempts to organize around a thesis; paragraphs are mostly stand-alones with weak or non-evident transitions.	Organization, while attempted, was unsuccessful. Paragraphs were simple, disconnected and formulaic. No evident transitions or planned sequence.	Organization, if evident at all, is confusing and disjointed; paragraph structure is weak; transitions are missing, inappropriate and/or illogical.
Tone (Audience/ Point of View)	Clear discernment of distinct audience; tone and point-of-view appropriate to the assignment.	Effective and accurate awareness of general audience; tone and point-of-view satisfactory.	Little or inconsistent sense of audience related to assignment purpose; tone and point-of-view not refined or consistent.	Shows almost no awareness of a particular audience; reveals no grasp of appropriate tone or point-of-view for given assignment.	Lacks awareness of an audience particular to assignment; tone and point-of-view inappropriate or very inconsistent.



# How might the use of rubrics benefit students?

- ✓ Exposes the hidden mental processes that the learner needs to use to understand the subject or discipline
- ✓ Fosters higher level thinking
- ✓ Allows students to become more deeply involved in the writing process and therefore in their own learning
- ✓ Helps students evaluate their own work
- ✓ Helps students give each other constructive feedback



# How might rubrics benefit the teacher?

- ✓ Defines your expectations
- ✓ Provides feedback to instructor on students' strengths & weaknesses
- ✓ Saves time overall
- ✓ Fosters consistency and fairness
  - ✓ Increases the consistency in grading among multiple graders
  - ✓ Helps colleagues reach agreement on common goals
- ✓ Supports instructor if/when students question their grade



# Group Activity: Assessment of Academic Paper

1. Form groups of 3 to 4.
2. Each group will develop one criteria and the description of the various levels of performance for that same criteria.

# Rubric for Article Critique

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NOT SATISFACTORY
I: Summary	The main themes and relevant information of the article are identified and presented in concise way.	Some of the main themes and relevant information of the article are identified and presented in concise way.	The abstract of the article written by the authors is rephrased.
II: Analysis	Demonstrates a deeper understanding of the overall meaning of the article (s) and its connection with the concepts of the course.	Demonstrates a complete understanding of the overall meaning of the article and its connection with some of the concepts of the course.	Demonstrates a lack of effort for understanding the overall meaning of the article and its connection with the concepts of the course.
III: Conclusion	A logical conclusion is drawn from the critical analysis, and precise recommendations made on how to improve the study.	Conclusion is logical but may not be completely related to the analysis. Incomplete recommendations are made on how to improve the study.	Conclusion is vague and unrelated to the critical analysis; Conclusions are too general to be useful. Recommendations to improve the study are unrelated to the critical analysis, and/or are too vague to be useful.



# Grading Bias

- Develop an ability to assess the work as distinct from the student
- Develop an awareness of cultural issues; however, try not to make assumptions about a student based on his/her cultural group.

**What are some potential biases?**



# Plagiarism

*1.9 “Plagiarism” means the representation of another’s work, published or unpublished, as one’s own or assisting another in representing another’s work, published or unpublished, as his or her own. (Conduct of Research Regulation, McGill)*

# Some Facts of Plagiarism in McGill

Decision	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Exonerated	55	60	57
Admonished	115	126	123
Reprimand	-	-	1
Totals	170	186	181

## Admonished:

- Failed paper, assignment, exam
- Placed on conduct probation
- Partial grade for paper, assignment, exam



# Plagiarism – what indications are there?

- Changes/irregularities in writing style
- Incorrect citation
- Self-plagiarism
- Social media
- Close collaboration



# Plagiarism – how can you stop it?

- There is no assignments that can't be plagiarized
- Education – talk about plagiarism (or ask your prof to)
  - Mini (formative) assignments on proper citation, paraphrasing
- Online checkers – with caution



# Tips and Tricks

- Review rubric with students (when possible)
- When writing comments ‘pick your battles’
- Give examples (good and bad)
- Mark with your ‘boss’ or other TAs

**For those who have graded before, what are your tips?**



# Resources

**Fair Play Website - McGill (Integrity for Undergraduates)**

<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/students>

**Regulation on the conduct of research - McGill**

<https://www.mcgill.ca/research/files/research/conduct-of-research-regulation-on.pdf>

**Annual Report on Student Discipline - McGill**

<https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/disciplinary/annual-report>

**Website on dealing with plagiarism**

<http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts/>

**Article on plagiarism checker limitations**

<https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2011/12/07/the-limitation-of-every-plagiarism-checker/>



# Many thanks for attending this session!

## Acknowledgements:

- Dianne Bateman and Carolyn Samuel
- Alexander DeGuise
- Holly Garnet
- Mitchell Brown