

Rubric-Referenced Self-Assessment

Why Is This Strategy Useful?

The literature on self-regulated learning and feedback suggests that learning improves when feedback reminds students of the need to monitor their learning and guides them in achieving learning objectives. Instructional rubrics and self-assessment have the potential to support learning and skill development. This strategy can be useful for all students.

Description of Strategy

Rubric-referenced self-assessment is based on the hypothesis that students themselves can be the source of feedback, given the appropriate conditions and supports. Students are given instructional rubrics that describe good and poor writing. The term "instructional rubrics" refers to rubrics designed to support student learning and development, in addition to serving as standards-referenced assessment tools. Instructional rubrics have several features that support student learning. They are written in language that students can understand; they refer to common weaknesses in students' work and indicate how such weaknesses can be avoided; and they can be used by students to evaluate their works in progress and can thereby guide revision and improvement.

Research Evidence

One quasi-experimental study conducted with 397 seventh- and eighth-graders in two middle schools in Southern California examined the impact of self-assessment on students' written essays. Students wrote two essays: a historical fiction essay and a response-to-literature essay. All students received instructional rubrics that identified the criteria and gradations of quality for the given essay. Students in the treatment group participated in two formal self-assessment lessons, during which they used the rubrics to assess the quality of their drafts. The results showed positive results for girls in the treatment group but not for boys on a historical fiction essay. Results were not significant for the treatment group on a literature essay. The results are explained in terms of the fidelity of the intervention, as well as the possible effects of rubrics, school conditions, and gender differences in response to self-generated feedback.

Sample Studies Supporting This Strategy

Goodrich-Andrade, H., & Boulay, B. A. (2003). Role of rubric-referenced self-assessment in learning to write. *Journal of Educational Research*, 97(1), 21–34.

The authors examined the impact of self-assessment on 7th- and 8th-grade students' written essays. Students wrote two essays: a historical fiction essay and a response to literature essay. All students received instructional rubrics that articulated the criteria and gradations of quality for the given essay. Students in the treatment group participated in two formal self-assessment lessons, during which they used the rubric to assess the quality of their drafts. Authors used multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between essay scores, treatment, and a set of control predictors. The results from the historical fiction essay suggested a positive relationship between the treatment and girls'

scores, but no statistically significant relationship between the treatment and boys' scores. The results from the response to literature essay showed no effect of treatment for either boys or girls. The results are explained in terms of the insufficiency of the intervention, as well as the possible effects of rubrics, school conditions, and gender differences in response to self-generated feedback.

Sample Activity

(Source: Rubrics and self assessment project. <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/Research/RubricsSelfHF.htm>)

Persuasive Essay Rubric Heidi Goodrich Andrade, Project Zero				
Criteria	4	3	2	1
The claim	I make a claim and explain why it is controversial.	I make a claim but don't explain why it is controversial.	My claim is buried, confused and/or unclear.	I don't say what my argument or claim is.
Reasons in support of the claim	I give clear and accurate reasons in support of my claim.	I give reasons in support of my claim but I may overlook important reasons.	I give 1 or 2 weak reasons that don't support my claim and/or irrelevant or confusing reasons.	I do not give convincing reasons in support of my claim.
Reasons against the claim	I discuss the reasons against my claim and explain why it is valid anyway.	I discuss the reasons against my claim but leave some reasons out and/or don't explain why the claim still stands.	I say that there are reasons against the claim but I don't discuss them.	I do not acknowledge or discuss the reasons against the claim.
Organization	My writing has a compelling opening, an informative middle and a satisfying conclusion.	My writing has a beginning, middle and end. It marches along but doesn't dance.	My writing is organized but sometimes gets off topic.	My writing is aimless and disorganized.
Voice and tone	It sounds like I care about my argument. I show how I think and feel about it.	My tone is OK but my paper could have been written by anyone. I need to tell more about how I think and feel.	My writing is bland or pretentious. There is either no hint of a real person in it or it sounds like I'm a fake.	My writing is too formal or too informal. It sounds like I don't like the topic of the essay.
Word choice	The words I use are striking but natural, varied and vivid.	I make routine word choices.	The words I use are often dull or uninspired or sound like I am trying too hard to impress.	I use the same words over and over and over and over. Some words may be confusing to a reader.
Sentence fluency	My sentences are clear, complete, and of varying lengths.	I have well-constructed sentences.	My sentences are sometimes awkward, and/or contain run-ons and fragments.	Many run-ons, fragments and awkward phrasings make my essay hard to read.
Conventions	I use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	I generally use correct conventions. I have a couple of errors I should fix.	I have enough errors in my essay to distract a reader.	Numerous errors make my paper hard to read.

Additional Resources

Rubrics and self assessment project. <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/Research/RubricSelf.htm>