



McGill

# Grading in the Humanities and Social Sciences

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TLS

# Opening Activity



- What is your department?
- What is something you know about the topic?
- What are your challenges and concerns about grading?

# Workshop Objectives



- Examine the dual role of assessment in courses
- Develop criteria and standards for grading
- Identify strategies to deal with plagiarism



# THE DUAL ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN COURSES



# What is Assessment?

# The Dual Role of Assessment



- **Summative:** What have students achieved in terms of learning outcomes (milestones, domain of knowledge, high-stakes).
- **Formative:** How are students learning (metacognition, critical thinking, self-evaluation, feedback, low-stakes).

# Summative Strategies



What are some examples of summative assessments that apply to your field?

Hint: Think about the learning outcomes of one of your courses

# Formative Strategies



- Clarify what good performance is
- Facilitate self-assessment
- Deliver high-quality feedback information
- Encourage teacher and peer dialogue
- Encourage positive motivation / self-esteem
- Provide opportunities to close the gap
- 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



What are some examples of formative assessments that apply to your field?

Hint: How would you help someone move toward the learning outcomes?

# Examples of Assessments



Formative	Summative
In-class discussions	Instructor-created exams
Clicker/polling questions	Standardized tests
Low-stakes group work	Final projects
Weekly quizzes	Final essays / papers
1-min paper / reflection	Final presentations
Homework assignments	Final reports
Surveys	Final grades

Adapted from: Yale Center for Teaching and Learning. 2018. *Formative and Summative Assessment*. Retrieved from: <https://ctl.yale.edu/Formative-Summative-Assessments>



# **CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR GRADING**

# Establishing Criteria & Standards



## Criteria

- Minimum Requirements

## Standards

- Levels of Performance

# Criteria & Standards



- What is a rubric?
  - A tool for assessment
- Why are rubrics important?
  - Rules for ‘scoring’
  - Transparency
  - Guide for students in bringing their work to a high(er) standard

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Overall Impression</b>	Author directly addresses main question or issue, and adds new insight to the subject not provided in lectures, readings, or class discussions. The author has retained nearly all of the knowledge presented in class. They are able to synthesize this knowledge in new ways and relate to material not covered in the course.	Author competently addresses main question or issue, but does not add much new insight into the subject. That said, it is clear that the author has learned a great deal in class and is able to communicate this knowledge to others.	Author attempts to address main question or issue, but fails. The author has retained some information from the course, but does not fully understand its meaning or context and cannot clearly convey it to others.	Essay does NOT address main question or issue, and it is obvious that author has not retained any information from the course.
<b>Argument</b>	Essay contains a clear argument—i.e., lets the reader know exactly what the author is trying to communicate.	An argument is present, but reader must reconstruct it from the text.	Author attempts, but fails, to make an argument (e.g., starts with a rhetorical question/statement or anecdote that is never put into context).	No attempt is made to articulate an argument.
<b>Evidence</b>	Provides compelling and accurate evidence that convinces reader to accept main argument. The importance/relevance of all pieces of evidence is clearly stated. There are no gaps in reasoning—i.e., the reader does not need to assume anything or do additional research to accept main argument.	Provides necessary evidence to convince reader of most aspects of the main argument but not all. The importance/relevance of some evidence presented may not be totally clear. Reader must make a few mental leaps or do some additional research to fully accept all aspects of main argument.	Not enough evidence is provided to support author's argument, or evidence is incomplete, incorrect, or oversimplified. Information from lectures and readings is not effectively used.	Either no evidence is provided, or there are numerous factual mistakes, omissions or oversimplifications. There is little or no mention of information from lectures and readings.

# Developing a Rubric



1. Define the goal and purpose of the task that is being evaluated
2. Decide what kind of rubric to use
3. Define the criteria
4. Define the levels of performance
5. Write descriptions for each performance level of the rating scale
6. Test the rubric, revise, and put it into practice

# How might the use of rubrics benefit students?



- Makes explicit the 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 learning process
- Helps students evaluate their own work
- Helps students give each other constructive feedback

# How might the use of rubrics benefit instructors?



- Defines expectations
- Provides feedback to instructor on students' strengths & weaknesses
- Saves overall time
- Fosters consistency and fairness
  - Increases consistency across multiple graders
  - Helps colleagues reach agreement on common goals
- Supports instructor if/when students have questions about their grade(s)

# Assessment of an Academic Paper Activity!



## Instructions:

- Form groups of 3 to 4
- 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 your ability to assess the work as distinct from the student
- Develop your awareness of culture issues and avoid making cultural assumptions

**What are some potential biases?**



# Academic Integrity

# Plagiarism



According to the McGill *Regulation on the Conduct of Research...*

“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.

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

# Possible Indicators



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

# Stopping Plagiarism



- There is no assignment that cannot be plagiarized
- Education – talk about plagiarism
- Formative assignments on proper citation or paraphrasing are a good strategy

# Tips



- Review your rubric with your students
- Write comments on assignments, but ‘pick your battles’
- Give your students examples of good and bad assignments
- Mark with other TAs or with the instructor

**What are some other tips?**

# Resources



Fair Play – A Guide to Academic Integrity

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

Academic Integrity – Office of the Dean of Students

<https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/students/student-rights-responsibilities/integrity>

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/>

Article on plagiarism checker limitations

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



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