

University of Houston-Clear Lake
Office of Planning and Assessment
Report from the Reading Team Summer Workgroup

Goal: To test and determine effectiveness of core objective rubrics

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Summer Work Activities

In its first meeting, the Reading Team Workgroup reviewed the rubrics and discussed the available artifacts to be assessed. It agreed to test the Communication and Critical Thinking rubrics in stand-alone reading sessions.

The Reading Team Workgroup (8 faculty) met twice to test the Communication (COM) Rubric. Additionally, volunteers were recruited (10 faculty) to test the Critical Thinking (CT) Rubric. Each session involved a brief review of rubrics in general and how assessment is different from grading, a discussion of the rubric itself, and a short norming session. Each session also worked to identify any issues with the rubric or its application.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, it was determined that the COM and CT rubrics are useful and have great potential to be adaptable to many different artifacts from many different course types. From testing both rubrics, it became obvious that some information about the assignment will be necessary. For example, if the artifact is an article review, it may be important to know that the article is a media article and not an article from a scientific journal. There were also several terms that were found to be confusing, which should be addressed in an Interpretation Guide. With minor edits and an Interpretation Guide, the tested rubrics should function well.

The Communication Rubric was tested in a 4 point and 3/6 point (3 labels but two levels of each label) version. The two versions had different trends when comparing labels and ratios. The 4-point rubric resulted in a mean of "Acceptable" or above less often. However, when comparing ratios, the 4-point had slight inflation. For the 3/6-point rubric, the variance was larger for SLO 1 (Context) and SLO 2 (Central thesis). For the 4-point rubric, the variance was larger for SLO 3 (Organization) and somewhat SLO 2 (Central thesis). The terms and statements from these SLO's likely need some clarification. For instance, SLO 2 includes the qualification of the thesis being understandable and repeated. How often does it need to be repeated for each level? For SLO 1, the assignment details may help guide interpretation of level of consideration of context and audience needs. For example, one paper was a letter format but included references. Was that a result of instructions or should the paper have been either formal or informal? SLO 5 also needs to be edited to include the grammar elements so it can be applied to a written artifact. From the comparison, it was determined that the 4 point rubric allowed for more details to clearly differentiate between levels and thus the 4 point rubric would provide better data to focus the continuous improvement.

The Critical Thinking Rubric was tested only in a 4-point version. For this rubric, the highest variance was on SLO 2 (Assumptions and Context) and SLO 3 (Information and Evidence). These two were cited as the most difficult to assess given the varying interpretations of the term context and the potential overlap with other SLO's. An Interpretation Guide should address context as well as clearly identifying how each SLO is distinct. The VALUE rubric uses assumptions and context together and contains a definition of context that may be helpful. SLO 5 (Creativity) was discussed as harder to assess in some assignments as to whether it was not required or is missing, but if not required it would be unlikely to be chosen by the Instructor. SLO 1 (Point of View) was also discussed in terms of whether all assignments would require the student to take a direct point of view, or if it might be requiring only the point of view of another. Those details would be made clear with the assignment information.

Future Work

The CCAC will need to discuss the proposed change in labels and finalize the rubrics. The Personal Responsibility (PR) work group revised and tested the PR rubric. Three Mathematics Faculty tested the Empirical and Quantitative rubric. However, Teamwork and Social Responsibility still need to be tested. Additionally, the feedback from all rubrics needs to be addressed. The CCAC will also need to use the feedback to develop the Interpretation Guides. Additionally, an Assignment Template will be needed to collect the relevant assignment information from Instructors.