

## **Rubric Basics**

"Rubrics are a critical and vital link between assessment and instruction. They operationalize quality in our minds so we can more effectively teach and lead."  
Alan D. Rowe

## **What is a rubric?**

For most educators, a rubric is a printed set of scoring guidelines (criteria) for evaluating work (a performance or a product) and for giving feedback. A rubric answers the questions:

1. By what criteria will the work be judged?
2. What is the difference between good work and weaker work?
3. How can we make sure our judgments (or scores) are valid and reliable?
4. How can both performers and judges focus their preparation on excellence?

## **Why are rubrics used?**

At New Measure, Inc. we believe that the rubric and criteria design process must be more centered on teaching and learning than scoring. Beyond scoring, we believe that there are six reasons for using rubrics:

1. Focus instruction---intentionally.
2. Guide feedback---descriptively.
3. Characterize desired results---objectively.
4. Operationalize performance standards---purposefully.
5. Develop self-assessment competence---constantly.
6. Involve students---thoughtfully.

We believe that when focusing upon "quality quantifiers" and "quality learning continuums", new habits of mind emerge.

## **What are the critical components of a rubric?**

1. Performance Element: the major, critical attributes, which focus upon best practice.
2. Scale: the possible points to be assigned (high to low).
3. Criteria: the conditions of a performance that must be met for it to be considered successful.
4. Standard: a description of how well the criteria must be met for the performance to be considered "good".
5. Descriptors: statements that describe each level of the performance.

6. Indicators: specific, concrete examples or tell-tale signs of what to look for at each level of the performance.