Get it Write: Successfully Teaching and Assessing Writing Online

Assessing Writing in Higher Education in Online Environments

Reflection

Definitions

Assessment	The systematic process of documenting and using empirical data on the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs in order to improve learning.
Testing	An event used to examine someone's knowledge of something to determine what that person knows or has learned. It measures the level of skill or knowledge that has been reached.
Evaluation	The systematic gathering of information to make decisions.

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Assessment – Next Level?

" … teacher feedback solely does not guarantee desirable progress in writing, as a teacher-dependent student is not ready to share the responsibility for learning outcomes. In this case, peer-feedback and self-judgement can become an effective strategy to enhance students' self-regulatory skills and bring the necessary improvements."

Osidak, Kavytska & Drobotun (2020)

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Rubrics

Rubrics as we use them today

Rubrics help instructors:

- Assess assignments consistently from student-to-student.
- Save time in grading, both short-term and long-term.
- Give timely, effective feedback and promote student learning in a sustainable way.
- Clarify expectations and components of an assignment
- Refine teaching methods by evaluating rubric results.

Rubrics help students:

- Understand expectations and components of an assignment.
- Become more aware of their learning process and progress.
- Improve work through timely and detailed feedback.

Source: https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/assessment-evaluation/using-rubrics

Rubrics – a different point of view

Have students build their own rubrics

Rubrics as a tool to:
- Deepen student comprehension
- Foster student independence
- Encourage effective peer feedback
- Personalize student development

1

Rubrics to deepen student comprehension

Having students build their own rubrics deepens comprehension

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
Teacher created rubrics handed down to students.	Student created rubrics after consultation and discussion builds understanding of criteria and performance levels before the assessment even takes place.
Students may or may not read/understand/apply the criteria to their work	

Having students build their own rubrics deepens comprehension

"… engaging students in a discussion about "What makes for a good speech" (or essay or model or dance or…) can help them deepen and internalize their understanding of the criteria for a quality performance in that particular area. As well, involving students in this conversation before they begin the assignment or project can help them make more informed choices …"

Source: Wolf & Stevens (2007)

2

Rubrics to foster student independence

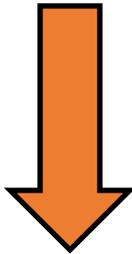Having students build their own rubrics fosters independence

3

Rubrics to encourage effective peer feedback

Having students build their own rubrics encourage effective peer feedback

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
Students may or may not read rubrics. Produce piece of writing to be corrected by teacher. ↓ Teacher corrects writing. Hands back with feedback.	Collaboratively created rubrics creates intrinsic motivation. Students hold themselves and others to the standards they set. They are now part of the process.

Advantages of peer feedback

Advantages of giving feedback

- students progress beyond the cognitive processes required for completing a given task, as they must now "read, compare, or question ideas, suggest modifications, or even reflect on how well one's own work is compared with others
- collaborative assessment moves students away from dependence on instructors to a "more autonomous and independent situation where each individual develops the experience, know-how, and skills to assess their own learning"

Advantages of receiving feedback

- achieve greater understanding and appreciation for their peers' experiences and perspectives.
- meaningful interaction increases—interaction with peers and interaction with the content
- promotes students' satisfaction with the course and with the instructor

Source: Ertmer et at. (2007

4

Rubrics to personalize student development

Having students build their own rubrics personalizes student development
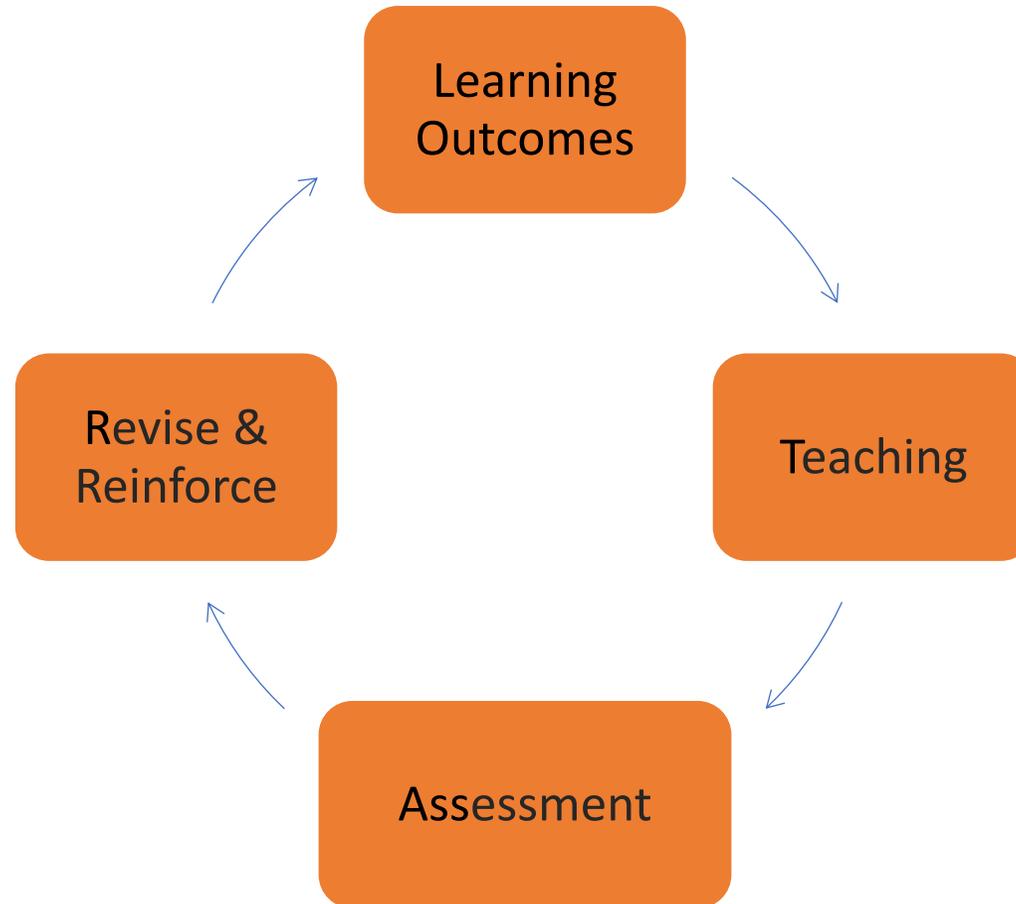
Having students build their own rubrics personalizes student development

Learning Outcomes

Student A

- occasional lack of clarity
- your opening needs to be more clear

Student B

- some of your arguments need development
- A clear and specific thesis sentence stated is required

Student C

- give clear reasons to support your position; build a case for your reader. Make sure that your reasons really do support or lead to the conclusion you come to.

Having students build their own rubrics personalizes student development
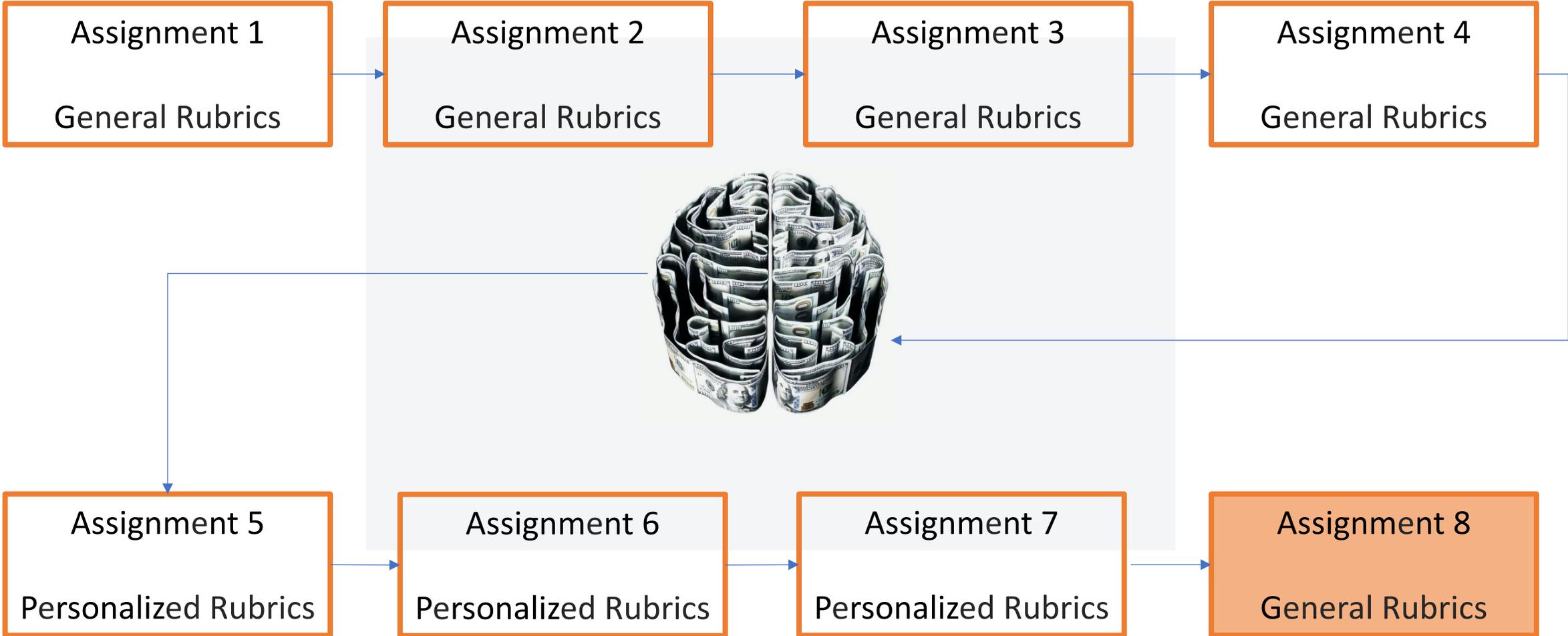
The *systematic process* of *documenting* and using empirical *data* on the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs in order to *improve learning*.

We have addressed …

- how to harness the power of assessment to support students in becoming effective writers;

- how we can use data from assessment, in conjunction with new tools to personalize our students' writing development and growth;

- how to deal with cheating;

Research

Cornell University. (2021, May). *Centre for Teaching Innovation*. Retrieved from Using Rubrics: https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/assessment-evaluation/using-rubrics

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