What Do Students and Instructors at the Academy of Art University Think of Rubrics?

Summary of Survey Results: Student & Instructor Perceptions of Rubric Effectiveness, 2013/2014

Introduction
Faculty developers have been advocates for rubrics at the Academy of Art University (AAU) for over ten years now. Our earlier research on rubrics confirmed that both students and instructors perceive clear benefits to using them. Now, as rubrics are becoming more widely adopted and formalized throughout our institution, many stakeholders—including faculty developers themselves—are revisiting some important questions about the impact of rubrics on teaching and learning:

1. What effects are more formalized rubrics having on student and instructor perceptions of rubrics?
2. How do student and instructor perceptions of rubrics compare?
3. Are there specific populations or contexts where rubrics are more or less favorably perceived?

In order to support assessment efforts at the AAU in an informed way, faculty developers Jennifer Russell and Natasha Haugnes, with strong support from Institutional Research, surveyed both instructors and students on their perceptions of rubric effectiveness in December 2013 and January 2014. The student survey replicated the survey we administered in 2008 to allow for easy comparison of results. The instructor survey was new. It identified which students to survey. (As in 2008, we only surveyed students whose instructors reported using rubrics.) Additionally, the instructors’ survey gathered data on their opinions about rubric effectiveness.

Background on rubrics at the AAU
Since its founding in 2003, Faculty Development has encouraged instructors across the AAU to create rubrics as a way to help them grade more clearly and efficiently. In the early years of Faculty Development, discussions about teaching often revolved around the basic question “How can you grade art?” Faculty developers explored this question with instructors, and often sat in on critiques, taking notes and helping to make visible the criteria and most common remarks that instructors were making in critiques. These notes quickly began to take the form of rubrics.

Our first small-scale, informal survey about rubrics in 2006 revealed that instructors valued rubrics because rubrics surfaced the qualities and goals that instructors wanted to emphasize—rubrics helped instructors to focus what they are teaching. Communicating standards to students was seen as a secondary benefit at that time.

At that point, faculty developers were encouraging instructors to make rubrics their own—to experiment with formatting, wording, and exemplars to make the rubrics reflect and enhance their individual teaching practices. One exception to the highly personalized approach was the Foundations department, however, where the director spearheaded an effort to create formal (shared) rubrics for all Foundations courses. She selected faculty to write the rubrics and, after a couple of semesters of testing them out, the entire department was using department-issued rubrics with exemplars. The number of grade complaints in that department decreased significantly once rubrics were in place.

In 2008, Jennifer and Natasha realized the students’ voices had been missing from their conversations about rubrics, which led them to conduct the first Student Perceptions of Rubric Effectiveness survey (SPORE 1). The students responded overwhelmingly in favor of rubrics, noting that rubrics helped them to produce stronger work, learn more, be more organized, and have fewer questions about their assignments.

While the SPORE 1 research answered some important questions for us, it raised another question: what is it exactly that instructors and students are calling rubrics? Some SPORE 1 responses showed that instructors and students across the AAU did not have a shared understanding of what a rubric was. Our earlier efforts to get instructors to “make rubrics their own” had resulted in some very innovative artifacts, but it had also spawned
some teaching tools that, while likely useful, were not technically rubrics. We realized that if we wanted to further our understanding of rubrics’ impact on teaching and learning, we needed to define what they were.

As a next step, in 2011 we conducted the Rubric Census to explore what instructors were calling rubrics. In response to our call, instructors submitted 267 artifacts as “rubrics.” We categorized one-third of these as “not rubrics” (e.g. checklists, full assignments, simple numerical formulas, open-ended feedback questionnaires, and stand-alone photos of previous student work). For the remaining contributions (all of which included both some development of discrete criteria and descriptors of levels), the researchers examined the type, length, number of criteria, and whether the rubric used visual examples and/or points.

As we were analyzing the Rubric Census results, Cybercampus solicited our input on a new rubric tool they were developing for our Learning Management System (LMS). The arrival of this new tool led us to articulate basic standards for rubrics and sound practices for developing rubrics. The process ultimately became part of the First Year Rubric Initiative (FYRI).

The goal of the FYRI is to establish “normed” rubrics for high-stakes projects in first-year core courses across the university. Rubric writers from each department draft the rubric according to specific quality guidelines under the guidance of a faculty developer. The rubric is then test-driven with actual student work in a norming meeting with a group of instructors and departmental leadership. The rubric writer then creates “sample critiques,” which are marked-up rubrics for samples of student work at a variety of levels to visually illustrate the explanations in the rubric. Finally, the entire packet is delivered to Cybercampus to load into the LMS for publication in all sections of the course, where students see the rubric and its sample critiques alongside the corresponding assignment.

The FYRI rubrics started appearing in Spring 2013. SPORE 2 was conducted after two semesters when 47 rubrics were in place.

Summary of significant findings
Highlighted findings are below. Expanded survey data is included in the following pages.

- Most students and instructors who use rubrics report that rubrics are helpful to learning.
  - 79% of students report that they learn more when they have rubrics in their classes.
  - Instructors’ average “rubric usefulness rating” is 3.8 out of 5. (5 being “very useful”)

- Faculty and students both rated “assignment clarification” as the most useful aspect of rubrics.

- Rubrics have a neutral effect on creativity, according to students (46%) and instructors (51%).

- The number of students at the upper division (junior and senior) and graduate level who reported having rubrics in their courses increased between SPORE 1 and SPORE 2. Together, students in these three levels accounted for 39% of the respondents in 2008; in 2014, they made up 52% of the respondents. (Despite recent rubric expansion efforts that focused on first-year classes, the biggest growth categories were elsewhere.)

Instructor Responses

- 74% of instructors who responded (n= 481) reported using rubrics in Fall 2013.

- Faculty indicated that the most useful aspects of rubrics were that they:
  - help clarify assignments to students (85% agreed or strongly agreed)
  - save time when grading (81% agreed or strongly agreed)
  - focus teaching (80% agreed or strongly agreed)

- 24% of respondents reported not using rubrics in Fall 2013. Their top reasons for not using rubrics were:
  - Do not know what rubrics are. (21%)
  - Rubrics take too much time to develop. (20%)
  - Rubrics will interfere with my teaching style. (11%)

- Faculty who were required by their departments to use rubrics and those who were not expressed no significant differences in rubric usefulness.

- 72% of instructors who use rubrics express that formal rubrics (shared across all sections of a course) are effective, while 17% disagree with formal / standardized rubrics altogether.
• Faculty who developed their own rubrics with the assistance from a Faculty Developer showed the highest average rubric usefulness rating.

Student Responses, 2014
• Students agreed or strongly agreed that with rubrics, they:
  ➔ do a more complete job on their assignments. (73%)
  ➔ have fewer questions about assignments. (72%)
  ➔ are more organized. (69%)

• The top reasons and times students indicated they referred to rubrics were:
  ➔ Before starting an assignment to clarify and/or plan out their work. (78%)
  ➔ While working on an assignment to make sure they are on track. (66%)

• Students who received visual examples of past student work indicated that rubrics helped enhance their creativity at a significantly higher percentage (44%) than students who did not receive visual examples (22%).

• Students who received personalized comments on their rubrics indicated significantly higher rubric favorability than students who sometimes or did not receive extra personalized comments.

Discussion
Rubrics are more ubiquitous, better defined, more often accompanied with visual sample critiques and overall, more formalized than they were when we conducted the first SPORE research in 2008. Faculty Development has played a big role in many of these changes, so one of our biggest questions as we launched this round of research was whether we are on the right track. We wanted to see whether this increased rubric formalization was having an effect, negative or positive, on the way students perceive rubrics’ effectiveness.

The data offer no glaring warning signs about the increased formalization of rubrics: There was no significant change in students’ overall perception of rubric effectiveness. Close examination of the data does, however, uncover some potentially positive correlations, as well as some factors to keep an eye on as we continue to develop rubrics at the AAU.

Students refer to rubrics more now than in 2008 during all phases of working on an assignment. Since rubrics are becoming required components of all freshman core courses, it makes sense that students and instructors are talking about and using them more.

Another encouraging finding is that having visual samples of students’ work available may actually help students be more creative (see statistic above). There has been ongoing discussion about rubrics’ effect on students’ creativity at the AAU for a long time. The results from SPORE 1 in 2008 showed us that the majority of students do not think that rubrics impair their creativity—the comments and data suggest that it was largely perceived as neutral. But with the increased numbers of formal rubrics accompanied by samples of student work at the AAU, the discussion has flared up again. Instructors often ask, “If students see examples of student work, won’t they just want to copy it?” The data suggest that the opposite is true: students who reported having visual exemplars to refer to were twice as likely as those without to say that rubrics enhanced their creativity (44% vs. 22%). Comments from students indicate that seeing student work actually helps them understand the expectations more clearly and hence gives them confidence to be creative. If we continue to encourage departments to upload samples of previous student work (sample critiques) with their rubrics, one would hope that this effect continues to grow.
One caveat that the data does bring to light is that instructors are now less likely to write personalized feedback on rubrics. This is an unfortunate trend, as students who get personalized feedback tend to view rubrics as more useful all around. This lack of personalized feedback likely reflects the fact that rubrics in 2008 were largely printed on paper and used as feedback sheets. Today, they are increasingly becoming static reference objects in the LMS. To actually fill one out as a grade sheet in an online course is laborious, and not all instructors take this added step. In our training, faculty developers do need to emphasize that reference rubrics do not replace grade sheets with some personalized comments. The rubric should help instructors streamline, but not altogether replace comments on student work.

The question of HOW exactly rubrics help learning is a hard one to answer. One factor that is clearly at work is that rubrics clarify assignments for students and instructors. Instructors and students agree that this is the most useful aspect of rubrics. The comments outlined in the last section (about effects on creativity) further support this assertion by highlighting how knowing the parameters of a task lets students know where to push creative boundaries. With the push for more formal rubrics, instructors and courses may be relying on the rubrics and sample student work, instead of the assignment itself, to convey the assignment guidelines. If this is indeed the case, what are the implications of communicating an assignment through a rubric, as opposed to through an assignment sheet? It may be worth exploring this question at a later time.

Overall, the research to date shows favorable attitudes towards rubrics by both students and faculty, but ongoing training and dialogue across campus are needed. These might further articulate what rubrics can and should do, and allow us to collectively examine in detail how rubrics are affecting learning throughout online and onsite classes. However, in our exuberance over their usefulness, we must keep a cautious watch for over-applying them as a tool. There are some circumstances where formal rubrics may stymie the flexibility of a course (e.g., if its direction is highly dependent on student work and interests) or students’ use of them as a tool for reference and reflection. Before expanding formal rubrics into other courses, the researchers recommend that the AAU weigh multiple factors, such as instructor autonomy, students’ level and internalization of the department’s standards.

Natasha and Jennifer are continuing to analyze the data and implications of these surveys. We encourage others at the AAU to examine the data and consider the implications for their own departments. Please contact us if you have any insights, questions or comments. We look forward to continuing the conversation.

Natasha Haugnes
nhaugnes@academyart.edu  |  415.618.3824

Jennifer Russell
jrussell@academyart.edu  |  415.618.3890

Published April, 2015
Results from IPORE: Instructor Perceptions of Rubric Effectiveness

Fall 2013

DATA RESULTS
We sent 1313 surveys to instructors at the end of the Fall 2013 semester. We received 481 usable responses (37%).

1. Did you use a rubric in any of your courses last semester (FA2013)? (N= 481)
   74% Yes  26% No

2. If no to #1: Which of the following best describes why you do NOT use rubrics (check all that apply); (n=84)
   21% I don’t know what they are.
   20% They take too much time to develop.
   11% They will interfere with my teaching style.
   04% They will impair student learning
   04% They will impair student creativity
   56% Other Emerging themes, in order of frequency were: Rubrics are not appropriate to what I teach; I have my own system and don’t need rubrics; I’m waiting for the department to give me a rubric or ask me to create one; I am in the process of creating one and haven’t used it yet.

3. Additional comments (n=26)
   30% of the instructors who left comments in this section said that they were in the process of creating rubrics.

4. If you would like a Faculty Developer to contact you about creating rubrics, please enter your contact information and name below.
   (18 instructors requested contact. Faculty Development is following up with this information.)

5, 10, 15. Please list the Department/Subject, Section, and Catalog/Course Number in which you used rubrics in Fall 2013. (Instructors were able to enter up to three rubrics. Detailed results are on file.)

6, 11, 16. Catalog/Course Number (e.g. 125):

7, 12, 17. Which statement best describes your rubric?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Rubric #1 (n=254)</th>
<th>12. Rubric #2 (n=54)</th>
<th>17. Rubric #3 (n=20)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>I created it myself in my own class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>I created it for myself in my own class with help from a Faculty Developer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07%</td>
<td>09%</td>
<td>05%</td>
<td>I created it under contract for my department as part of the First Year Rubric Initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>I was somewhat involved in the process of creating the rubric (e.g. participating in a norming DAT), but someone else created it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>05%</td>
<td>Someone else in my department created it and I had no input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>07%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Other: Many responses duplicated existing options. Eight respondents modified existing rubrics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Were you required to use this rubric? \( (n=253) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric #1 ( (n=253) )</th>
<th>Rubric #2 ( (n=54) )</th>
<th>Rubric #3 ( (n=20) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I choose to use it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My department strongly encourages me to use a rubric, but I am not required to do so.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My department requires me to use rubrics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06%</td>
<td>02%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I would like to enter course information for another rubric. Yes  No

How useful in general are rubrics? Rate the usefulness of rubrics for each statement. Rubrics...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree or Agree</th>
<th>Neutral/ no effect</th>
<th>Disagree or Strongly disagree</th>
<th>( n )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) guide discussion or critique in class</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) focus my teaching</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) save me time when grading</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) communicate my standards to my department or other instructors</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) help all of the instructors of one course grade according to the same standards</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) clarify the assignments for the students</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) improve students’ mastery of the material</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) improve students’ creativity</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) improve students’ motivation to create art &amp; design</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain any of your answers above \( (n=77) \): Twenty-three responses to this question referenced the assignment, generally referring to how rubric clarify the assignment:

- It helps clarify the assignments and sets standard of quality.
- Specific & precise guide lines for each course and assignment are very necessary...
- I have found that with good communication between myself and the students, they are more inclined to work the rubric (with some variation) to help achieve their assignment goals.
- The rubrics did help the students and I to understand what the expectations were for each assignment though.

Seventeen responses to this question referenced rubrics’ negative or neutral effect on creativity:

- Too often, if given a rubric, students look to it as a checklist of things to do rather than the assignment as a creative problem to solve which short-circuits creative thought. Good students can sometimes use a rubric as a guide. Poor students tend to use it as a crutch. I’m not convinced of the merit of a rubric as student-facing documents. As faculty-facing documents, they have more value, imho.
- It turns students interest away from the assignment and more towards the grade. It disrupts the intimacy of being creative and makes it too structured. Imagine a rubric to follow for your own most intimate situations. A bit off putting, no?
- I do not think that rubrics spur creativity in a student —and I am still not sure we can adequately assess imagination and creativity in a rubric.
• … Yes, rubrics are CRITICALLY important to the teaching process (as they have been in my courses for many years before they were ever forcibly required), but as currently written are an impediment to creative education.

21. There are growing numbers of standardized rubrics (shared in all sections of a course) at the AAU. Choose the statement that describes the most effective use of standardized rubrics. Standardized rubrics (shared in all sections of a course) are effective for: \((n=224)\)

- 15% major assignments in all first-year courses.
- 14% major assignments in all first- and second-year courses.
- 30% major assignments in all courses.
- 13% all assignments in all courses throughout the department.
- 17% I disagree with standardized rubrics. Instructors should be allowed to decide whether or not to use them.
- 11% Other:

22. Please explain your answer to #6 above: \((n=141)\)

Instructors who answered that standardized rubrics were most effective for major assignments in all courses (34 comments) generally praised the clarity rubrics provide, but want flexibility for the lower-stakes assignments:

• By having the major assignments standardized in rubrics it helps to keep the various instructors of a course on the same page. By it just being the major assignments it allows for flexibility for smaller assignments to be different which should support the style/experience of the instructor.

• I think that rubrics should be used for major assignments, but for smaller assignments instructors should probably be given more flexibility. However it depends on the course requirements, if all assignments are to be the same, then why not use a rubric.

• Standardized rubrics shared in all sections of a course made me feel comfortable about my grading because I knew teachers in other sections of the course were also using the rubrics. When teaching the class for the first time, being able to discuss the rubrics with other teachers gave me more confidence about my grading decisions. Providing the assignment rubrics to the students before their assignments were due also assured me that students could not claim they were unaware of what criteria I would use to grade their writing.

Instructors who disagree with standardized rubrics (27 comments) generally note that instructors should be the ones to decide what is best in their classrooms:

• Yes, instructors SHOULD use clear rubrics in their courses where applicable, especially where they assist the student in the process, technically. However, standardized rubrics have led to stunted creative intelligence and a general lack of academic freedom.

• I have found that rubrics are useful for some assignments and groups of students, but not all courses, instructors, students, etc. I like being able to create my own rubric for assignments if they will be useful and have done so in the past, but I wouldn’t want to be required to complete a rubric for every assignment in every class.

• I feel each class can accomplish the same course learning outcomes, but the way in which to get there should be flexible. It depends on the teacher’s strengths, and their view of what is the most important takeaways from the material. This also involves the student’s own particular strengths. Standardizing rubrics can defeat the purpose of individualizing the education to best help any particular student.

Instructors who thought rubrics were effective for all assignments in all courses (17 comments) throughout the department generally liked the clarity that rubrics offered, though many of these comments made it clear that these rubrics must be “properly written” or “normed.”

• Rubrics provide students with clarity regarding the learning outcomes that they must demonstrate, and how to do so. Properly written, they help the student focus without stifling creativity.

• When done properly (accurate, several examples per grade, etc) I believe they are useful for both students and instructors. It accelerates the learning process and gives the students a chance to see the “end goal”. For the instructor, the benefit of having a standard by which to grade all students equally is very important.

23. Please share any further comments based on your experience with rubrics: \((n=68)\)

No clear new trends emerge in this section. Instructors reiterated comments they made in previous open ended questions, or recounted their own ways of using rubrics.
Results from SPORE 2: Student Perceptions of Rubric Effectiveness
Spring 2014

DATA RESULTS
We sent 1313 surveys to instructors at the end of the Fall. There were 5334 surveys sent to students after the end of the Fall 2013 semester. Surveys were only sent to students of instructors who reported using rubrics. We had 395 usable responses (7%).

About you:
1. What is your class standing? (choose one) (n=392)
   23% Freshman    23% Sophomore    17% Junior     9% Senior    26% Grad    2% non-degree

2. Is English your first language? (n=391)     61% Yes      39% No

3. What is your major? (n=394)
   01% Acting
   02% Advertising
   01% Architecture
   02% Art Education
   20% Animation
   03% Communications
   08% Computer Arts New Media
   07% Fine Art
   07% Fashion
   02% Jewelry Metal Arts
   03% Gaming
   06% Graphic Design
   04% Interior Architecture & Design
   07% Illustration
   01% Landscape Architecture
   03% Motion Pictures & Television
   02% Music
   05% Photography
   04% Visual Development
   13% Illustration
   01% Landscape Architecture
   03% Motion Pictures & Television
   02% Music
   05% Photography
   04% Visual Development

Note: This captures majors, not classes, so ESL and Liberal Arts classes are hidden within the results.

4. In which classes did you have rubric last semester? (Results are on file.)

5. Did any of the rubrics include visual examples of (past) student work?
   66% Yes      34% No

About rubrics:
6. When and why do you refer to the rubric (s)? (Check all that apply)
   78% Before starting an assignment to clarify the assignment and/or plan out my work
   66% While working on an assignment to make sure I am on track
   35% During critiques or peer reviews to focus my comments
   53% Before turning in a final draft of an assignment to assess my own work.
   55% After I have received a grade—to help me understand why I got the grade I did.

7. When does your teacher hand out the rubric? (n=308)
   52% When giving the assignment, or before
   03% While I am working on the assignment
   12% When returning the assignment to me along with the grade and/or feedback.
   04% During the critique
   30% I'm not sure/other
8. How much of the rubric do you read before you turn in an assignment? (choose one) (n=306)
   49% All of it.
   28% Most of it.
   15% I read only the descriptions of the grade(s) I’m hoping for.
   7% I never look at the rubric at all before turning work in.

9. How much of the rubric do you read after you get an assignment back? (choose one) (n=308)
   28% All of it.
   22% Most of it.
   32% I usually read only the parts that my teacher has circled for me.
   07% I never look at the rubric at all after I’ve gotten my grade.

10. Does your teacher write extra “personalized” comments on the rubric? (choose one) (n=298)
    21% Yes  23% No  56% Sometimes

11. Rubrics help me better understand the standards and expectations of… (check all that apply) (n=303)
    75% My individual teacher
    50% My department at the AAU
    50% My chosen professional field
    07% Other

12. Below is a list of comments from students about rubrics. Decide whether you agree or disagree and click on the appropriate response. If you think that the item does not pertain to you, or if you have no opinion, leave it blank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When a teacher uses a rubric...</th>
<th>Strongly agree or agree</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree or disagree</th>
<th>n=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have fewer questions about the assignment</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more organized</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>07%</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work is stronger</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work harder</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do a more complete job on my assignments</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>05%</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am less surprised by my grade</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confused</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor feedback is clear and consistent</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can argue more effectively to have my grade changed</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Overall, how does having a rubric affect your learning? (choose one) (n=298)
    47% I learn much more if I have rubrics in a class.
    32% I learn a little more if I have rubrics in a class
    19% Rubrics don’t make a difference.
    <1% I learn a little more without rubrics
    03% Rubrics get in the way of my learning

14. In which classes and/or departments would you like to see more rubrics? (n=167)
    Anonymous results will be shared with department directors.
    31% All courses  3% none  2% Teacher should decide

15. What effects, if any, do you feel that rubrics have on your creativity? (choose one) (n=274)
    37% More creative  17% Less creative  46% No effect
16. Please comment about how rubrics affect your creativity:

142 students wrote comments in this section. Below are examples of comments from the largest categories.

Approximately 20% of the received comments noted that parameters or guides help their work. Many of these quotes implied that the structure and direction provided by rubrics allowed students to focus their creative energy, by taking away the anxiety that arises about wondering whether they have done the assignment correctly.

- It gives you some parameters to work within which, to me, encourages me to think of ways to push the limits of those parameters and think more creatively.
- They help push me to expand my ideas creatively more.
- I come up with ideas as a knee jerk reaction to receiving an assignment. The rubric defines which of those ideas are applicable and how I might have to adapt them to fit better.
- They affect my creativity as I can see what’s been done in the past and want to push myself to do better and take things in a different direction or do them differently from anyone else so that my work doesn’t look like past efforts and is a better reflection of my skills and style as well as what I’ve learned.
- Rubrics don’t affect my creativity at all. They help guide my creativity to fit the assignment standards, then I can go from there.
- If anything, I try to find ways around the rubric, so sometimes I get even more creative, I guess.
- It allows my creativity to be focused more towards the task at hand.
- Well sometimes rubric does give an idea on how the work should be like so I’m able to push my creativity harder than that I usually did. I think I did feel a little more confident in doing my work when I know the rubric. Because most of the time I’ll be worried if I really did it right.

Approximately 12% of the received comments noted that seeing samples of previous student work inspired them to do better.

- when I see examples, I strive to do a better job to keep up with my classmates
- Seeing what others have done loosens restrictions. It is nice seeing that there is so many options for development of the project and content becomes less focused on what I cannot do.
- I see what great work others have turned out and it inspires a sense of competition in me. Then I work harder to keep up. It’s also comforting to see where I stand at the moment.

Approximately 13% of the comments expanded on how rubrics limit creativity.

- I feel that sometimes it makes things “fit in a box” rather than letting the creativity flow freely.
- It’s more difficult to come up with unique ideas when I have a preconceived notion about knowing what student examples have an “A” in the rubrics. It makes me lean toward doing similar work.
- It dampens my creativity somewhat because when I receive examples I try to emulate that because I believe that example must be an A and in order for me to get an A I need to do something similar.
- There is no room for individualism. I feel that my work must reflect exactly that of the A example or I will fail.

Approximately 20% of the comments expanded on how rubrics have no effect on their creativity, often noting that the rubric (and perhaps the assignment and the course) addresses something that is separate from creativity.

- not now because I think I am still learning skills not so much creativity
- They lay a nice enough foundation without being invasive.
- I think my original creativity is not being affected by using them. But in terms of academic success, the use of rubrics is essential for me.
- They don’t affect my creativity, just the quality standard and how hard I work.

17. What can teachers do differently to make rubrics more useful to your learning?
137 students wrote comments in this section. Below are examples of comments from the largest categories.

Approximately 23% of the comments in this section expressed a desire for instructors to use them or explain them more.

• It’s best to always be thorough with what they expect of students when doing midterms and finals, homework, etc. I can speak for all students that we don’t like it when an instructor sometimes lets us do whatever for a project, but then criticize our work so much to the point where the instructor should’ve just laid out what they wanted in the first place. It waste time and disappoints us greatly especially when it becomes a repetitive problem.

• Use them. Period. They are a tool for learning as much as any video or link to an article you send me to. They set the standard of expectation on a project so that there are no surprises when being graded. Include examples of previous work so that a student can see what an “A” looks like, and why, as opposed to what a “F” looks like and why. Make the rubrics and examples a discussion piece. Have students explain and point out the differences in grade levels to help better understand a project.

• Some professors don’t seem to follow rubrics or even module requirements when teaching which can make learning the information more confusing. Those professors who stick to the rubric and module content but require a lot from students are the ones I find most helpful.

• More detail. never tell your students something like;” you are the designer, you need to design by yourself.” i had one in my color class. and i felt its ridiculous. im student not the designer yet, im asking for learning and try to ask for profession point. whats the meaning for i study if my instructor tell me go think yourself when i have techniques problem?

Approximately 21% wanted more visual examples.

• Include not just examples of “good work” or why it’s good, but also examples of work that had problems with it as it helps us in understanding why certain things should be avoided and what the pitfalls or issues are and to learn to better analyze our own work and that of our peers—in a sense, it helps us to learn from mistakes and hope to avoid repeating them as well as to just understand why. Also, in the past, it was helpful to show work with different grades attached—and an explanation into why they earned those grades—as it helped to explain why we may have received a certain grade with some projects or assignments.

• I would really like more personalized comments on rubrics turned back to me. On the different grades you can check, there are a lot of mistakes listed, and i want to know what specifically i did well on, and what i need work on, and having that in writing would be great for future reference.

9% wanted more personal notes or the rubric more tailored to the individual teacher.

• if they personalized them and included their own comments; often times, I feel like the classes and the requirements and assignments are created by two completely different people, so it would be helpful to know what a specific instructor expects out of their students in their work from the very beginning.

16. Please share any other comments you have about rubrics in the space below:

11% say other things are more important, often the visual examples, or the instructor's decisions about how to teach.

• I think I learned more with the student examples especially as an online student. I have had a few assignments over the years that were so difficult or overwhelming that I wasn’t sure where to start much less finish

• I don’t find the text in rubrics nearly as useful as the example images of past student work - although I think the combination of both is probably still best to be available.

• Rubrics should be required on the first project. How the class is run by the teacher is their call thereafter.

• Even though they tend to encourage students to follow the same lines, they are vastly important in a student who’s not in a classroom to be able to see other work and know how high a bar is set, and what actual expectations are for the art for any given class. But, a professor (or more often, just the module) saying “look at the rubrics” isn’t enough... professors should discuss them in depth, so that students can actually “learn” from the rubric, and not just use it for an example that they should mimic.
34% of the comments in this section were **general positive observations** about rubrics.

- There have been many times where I look at the rubric wondering what the expectation is for work and content. I’m always amazed by the quality of the A level work, but it always pushes me to work harder and I always end up with a better grade because of it.

- Rubrics give teachers an external comparison for student’s work which allows them to be more objective during critiques. In classes without a rubric, it is more common to be critiqued versus the quality of other students in the class, which creates a micro-hierarchy, rather than an objective analysis. I strongly suggest all classes have thorough rubrics.

- I personally like the use of rubrics—they not only provide clarity at times when an assignment may have multiple components or requirements and just might not make sense or seem confusing. Whether an assignment is online or on site, one problem that can sometimes arise is in trying to get hold of a professor for clarification (or sometimes having it happen that a professor may just appear unapproachable or have an air about them that intimidates the student enough to be afraid to ask out of fear of being ridiculed) just as some people out there may be more visual than others and it helps to “see” or get an idea about what we’re supposed to be working on (but with the idea to do something completely our own!). It also can clarify some of the confusion that arises with grading (depending upon the design of the rubric, however) and why we may have earned the grade we had so we know how to improve our work for the future and what things to avoid doing and learn from the experience.

- They make my OCD fly through the roof when I’m trying to work and get done quickly, but that’s just me. I do appreciate having examples to help steer me, I just end up stressed out. It’s needed stress, though, to push me to be the best that I can be.

3% of the comments were **general negative comments**.

- I feel that those who don’t have the talent of the student work shown in the rubrics can be discouraged, the rubrics make it seem like if you don’t have this level of skill you will get a bad grade. Not everyone is at the same level artistically, and if we aren’t then we get lower grades.