Explicit teaching strategy
Sharing learning intentions
Sharing success criteria

Technique guide

Developmental rubrics

Overview

Developmental rubrics describe growth along a proficiency scale from novice to expert. These can be useful for both teachers and students. Students can use developmental rubrics to track their learning and set learning goals. Teachers can use these rubrics to track student progress over time and inform their next steps in teaching. Teachers may also use them to:

- derive success criteria
- give feedback on learning progress.

Teachers may collaboratively create developmental rubrics as a consistent teacher judgement activity before unit planning.

Developmental rubrics can also be used to craft analytical rubrics associated with specific learning tasks. Analytic rubrics divide a task into component parts with distinct elements or traits and describe performance for each element (McTighe et al. 2024). These have a formative assessment role for students working towards a larger piece of learning (for example, an assessment task). The increased transparency of expectations can reduce student anxiety about high stakes assessments and increase submission rates. A rubric can also assist in making evaluative reasoning clear to students (Panadero and Jönsson 2013).

Key considerations

Rubrics should be written describing what learning 'looks like' at each level of progress.

- **Describe what the student will do, say or create** to demonstrate knowledge, skill or understanding in student-friendly language.

Instead of ...	Descriptors should say ...
shows a solid understanding of...	explains examples of...

- **Eliminate subjective language** such as good, limited, extensive, poor and so on.

Instead of ...	Descriptors should say ...
demonstrates deep understanding	integrates viewpoints from different sources

- **Describe what they are demonstrating at that level rather than what they are not doing.**

Instead of ...	Descriptors should say ...
no analysis	outlines events

- **Start with what emerging understanding looks like.**

Instead of ...	Descriptors should say ...
fails to address the key points	addresses a key point

- **Progress the achievement** make each step achievable from the one before. Taxonomies such as Bloom's, SOLO or Krathwol could be useful.
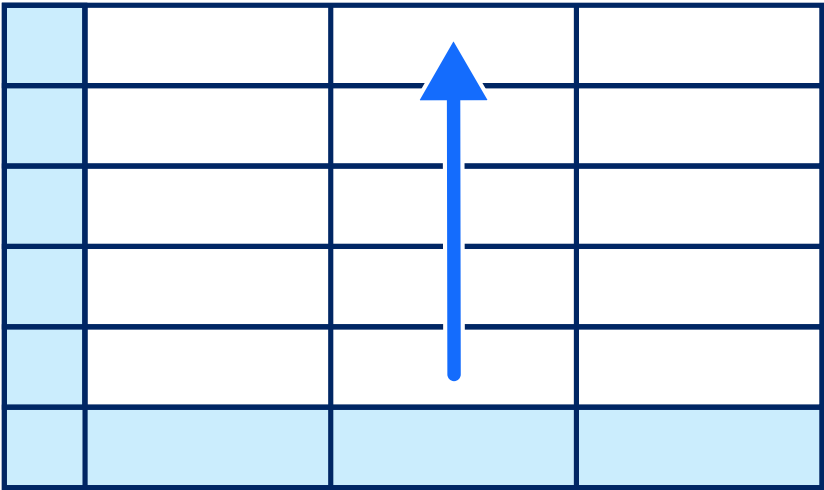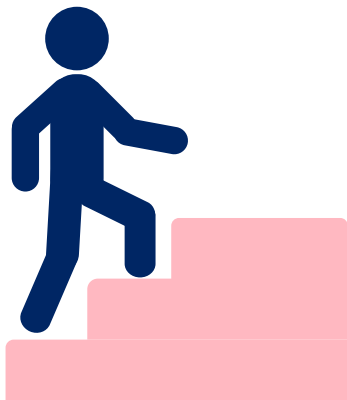
Classroom application

For a stage developmental rubric, break the outcome into component parts or indicators:

Setting the first level: Ask yourself, 'What is the first demonstration a student can make that shows they are starting to achieve in this component part or indicator?' This should be stated in the positive.

Setting the final level: Ask yourself, 'What is the full embodiment of this component part or indicator?' It is important at the upper levels not to introduce new skills that are not covered in the outcome.

Directing students as to 'Where do I go next?': Each description need only cover what a student has to do at that level and not cover what they should do next. For students to understand what they should do next they would read the proceeding level. This means that the difference between the levels needs to be achievable from the level before. Referring back to the Common grade scale can assist teachers with this task.

Stage 3 English example

Quality criteria	Temporal (time) setting	Spatial (space) setting	Language choices
Higher ↑	Temporal setting integrates time-specific details that enhance the mood and context. Example: On a sweltering afternoon, the cicadas buzzed like a thousand tiny drummers, marking the peak of summer.	Crafted description of spatial setting uses sensory details to create immersive experience that enhances narrative. Example: The grand library was a treasure trove of knowledge, with towering shelves that seemed to touch the ceiling. The musty scent of old paper hung in the air, and the soft rustle of pages turned, echoing whispers of the past.	Varied use of figurative language devices, blending similes, metaphors, and personification to create a rich, imaginative setting that captivates the reader and adds depth to the narrative. Example: The ancient forest whispered stories of old, as the emerald leaves danced playfully in the gently breeze, while sunlight trickled through the branches like golden honey.
	Temporal setting is specific and relevant, enhancing the narrative. Example: It was summer, when the sun blazed down, and the days stretched lazily.	Spatial setting describes the environment and is relevant to the story, establishing mood and reader expectations. Example: The library was spacious, with sunlight streaming through tall windows, illuminating the dusty shelves lined with ancient books.	Uses several figurative language devices including similes, metaphors or personification, that builds a clear image in the reader's mind. Example: The forest was a sea of green, with trees standing tall like soldiers, guarding the secrets of the woods.
	Here the teacher decides a descriptor at this level is not required.	Spatial setting includes relevant details but lacks impact and the establishment of mood. Example: The library was big with thousands of books along each shelf.	Uses figurative language, including basic similes or metaphors. Example: The forest was as green as a grass field.
Lower ↓	Temporal setting includes a time period, without additional details. Example: It was the summer of last year.	Spatial setting contains basic details about the environment. Example: The library was big.	Language descriptions are mostly literal (just say what they are). Example: The forest was big and green.
	Indicates a temporal setting. Example: It was a long tine ago.	Indicates a place. Example: He was in the library.	Language is used to name a place. Example: They were in a forest.
	Insufficient evidence.	Insufficient evidence.	Insufficient evidence.
Features	Temporal (time) setting	Spatial (space) setting	Language choices

Creating written text

EN3-CWT-01 – plans, creates and revises written texts for multiple purposes and audiences through selection of text features, sentence-level grammar, punctuation and word-level language

Imaginative purposes

- Make creative choices about temporal and spatial settings, character profiles and motives to enhance reader engagement

Understanding and responding to literature

EN3-UARL-01 – analyses representations of ideas in literature through narrative, character, imagery, symbol and connotation, and adapts these representations when creating texts

Imagery, symbol and connotation

- Analyses how figurative language in literature can enhance meaning and affect the audience

Classroom application

Stage 6 Food technology example

Quality criteria				
High	**A**	Evaluates better food choices for health		
	B	Analyses food consumption patterns and health outcomes	Debates the proposed benefits from including supplements in the diet	
	C	Explains causal relationship between nutrient intake and dietary disorders	Explains causal relationship between supplement intake and health	Explains the consequences of malnutrition
	D	Identifies the causes of dietary disorders relating to nutrient intake	Identifies the benefit from supplement in the diet	Identifies the effects on the body of malnutrition
	E	Names dietary disorders	Names supplements that could be included in the diet	Names dietary disorders from malnutrition
Beginning		Insufficient evidence.	Insufficient evidence.	Insufficient evidence.
Indicative behaviours		Describes the relationship between nutrient intake and dietary disorders	Debates the role of dietary supplements in the diet	Explains consequences of malnutrition
		H2.1.2 Evaluates the relationship between food consumption and health		

> **Here the teacher decided that the outcome was fulfilled at this level. Teachers may also 'skip' a level and leave it blank where appropriate.** (pointing to row B)

> **Here the teacher has split outcome H2.1 into 3 parts and is focusing in on consumption.** (pointing to Indicative behaviours)

Learning intentions and success criteria resources

More resources

ARC (Assessment Research Centre) *Reliable rubrics | developing rubrics that really work*, ARC, accessed 30 November 2024.
https://reliablerubrics.com/

VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) *Put formative assessment rubrics into practice*, VCAA, accessed 30 November 2024.
https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/foundation-10/formative-assessment/formative-assessment-rubric-samples/put-formative-assessment-rubrics-practice

References

English K–10 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2022.
https://curriculum.nsw.edu.au/learning-areas/english/english-k-10-2022/overview

Food Technology Stage 6 Syllabus © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2013.

Griffin P (2018) *Assessment for teaching*, Cambridge University Press.

McTighe J, Brookhart SM and Guskey TR (2024) '*The value of descriptive multi-level rubrics*', *Educational Leadership*, 81(6), accessed 25 November 2024.

Panadero E and Jönsson A (2013) '*The use of scoring rubrics for formative assessment purposes revisited: a review*', *Educational Research Review*, 9:129–144, accessed 25 November 2024.