Using Rubrics for Standards-Based Assessment

One of the most useful tools for teachers who are teaching a standards-based curriculum is the assessment rubric.   According to Teach-nology, "Rubrics are performance-based assessments that evaluate student performance on any given task or set of tasks that ultimately leads to a final product, or learning outcome."

The University of South Florida College of Public Health lists these advantages of using rubrics for authentic assessment (http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/eta/Rubric_Tutorial/):

• Rubrics make the instructor's expectations clear to the students

• Rubrics show students how to meet the instructor's expectations (what they need to do to be successful)

• Rubrics help students evaluate the quality of their own work

• Rubrics identify the specific elements an instructor uses to differentiate between the qualities of performances. (It helps the student answer the question 'why did I get a point taken off?')

• If more than one person is evaluating the performance, it improves the consistency and objectivity (standardization) of grading

• It may reduce the time it takes to grade if there are similarities among comments made to students regarding flaws or excellence in a performance

Creating Rubrics

According to USF Health, creating rubrics involves six essential steps (http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/eta/Rubric_Tutorial/). In order to achieve both staff buy-in and a tool that produces consistent results when used by several staff members, it is important that teachers who will use the rubric participate in its creation and/or revision.

1.   Identify the performance objective or standard

2.   Identify the dimensions/tasks comprising the performance

3.   Identify the potential gradations of quality

4.   Assign a point value to each gradation, and a total point value for the assessment

5.   Identify the criteria for each level of quality within a dimension/ task

6.   Create the rubric table (such as the one shown below):

Applying this process produces a rubric such as the one that follows – a rubric for assessing oral presentations from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html).

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This brief prepared by Howard Johnston, University of South Florida

	1	2	3	4	Total
	Evaluating Student Presentations				
	Developed by Information Technology Evaluation Services, NC Department of Public Instruction				
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	
Subject Knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	
Graphics	Student uses superfluous graphics or no graphics	Student occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation.	Student's graphics relate to text and presentation.	Student's graphics explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.	
Mechanics	Student's presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	
Eye Contact	Student reads all of report with no eye contact.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes.	Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.	
Elocution	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.	
				Total Points:	

Resources

RCampus Rubric Gallery
(http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshellc.cfm?mode=gallery&sms=publicrub)
Literally thousands of outstanding samples of rubrics covering every conceivable school subject or learning task can be found at the RCampus Rubric Gallery. This also includes access to an outstanding rubric creation tool – iRubric.

RubiStar
http://rubistar.4teachers.org/
RubiStar is a free tool to help the teacher who wants to use rubrics but does not have the time to develop them from scratch (registration required).

Teacher Helpers: Assessment and Rubric Information, Kathy Shrock's Guide for Educators
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html
Kathy Shrock's Guide covers almost any topic that's useful for teachers, administrators and students. Her guide for assessment rubrics is no exception: it's huge, helpful, and selective. Bookmark this site; you'll be back again and again.

Rubrics and Rubric-Makers
Teach-nology
http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/
One of the most extensive teacher resources for rubrics on the Internet, it has tools that help guide you through the process of creating these assessment tools for evaluating student performance. It also has links to over 500 printable rubrics.