

THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION
of a
RUBRIC ASSESSMENT REPORT CARD

SHEILA STEARNS

B. Ed., University of Lethbridge, AB., 1983

A One-Credit Project
Submitted to the Faculty of Education
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Lethbridge, Alberta

March, 1999

DEDICATION

For Pat, my friend and husband,
who shares life with me.

Life is a song – sing it.

Life is a game – play it.

Life is a challenge – meet it.

Life is a dream – realize it.

Life is a sacrifice – offer it.

Life is love – enjoy it.

Sai Baba

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the development and implication of a rubric assessment report card for 30 English as a Second Language students, ages ranging from 7 to 15, in a one room Hutterite Colony School. Through an action research approach, data were gathered in the forms of observations, discussions, and review of educational literature. The findings of this study indicate that rubric assessment improves student learning and performance. This was attributed to rubrics being motivational tools of assessment, allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning while being involved in their own assessment. This led to the conclusion that a rubric assessment report card better complements the current assessment practices in the researcher's school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have made this project possible:

To my supervisor, Dr. Nola Aitken, for providing thoughtful comments, for encouraging me, and for her friendship.

To my second reader, Dr. Cynthia Chambers, for her insightful suggestions.

To Dr. David Townsend, for his assistance and belief in me.

To my husband Pat, and children Tammy and Chris, for their patience, support, and unconditional love.

To my parents, David and Elinor Robertson, for believing in the value of a good education.

To fellow teachers and friends, Laurie Cooper and Kim Syverson, for their collaboration and input.

To the children of my school, for their enthusiasm, energy, and positive acceptance of new approaches to learning and assessment.

To the parents of the children, who I learn with daily, for their trust and respect.

To my many friends who have provided hope and confidence when I most needed their friendship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	5
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
SCHOOL COMMUNITY.....	20
METHODOLOGY.....	25
RESULTS.....	38
DISCUSSION.....	40
CONCLUSION.....	42
References.....	43
Bibliography.....	45
 Appendixes	
Appendix A Classroom Rubrics.....	46
Appendix B Past Report Card.....	51
Appendix C Sample Report Cards.....	52
Appendix D Rubric Assessment Report Card.....	63

INTRODUCTION

**"We value what we measure;
we measure what we value."**

- Grant Wiggins, May 16, 1991

Teachers are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn and laugh with students in a variety of learning environments. As teachers, we have a huge responsibility to our students, their families, community members, and educators. What we do and say has the potential to affect students' lives in either a positive or negative manner.

Assessment, an integral component of teaching and learning, often causes mixed feelings for those involved. Many of us question our feelings and concerns regarding the issue of assessment. We may feel anxiety about the fairness and accuracy of our assessment of student learning; concern about the importance placed on external testing while disregarding alternate forms of assessment such as anecdotal records and portfolios; and confusion over the shift in emphasis for assessment that focuses on learning processes while still being requested to provide assessment that demonstrates products of student learning.

Presently we are experiencing a paradigm shift in our thinking about teaching and learning. The emerging view sees the learner as an active participant as opposed to the learner being a passive recipient of information. The Alberta Assessment Consortium (September, 1997) identifies the demands this now makes on teachers:

- . engaging learners with different experiences and backgrounds with the learning situation;
- . designing a variety of assessment strategies that will provide information about how learners are learning;
- . utilizing assessment information to plan further learning activities that build on student strengths.

We, as teachers, must meet the changes and work together with students, parents, and community members to assist in preparing students in developing competencies and attributes. The members of the Alberta Assessment Consortium (September, 1997, p. 5) have identified these competencies and attributes as:

- . an ability to apply knowledge and skills
- . problem-solving and decision making skills
- . effective communication and team work
- . self-confidence and self-esteem
- . understanding and use of personal strengths
- . responsibility and persistence
- . independent and diverse ways of thinking
- . adaptability and flexibility

Therefore, there is a need for a multi-dimensional approach to assessment.

Teachers must encompass a variety of assessment types designed for a variety of purposes; provide students, parents, and members of the community with clear information regarding student achievement; and enable students, parents, and community members to become involved with the assessment process.

Assessment involves the gathering of information which provides the basis for sound decision making regarding teaching and learning. The primary purpose of assessment is to provide ongoing feedback to students, teachers, and parents. The three major purposes of assessment are often described as being diagnostic, formative, and summative. Although each has unique characteristics, they are often interrelated.

Diagnostic assessment (tests, journals, performance-based assessment, etc.) may be used to discover what students know and can do; identify student strengths and then build on these strengths; target areas of difficulties and follow-up with a planned instruction to meet these difficulties; and make informed decisions regarding where to focus time and energy.

Formative assessment, encompassing a variety of strategies, differs from diagnostic assessment in that it provides ongoing feedback to the teacher with regards to the effectiveness of instruction. This form of assessment identifies areas of growth; motivates students; focuses attention and effort; and encourages goal setting and monitors achievement of goals.

Summative assessment, which can include results of formative assessment, (provincial achievement tests, end-of-unit tests, projects, demonstrations, performances, etc.) simply reflects student achievement at a given moment in a specific context. The purposes of summative assessment include providing feedback to students, parents, and post-secondary institutions about achievement; assisting parents and teachers in making decisions about appropriate placement for students; and determining program effectiveness.

When choosing appropriate assessment strategies, a teacher must first consider what purposes the assessment will serve and the kinds of assessment information that must be gathered to fulfill those purposes. A balanced assessment of student learning would include a selection of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.

Many of our attitudes about assessment, sadly, have been shaped by the assessment we have experienced ourselves. For example, in my case, I received positive feedback in both formal and informal learning situations throughout my life. This led to my being an avid life-long learner. Other individuals have shared nightmare stories about their horrible experiences with assessment where they were disgraced publicly, of never understanding why they were assessed in a given manner, of feeling they had little or no control over their learning situation, and of never learning their strengths. The subtle, yet very strong, message that some people learn throughout their life is that assessment is harsh and very unfair.

For this reason, the development of a balanced assessment of student learning, particularly in the case of young learners, has become an important area of study. I chose to investigate the possibility of developing a rubric assessment report card which would enhance the lives of my students, parents and members of the community. What I found were a variety of assessment strategies which were effective when implemented effectively. I discovered that my students, parents and members of the community had a strong desire to become involved in the process of assessment. This led to the designing and implementation of rubric evaluations used within my classroom on a daily basis, and eventually a rubric assessment report card which was parallel with our daily assessment and evaluation.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The questions I want to investigate are: “Will a rubric assessment report card better complement the current assessment practices in my school?” and “What do I need to know more about in order to design and implement an effective rubric report card?”

These questions came at an opportune moment for me as I was actively searching for a way in which to involve my parents, students, and community members more in the life of our school. For the purpose of this paper, "Rubric" can be defined as a scoring tool containing a set of criteria used to discriminate among different degrees of quality, understanding, or proficiency.

While teaching Grades 1-8 in an English as a Second Language setting on a Hutterite Colony, I recognized the positive effects of using rubrics with my students. During the past two years in my classroom I have re-examined the way I evaluate and assess student learning. My research of the literature on different schools of thought combined with my own observations seem to be in accordance with that of Richard Stiggins (1997), quoted by Bev Lyseng: “Students can hit any target as long as they can see it and it holds still for them . . . We must eliminate the mystery” (personal communications, November, 13, 1998).

Including students and families in the assessment process can have a significant effect on education. Dr. Harry Wong (1998) writes: “The more the school and the family are joined as partners in educating young people, the greater the child’s chances for success” (p. 45). I believe the old saying, “. . . it takes an entire community to raise a child,” remains true today.

Utilizing rubrics in the classroom provides an opportunity for schools to change from a testing culture to an assessment culture. This implies that students will be assessed for accomplishment with their performance being assessed against specific learning criteria. This educational paradigm shift has significant implications for our education system.

Teachers' lives will become easier with the adoption of rubrics as an assessment tool. Objectives clearly out-lined specify the criteria necessary for students to accomplish the given objectives. Students know exactly what they are to learn as well as what is expected of them. There are no mysteries. Parents, students and teachers who understand the assessment procedure are happier and less stressed.

“Grades are only as good as the assessment system from which they are drawn. Grades are clear if clear standards and criteria are used. Narrative comments don't change this fact” (Wiggins, 1996, p. 29).

Cooperative learning, a set of instructional strategies whereby students work in small, mixed-ability learning groups helping one another learn, is often a direct result of utilizing rubrics. Cooperative learning is a win-win situation for everyone involved: students, parents and teachers. The greater the time students work together and the greater the responsibilities students take for their work, the greater the learning.

“The parents . . . see cooperative learning as a bonus because their children are getting the training in leadership, group decision making, and conflict management they'll need to be successful in later life” (Johnson in Wong, 1998, p. 246).

For my students, and their community at large, cooperative learning is an integral part of their lives. Rubrics encourage students to support and encourage one another.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Once upon a time, explaining how children were progressing in school seemed simple. However, times have changed and more accountability is being demanded from teachers regarding their students' progress. Assessment is an extraordinarily complex and controversial topic. Steve Horowitz (1997) writes that we must not lose sight of the reason we are all caught up in the assessment frenzy: to help children learn.

The literature on assessment is vast. A variety of assessment strategies has been the preferred method over the decades as educational paradigms have shifted. Presently the trend is moving towards performance-based instruction. The growing inadequacy of conventional tests has spurred interest in performance assessments which are viewed as being better suited to measure what is actually important; students applying knowledge, skills, and understanding in real-world contexts. Performance assessments—in and of itself—will not significantly improve student performance. However, the development of assessment tasks and evaluative criteria can influence instruction and learning.

Jay McTighe's (1997) thoughtful work in the area of assessment offers seven principles of assessment: establish clear performance targets; strive for authenticity in products and performances; publicize criteria and performance standards; provide models of excellence; teach strategies explicitly; use ongoing assessments for feedback and adjustment; and document and celebrate success.

Gardner (1991) contends that developing students' understanding is a primary goal of teaching. He defines understanding as the ability to apply facts, concepts, and skills appropriately in new situations. Performance-based instruction determines how

students will demonstrate the intended knowledge, understanding, and proficiency.

McTighe's (1997) principle of establishing clear performance targets and the goal of teaching for understanding combine as a powerful means of linking curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Performance assessments become targets for teaching and learning. They also provide a source of evidence that students understand, and can apply, the concepts teachers have taught. Students' attitudes and perceptions toward learning are influenced by the degree to which they understand what is expected of them.

Research and experience confirm that when learners perceive classroom activities as meaningful and relevant, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward them (Schunk, 1990). Educational leaders recommend that teachers involve their students in authentic work. Performance assessment should evaluate students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a manner that reflects the outside world. McTighe (1997) stresses that what we, as teachers, assess sends a strong signal to students about what is important for them to learn. Authentic performance tasks have the ability to play an important role in teaching and assessing.

Teachers who publicize criteria and performance standards are allowing their students to improve their performance. McTighe (1997) writes that our evaluation of student products and performances must be based upon judgement and guided by criteria. Rubrics, rating scales, or a performance list, are some of the scoring tools which incorporate criteria. The set of criteria identifies the qualities that we consider to be most significant in student work. When students have opportunities to examine their work in light of known criteria and performance standards, they have an opportunity to improve.

Providing students with scoring rubrics is an important step of performance-based instruction and assessment; however, many students do not have the ability to apply given criteria to their own work. Wiggins (1993) suggests that if we expect students to do excellent work, they need to know what excellent work looks like. Following his idea, performance-based instruction and assessment require that students be provided with models and demonstrations that illustrate excellence. The result of providing students with models of excellence is often higher quality products and performances. I have found that involving students in the actual designing of the rubric or rating scale, based on their understanding of the topic and criteria, assists students in being able to distinguish between poor- and high-quality performances. Guided by a clear conception of excellence they are better able to improve their own work.

Effective performers, from all walks of life, use specific strategies and techniques to improve their performance. Athletes may visualize a flawless performance, writers seek “critical feedback,” medical students form study groups, executives practice time management techniques. Students must be taught thinking and learning strategies.

One approach is the direct instruction model. In addition to direct instruction, many teachers find it helpful to incorporate thinking and learning strategies into tangible products such as posters, bookmarks, visual symbols, or cue cards (McTighe & Lyman, 1988). These and other cognitive tools offer students practical and concrete support as they acquire and internalize performance-enhancing strategies.

Performance-based instruction underscores the importance of using assessments to guide improvement throughout the learning process, instead of waiting to give feedback at the end of instruction. “Kaizen,” a Japanese concept, suggests that quality is

achieved through constant, incremental improvement. This means ensuring that assessment enhances performance, not simply measures it.

Teachers who believe that the focus of student improvement should be based on a personal benchmark allow every student to achieve a measure of success while cultivating the habits necessary for lifelong learning. McTighe's (1997) principle of documenting and celebrating success causes many educators to ask questions such as, "How do we encourage students' efforts without conveying a false sense of accomplishment? How can we preserve students' self-esteem without lowering our standards?" Some students may believe that certain identified targets are beyond their grasp, resulting in less effort being put forth. I do not believe there is a simple solution to this dilemma. However, I do believe that performance-based instruction and assessment allows for genuine celebrations which encourage children to keep trying and to reach for higher levels of competence. They focus on what children can do and how they have improved as a means of spurring continued growth.

Developing scoring tools for performance-based assessment will not, by itself, boost student achievement. However, the seven principles discussed above reflect promising ways to ensure that performance is something more than is measured at the completion of a unit by a pen and paper test.

Rubrics are becoming accepted as an effective form of performance-based assessment. Rubrics, a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work, articulating gradations of quality for each criteria, appeal to teachers and students alike (Kerrins, 1997). Rubrics describe the difference among various levels of student performance on a given task or project in clear, precise, qualitative terms.

Judith A. Kerrins (1997) writes that when rubrics are used students know the difference among different levels of student work. Rubrics are given to students before they begin their work--resulting in “no surprises, no excuses!” One student actually didn't like rubrics for this very reason: “If you get something wrong,” she said, “your teacher can prove you knew what you were supposed to do!” (Marcus in Gooddrich, 1997, p. 14).

Heidi Goodrich (1997), in her article “Understanding Rubrics,” suggests five reasons for using rubrics in the classroom:

- 1) Rubrics are powerful tools for both teaching and assessment by making the teacher's expectations clear. Rubrics help define “quality.”
- 2) Rubrics help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their own and others' work.
- 3) Rubrics reduce the amount of time teachers spend evaluating student work.
- 4) Rubrics, because of their “accordion nature” allow teachers to accommodate heterogeneous classes.
- 5) Rubrics are easy to use and explain.

When rubrics are used to guide self- and peer assessment, students become increasingly able to solve problems in their own and one another's work. Rubrics provide students with more informative feedback about their strengths and areas in need of improvement. There is no reason why rubrics cannot be expanded to reflect the work of both gifted students and those with learning disabilities.

Educators who have accepted the shift towards more authentic, performance-based assessments are favoring the use of rubrics. How do you create rubrics which will be effective for you and your students? Goodrich (1997) outlines the design process which should engage students in the following steps:

- 1) Look at models: identify the characteristics that make the strong ones strong and the weak ones weak.
- 2) List criteria: list what counts in quality work.
- 3) Articulate graduations of quality: describe the strongest and weakest levels of quality, then fill in the middle levels.
- 4) Practice on models: have students use the rubrics to evaluate the models you gave them in step 1.
- 5) Use self- and peer assessment: as students work stop them occasionally for self- and peer assessment.
- 6) Revise: always provide students with time to revise their work based on the feedback they have received.
- 7) Use teacher assessment: use the same rubric students used to assess their work.

I have gone through the seven-step process with students in grades one through eight. We found that a powerful rubric articulates the characteristics in students' own words. The largest challenge we found was to avoid unclear language. Elusive terms like creative are difficult to define. Students then discussed what creative meant in terms

of the context of the rubric, and brainstormed methods in which they could meet the criterion.

The second challenge my students and I faced was avoiding negative language. Quite often articulating gradations of quality is also challenging. We found that time spent thinking about the criteria before finding the levels of quality worked well.

Once you have created rubrics--the most difficult part--using them is relatively easy. The point of a rubric is to help students learn more and produce better final products. Allow students time to revise their work after assessing themselves. Peer assessment takes longer to become effective. Students may need to be held accountable for their assessment of a classmate's work by signing off on the rubric they use.

Grading, if a requirement, is also relatively easy with rubrics. A piece of work that reflects the highest level of quality for each criterion obviously deserves the highest grade--"A," while a piece of work that consistently falls in the lowest deserves a low grade--"D." Seldom does one piece of work fall into only one level of quality. Many teachers average out the levels of quality, either formally or informally.

The educational literature shows that rubrics may also be used in portfolios. Whichever way rubrics are used, the main idea is to support and evaluate student learning.

"In the new assessment program, no child 'fails' . . . the lowest level, novice, recognizes the child as a beginner, not a failure" (Boysen in Burke, 1996, p. 65). Assessment of performance-based instruction tends to use qualitative scales which use adjectives rather than numerals to characterize student performance. There are two types of qualitative scales: descriptive and qualitative.

Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992 in Burke (1996), author of The Mindful School: How to Assess Authentic Learning, defines descriptive scales:

“Descriptive scales label student performance by using fairly neutral terms to characterize the performance” (p. 64). These scales do not always make explicit the standards on which judgement is based. Examples of a descriptive scale are:

“No evidence . . . Minimal evidence . . . Partial evidence . . .

Complete evidence.

Task not attempted . . . Partial completion . . . Complete . . .

Goes beyond.

Off task . . . Attempts to address task . . . Minimal attention to task . . .

Addresses task but no elaboration . . . Fully elaborated and attentive to task and audience.”

Evaluative scales incorporate judgements of worth based on standards of excellence. Evaluative scales may use grades or descriptors of excellence or judgement of competence. These scales require scoring criteria that include standards of excellence, competence, or significant outcomes. An example of an evaluative scale follows:

AWESOME	A	Student addressed topic logically and used effective delivery style to present case.
WOW	B	Student addressed topic in organized way and used effective speaking techniques.
OKAY	C	Student addressed topic, but did not use effective speaking techniques (eye contact, gestures).
OOPS	D	Student did not address the topic.
OUCH	F	Student did not give speech.

(Burke, 1996)

As you can see from the above two examples, an evaluative scale is more in line with performance-based assessment. As teachers, we must answer critical questions in order to shape a grading system. What is the purpose of the reporting system?

Rating scales, rubrics included, ought to serve to support learning and encourage student success. Positive feedback in terms of reporting achievement provide motivation to improve. “Grades” should indicate student achievement and be clearly communicated to students and parents.

Assessment is an integral part of our educational process. There are practices that increase the meaning of assessment or of the grade and give it more meaning to students, parents, and teachers. The integrity of assessment is increased when grades align with instruction, learning, and testing. Assessments arrived at through a thoughtful process, involving a close analysis of the instructional factors, become more meaningful.

Rick Creech (1999) provides practical guidelines to provide accurate and understandable descriptions of learning:

- . what students have learned
- . what students can do
- . whether student learning status is in line with expectations for the particular level
- . how communication is facilitated between teachers and parents
- . why averaging falls far short of providing an accurate description of what students have learned
- . why any single measure of learning can be unreliable
- . why the most current information provides the most accurate description of learning
- . why one should consider eliminating the highest and lowest scores, and instead, use the median scores

When reporting relates to learning criteria, teachers and students have a clearer picture of what students have learned. The literature points out that we must be acutely aware of the learning criteria. Three criteria are referred to on a consistent basis:

- 1) Product Criteria--focus on what students know and are able to do. These are the final results.
- 2) Process Criteria--grading and reporting should reflect not just the final results, but how students got there.

- 3) Progress Criteria--improvement scoring or learning gain. Consider how much students have gained from their learning experiences. Gauge how far students have come rather than where they are. Here, scoring criteria are highly individualized.

Creech (1999) states that it is the teacher's responsibility to assess students in different ways for different students, using a combination of these three learning criteria when circumstances merit.

Traditional grading practices serve the following purposes: communicate student achievement to student, teachers, parents and other stakeholders; provide incentives to learn; provide information that the student can use for self-evaluation; and, evaluate a particular program's effectiveness. When the first three purposes are reflected by grades, a broader understanding of their use emerges. This broader understanding assists students, parents, and teachers in dealing with the fact that different students receive different grades based on a variety of criteria.

Non-traditional grading practices such as descriptive grading and multiple grading are beginning to be implemented in regular education classrooms. These methods are highly reflective of the degree of adherence to the criteria expected by the teacher. All students may benefit from non-traditional grading practices.

Several non-traditional grading practices, when matched with a non-traditional testing method, give a more accurate indication of student achievement. Helen Sobehart, author of "Alternative Methods of Grading" (1998), discusses the following alternative practices:

An accommodation checklist accompanies the report card and indicates the modifications that were made to help the student achieve success in the regular classroom. The checklist might include such items as a test read orally for the student; materials modified to meet the student's needs; or, individual instruction needed at times.

Incentive grading offers a student a way to improve a grade during the course of a reporting period. Examples of incentive grading systems that could be used are: elimination grade--the student is given the opportunity to eliminate the lowest grade in order to improve the grade average; alternative credit grade--the student is allowed to do an alternate assignment to improve a grade.

The pass/fail system of grading requires that only the minimum competencies for the project need to be determined. Sobehart in Creech (1999) identifies the advantages of this system as being: less competition among students; less anxiety among students; student knows the expectations; and, ease of scoring. The disadvantages of the pass/fail system, are the following: they are difficult to provide constructive feedback; less motivating for students; no way to judge ability; and, arbitrary minimum standards (Creech, 1999).

Based on my review of the literature in assessment, I found the following common questions to consider when developing a grading scale:

- 1) What is the purpose for grades? (class rank, sorting, motivation)
- 2) What is the audience for the grades? (students, parents, colleagues, employers)
- 3) What criteria are considered? (tests, projects, effort, attitude)

- 4) What system is used for grades on the report card? (letter, number, narrative)
- 5) How should one define terminology of grading? (A=?, 4.0=?)
- 6) How should one communicate the system to stakeholders?
- 7) Is the grading system grounded in sound measurement principles?
(research based)
- 8) Does the grading system provide valid measurement of student achievement?
- 9) Do teachers need professional development in grading practices?
- 10) What does the grade a student receives on the report card really indicate?

Having taught E.S.L. students in grades one through eight for six years, I have found the issue of assessment to be challenging. Teaching and assessing English with native speakers of a distinctive German culture, all with varying degrees of oral language development, has been rigorous to say the least. My question, “Will a rubric assessment report card better complement the current assessment practices in my school?” was very timely. It has proven to be a most interesting journey--for myself, my students and their parents, and the community at large.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

For the past six years I have had the wonderful opportunity of learning and laughing with thirty Hutterite children, their families and their community. It is here that I teach grade levels one through eight in a small one room school house. It is a challenging, yet exhilarating, position.

Hutterites are a group of ethnic people that share common beliefs, including adult baptism, pacifism, and simple living. They practice communal ownership of property and communal living. The central ethos that keeps their community united is based on the words of the New Testament. The uniting principle is that of owning all things in common in a farming life-style removed from mass society.

Hutterites have three distinct subgroups: Schmiedeleut, Dariusleut, and Lehreleut. Each group is like a separate denomination with its own disciplines. All Hutterite people speak in a Tyrolese German dialect. This German is an oral, unwritten language spoken primarily in the home. High German is used in the church and German school.

The distinctive dress of the Hutterite people--black cloth and suspenders for the men, and polka-dot shawls and colorful long skirts and aprons for the women--make them easily recognizable by members of the "outside world."

Certified English teachers are hired by the local school board authorities to instruct the children in the mandated Alberta Education curriculum for grades one through nine. Teachers are responsible for reporting students' progress to parents, central office, and Alberta Education. Report cards are issued either three or four times within the school year and cumulative files are kept for each student. Provincial Achievement

Tests are written by students in grades three, six, and nine. During the past decade there has been a marked increase in student achievement on these exams with the majority of colony students meeting or surpassing the provincial acceptable assessment standard.

Colony members on the colony build the school facilities itself, with English teachers commuting to and from school. Colony members are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the school. German school and English school are held in the same classroom.

On Lehreleut colonies no modern technology is allowed. Computers, televisions and videocassette recorders, tape decks, and overheads are not permitted. Musical instruments such as pianos, guitars, and musical instruments are also disallowed. This limits a variety of learning opportunities for the children and can make creative teaching a challenge.

Thematic teaching is my preferred method of teaching in a multi-graded situation. English teachers often utilize a two- or three-year cycle in areas of social studies and science to ensure that all topics are covered. Cooperative learning occurs with older and younger students working together. Our colony school has an informal "No Fail" policy. Students' progress at their own speeds, working at whichever level they are presently achieving. We refer to "year" rather than grade. For example, a student may be in year three but working in a grade level four math program, or a student in year five may be working on criteria to meet objectives for a science four topic.

All students are E.S.L. students because their mother tongue is German. Children beginning English school come with little, or no, command of the English language. For the most part English is only spoken during English school; however, they quickly

become fluent in English. Hutterite children are generally enthusiastic and love to learn. There are very few discipline problems in a colony school.

Infants stay at home with their mothers until they are two years of age. Toddlers between the ages of two and five years spend six hours per day in the kindergarten where older women from the colony oversee them. When children reach six years of age they attend German school during the school day. Here they are taught their German alphabet, and how to read and write. They also begin memorizing their scripture lessons.

Children begin attending English school at the age of seven years and complete their formal English schooling when they are fifteen years of age. The school day is extremely long for Hutterite children as they attend German school for approximately one-and-a-half hours before English school begins, and again after English school for approximately one hour. During German school, taught by their German teacher, students learn to read and write in High German, memorize scriptures, and sing hymns. English homework is frowned upon as the students are expected to devote themselves to their German studies in the evening. Therefore, it is often difficult to thoroughly cover the entire curriculum.

The colony I teach on is of the Lehreleut denomination. This denomination is very conservative in their beliefs and practices. There is a very strict hierarchy, which is adhered to by all colony members.

The head of the Hutterite hierarchy is the senior minister. He is in charge of all decisions affecting colony members and is the spiritual leader. Church services are held twice daily. The senior minister also performs adult baptism, weddings, and funerals. The junior minister takes over if the senior minister is absent from the colony.

Next in line is the head boss. Married male colony members vote him to his position. The head boss is responsible for all financial business of the colony. He keeps books, orders supplies and pays bills. This position is extremely demanding, as colony farms are big business.

The male elders of the colony are seen as people with wisdom. They are involved in all decisions which affect the well being of colony members. Elders are treated with great respect.

The German teacher, also an elected position, is responsible for the instruction of all German classes. He is also responsible for the behavior of all children during the day, twelve months a year. Frequently the German teacher is also assigned the position of gardener. The children assist him with the planting, watering, weeding, and harvest of fruit and vegetables which are necessary to feed colony members.

Next in the hierarchy are the farm bosses: the field boss who oversees the actual farming operation; the dairy boss who is in charge of the dairy barn and the cow boss who cares for the range cows; the pig boss who operates the swine barn; and the chicken boss who tends to the chicken barn. Although technology is not permitted within the school these barns have all the newest technology available to our society. Each of these individual areas is an important part of the whole colony operation.

Equal to the bosses are the tradesmen: carpenter, electrician, plumber, mechanic and blacksmith. These men are extremely talented at their occupations and keep the colony running smoothly.

Women also work hard for the well being of the colony. They are responsible for childcare, cooking and baking, sewing and cleaning. An elected head cook oversees the

communal kitchen. All women and older girls' work on a weekly rotation baking and cooking schedule for the colony members.

The older boys and girls (those out of English school and not married) assist wherever they are needed. They participate in a process similar to apprenticing where they are taught the necessary skills required by the colony. Children are expected to attend school and learn their lessons, baby sit, and assist with all work on the colony.

Every member of a colony contributes to the well being of the colony. Colony life is simple and filled with hard work. Hutterites' lives are guided by their religious beliefs.

I have found teaching in this unique environment to be very rewarding. Parents are interested in their children's progress and enjoy being involved in our school life. They are extremely supportive of my efforts with their children and encourage their children to be the best they can be.

Our colony, due to large numbers, is fortunate to have two full time teachers and a full time paraprofessional. Students appreciate all that we do to make their lives richer. I hope I am enhancing their lives as they become actively engaged with learning on their journey towards adulthood.

METHODOLOGY

My research is the story of the journey I shared with 30 students to design and implement a rubric assessment report card for a multi-graded one-room school on a Hutterite colony. They are at different levels of learning and all learn in a variety of ways. The 30 boys and girls, ranging in age from seven years to 15 years of age, have numerous interests, likes and dislikes. We have developed a close rapport with one another and share our successes and frustrations, laughter and tears, our dreams and our realities. Our classroom is filled with energetic, enthusiastic learners' actively engaged in learning.

In our classroom there are opportunities for brainstorming, independent work, centers, group projects and sharing. We celebrate student improvement and success. The Hutterite culture encourages group work for the benefit of all; thus we practice this in school. Cooperative learning is the accepted manner of learning in our class with older children helping younger children and with everyone joining in discussions and activities.

With 30 children, in eight grades, actively engaged with learning, our classroom tends to be noisy. Often a passing comment will lead to a spontaneous learning moment, which extends throughout the entire day. The children's days are filled with questions--some answered while others are left for the moment.

With this many children assessment becomes an important and often disturbing issue. The increased emphasis on measuring student progress and reporting this progress to students, parents, and the community raises important questions. What do we actually mean by assessment as opposed to grading? How do we design reliable assessments?

Can we evaluate an individual performance on a cooperative project? How do we explain this to parents?

In order to answer these questions and others I chose to follow the accepted Action Research approach of methodology as outlined by Dr. David Townsend, a member of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge.

Dr. Townsend defines action research as: “A fancy term for a really great way for teachers to demonstrate their commitment to lifelong learning, satisfy their curiosity, collaborate with colleagues, inspire their students and document their successes” (personal communication, February, 1997). He refers to authors such as Richard Sagor, Carr and Kemmis, John Elliot, and Robin MacTaggart for further examples of action research in which teachers model problem solving for their students, actively engage in professional development activities, and develop high levels of expertise in selected areas of curriculum, instruction and organization.

Townsend outlines the process of action research which generally follows ten steps:

- 1) Define the focus or problem.
- 2) Collect information.
- 3) Analyze the information. What’s relevant? What’s doable?
- 4) Report your preliminary conclusions with your group.
- 5) Plan action--build personal commitment and group support.
- 6) Take action.
- 7) Collect information.

- 8) Analyze the collective knowledge to help make sense of what is happening and why.
- 9) Publish.
- 10) Future Action: celebrate, relax, and reflect. Take time to consolidate your learning.

Townsend reminds those involved in action research that the process frequently repeats itself before the process is complete (personal communication, February, 1997).

Define the Focus or Problem

The questions that guide this study are “Will a rubric assessment report card better complement the current assessment practices in my school?” and “What do I need to know more about in order to design and implement an effective rubric report card?”

Collect Information

I turned to my students, colleagues, and the literature for answers. All were helpful in assisting me develop a strong philosophy on assessment, which I believe will help open the doors of communication between my school and the community.

Assessment guru Grant Wiggins (1998), in his article “Measuring Student Progress,” writes that good assessment is about expanding the assessment repertoire because no single form is sufficient. Every method has its strengths and weaknesses, and its place.

My students and I made a list of the various assessment strategies we were currently using in our classroom. Checklists, anecdotal records, portfolios, rubrics,

performances, oral quizzes and written tests were being utilized throughout each reporting period. Percentages for the older students were being recorded while checklists were kept for the children in primary grades. All students kept portfolios to share with their parents and interested guests to our school.

Analyze the Information

As a group we discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each of our assessment practices. My students preferred assessment types in which they were actively involved. Rubrics and portfolios topped their list as being the most effective and most fair. Here was insight number one--my students believed in self-assessment as a valuable learning tool. Insight number two--students wanted to be involved in the assessment of their own work. Insight number three--letter grades held little meaning for my students.

More questions arose: "Are each of these assessments reliable?" "What is really being assessed?" "Is there an easier way to assess student progress?" "Should all students be assessed in the same way all of the time?" "Can we design a new report card for just our school?"

Report

I asked my students if they would be interested in a new reporting format for our report cards. The answer was an unanimous, "YES!" I explained my position to our German teacher and assistant superintendent. Both were willing to experiment with a new format for our school. Colleagues expressed an interest in seeing the end results.

Plan and Take Action

I began to ponder the effectiveness of my assessment practices. It was now time to search outside of our classroom for answers to our questions. I began discussing assessment with colleagues and made plans to visit some of their classrooms.

I observed a variety of teaching strategies and a mixture of assessment techniques. I found a wide discrepancy between process-based and product-based assessment. Teachers frequently doubted the reliability and validity of their assessment. It became obvious that teachers need to find assessments that illustrate information about each individual child and the progress she is making.

Analyze

I began to review what I knew about assessment. What was relevant to my teaching situation? More importantly, what was manageable? Assessment should be valid and reliable. I also believe assessment should be a positive experience and promote learning.

I reflected on the instructional strategies I tended to use in my classroom. Performance-based instruction was the mainstay of my day with direct instruction interspersed. My students were responding well to rubrics and rating scales, and becoming effective at writing criteria with graduations for performance levels.

Grade 1 & 2 Math Rubric
for
Borrowing in Subtraction

- 4 **AWESOME!!**
- Students are busy and on task.
 - Students demonstrate a strong understanding of when and how to borrow when subtracting.
 - Students can solve problems correctly.
 - Students can explain the process to another student, using more than one method.
- 3 **TERRIFIC!**
- Students are busy and on task.
 - Students have a pretty good understanding of when and how to borrow when subtracting.
 - Students can usually solve a problem correctly.
 - Students have difficulty explaining the process.
- 2 **OKAY**
- Students are busy and on task.
 - Students are not always sure of when and how to borrow when subtracting.
 - Students can sometimes solve a problem correctly.
 - Students can not explain the process but they can show how to borrow with pictures or manipulatives.
- 1 **OOPS**
- Students are busy and on task.
 - Students always need help to know when and how to borrow when subtracting.
 - Students seldom solve a problem correctly.
 - Students cannot explain or show the process.

It was time to learn more about rubrics.

Collect Information

Dr. Nola Aitken, member of the Education Faculty at the University of Lethbridge, presented a workshop at the Hutterite Educator's Conference in May, 1997 at which I chaired her session. Her workshop, entitled "Rubrics: So What's The Mystery?", was a hands-on-approach to understanding rubrics. Aitken stated that rubrics are multi faceted in that they: link assessment and learning, can assess accurately and fairly when constructed and applied properly, can be used formatively to yield diagnostic information, and can be used summatively for grading purposes (personal communication, May, 1997). After sharing a variety of rubrics (see Appendix A) all participants were actively involved in setting criteria for an art rubric.

I attended a professional development day sponsored by Horizon School Division in Taber and participated in a presentation on rubrics. The presenter, Judi Hadden, suggested that a four-point rating scale was more effective and professional than a five point rating scale. She felt, that as professionals, we knew which students were meeting the criteria for specific grade level objectives and that a five-point scale, too often, led to sitting on the fence (personal communications, October, 1997).

Reflecting on my students I realized I knew exactly what progress they were making, what they could do, and what they understood. The question was, "How do I share this information with parents?" I certainly had food for thought.

I attended the Special Education conference where I listened to expert Spence Rogers. "Success is a feeling of forward motion," says Rogers (personal communication, October, 17, 1998). He believes that rubrics allow students to take control of their learning by moving forward. Rogers defined assessment as a gathering of information

so we can change our behavior to improve results. He stressed that assessment is about teaching and learning where relationships are KEY. Evaluation is about grades and scores. Spence Rogers further differentiates between the two by saying that assessment is a motivational tool while evaluation is a demotivational tool. Rogers demonstrated how to create a rubric with students and suggested that outstanding rubrics have anchors to match the words. In order to have success with rubrics, according to Rogers (personal communication, October, 17, 1998) the following should occur:

- 1) The rubric must be user friendly.
- 2) The assessment scale should consist of even numbers.
- 3) The rubric must be visible to the students.
- 4) The vocabulary should be active.
- 5) Students must be involved in the process of developing the rubric.
- 6) Rubrics must become part of the daily classroom routine.

This motivational speaker believes that educational terminology is becoming muddled and that rubrics are coming to mean marking, rather than referring to the quality criteria by which something is evaluated or developed.

One month after listening to Spence Rogers I attended the 1998 Assessment Consortium Conference. During a powerful drama presentation during the opening ceremonies I received a message which said, "Marks do NOT reflect knowledge."

Dr. Harry Wong, an international speaker on effective learners, was the keynote speaker. He provided insightful comments on common sense, user-friendly approaches to effective assessment. "The effective teacher AFFECTS lives," said Dr. Wong.

“He has positive expectations that students will be successful” (personal communication, November, 12, 1998). In his book, The First Days of School, Dr. Wong addresses issues from discipline to assessment. He believes that students should be involved in the process of assessment.

Kris Crowther and Joanne Wanvig, teachers in Calgary, utilize rubrics as part of their broad-based assessment. Their session, entitled “Rubrics Made Easy,” encouraged teachers to use rubrics on a daily basis. They shared a variety of rubrics which they and their students have designed. Crowther and Wanvig suggested that to assign grades using holistic rubric scoring, first sort the papers into several stacks, representing top level papers, middle level, and bottom level. The levels should be interpreted as evaluating the responses to one particular problem, not as categorizing the students themselves (personal communication, November, 13, 1998).

The session presented by Sandra Levesque and Helen West supported their belief in relating the role of assessment to quality learning. They stated that rubrics: identifies the learner expectations from the Program of Studies; identifies key elements to be evaluated; describes the criteria that students must meet in order to achieve a performance level indicator; helps teachers work towards consistency in evaluating students’ work; and, helps teachers identify student samples at each performance level to help in evaluating student work (personal communication, November, 13, 1998).

Joanne Stickle, a member of the Alberta Assessment Consortium Executive Committee, quoted Richard J. Stiggins: “The quality of instruction is a function of teachers’ understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the students. The depth of that understanding, in turn, hinges on the quality of teachers’ assessment of

student achievement (personal communication, November 13, 1998). Her presentation was extremely effective in promoting thought on our individual beliefs about assessment and matching assessments to purpose.

Analyze

It was now time to delve into the literature on assessment. What I found supported my philosophy that assessment should improve performance, not just monitor it. It also supported my belief that assessment can be used as a teaching and a learning tool for students. In a student centered classroom linking assessment with learning is an obvious progression. The literature stressed the importance of effective communication for students, parents, and the community. When using rubrics clear and appropriate targets are essential.

After reviewing the literature I knew that my classroom instruction was primarily performance-based. It made sense that the preferred method of assessment should focus on performance-based assessment. My students were familiar with the use of rubrics as an assessment tool. They had been involved in designing rubrics and setting the criteria for them. Students in grades one through eight were becoming more proficient at self- and peer assessment, using rubrics as their guide.

Could I design a rubric assessment report card which was parallel with our daily assessment? Our present report card is inadequate (see Appendix B.) I began searching for report cards from schools which used performance-based assessment. I critiqued them, looking closely at the language used for descriptors (See Appendix C).

I reflected on the powerful words of Steve Horowitz (1996): “It’s not what you say, but how it’s heard that counts.” He related a message his superintendent had once shared with him: “. . . do you know who our community members are? How they communicate? The language they use?” The message here is that if you want to communicate something to somebody, you had better talk their language, not yours. It doesn’t matter what you intend to communicate, it’s what the receiver hears and interprets your message to be that counts.

With this profound message in mind I considered the audience for my proposed rubric evaluation report card. The major stakeholders were my 30 E.S.L. students, their German speaking parents, and the Hutterite community at large. All were accustomed to the use of rubrics in our classroom and the vocabulary they used. The rubrics were meaningful, valid and reliable. Students had accepted ownership of this form of assessment. I had found our rubrics to be user friendly and motivational.

Publish

After receiving the green light from my assistant superintendent, German teacher, and students, I began the process of designing a rubric assessment report card, keeping in mind my main reason--sharing the students’ progress with their parents.

I included an explanation of the rubric scale, choosing descriptors that were common to the German language of colony members. Personal and social development is an area that is extremely important to Hutterite people, thus this area was also included using the same rubric scale evaluation for subject area achievement.

Although attendance is kept in an official registrar this is not an area of interest to my community. Attendance in my school is extremely high and parents notify the school when their child(ren) is going to be absent. Therefore, I did not include an attendance section, but rather a brief reminder of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

The most difficult aspect of designing the report card was deciding what subject areas would be reported. To help me with this enormous task I asked for assistance from my students. Language Learning receives the main focus of our attention, as students are becoming bilingual. We brainstormed and decided on seven distinct areas for language. We then subdivided these categories. Math is also perceived by the Hutterite culture as having great value. Thus, mathematics was divided into four separate areas.

An area was provided for anecdotal notes from the teacher. This area allows for further comments, from the teacher, to expand on student performance. Parents requested that interview comments be recorded on this formal document. This was an excellent idea as we hold only two formal interviews per year and it is often difficult to remember what we discussed earlier in the year.

After reflecting on the importance of student input I included a section for students to record their goals for the next reporting period. Students review their report card and meet with the teacher to identify agreed upon areas of focus. We can then refer to this throughout the year to monitor progress being made.

The back page of the report card has a division for parents to sign as well as an area for a final message from the teacher. A certificate of student achievement indicates that the student will advance to the next year of school. There is no mention of grade

level as all students work at a level in which they can achieve success and show improvement.

Future Action

Our rubric assessment report card was now ready to pilot. I felt it was based on sound educational pedagogy and would meet the needs of the students, their parents, and community.

RESULTS

As I prepared to complete the rubric assessment report card I realized I had not included in my design a designated area to indicate if a student was working on a modified, at grade level, or an advanced program. Therefore, I wrote in the words "Grade level ____" beside each subject area heading. This worked well as many of my students are working on objectives for more than one grade level.

I was filled with feelings of excitement and anticipation. The students had all seen our new reporting assessment tool. We had gone through it together, discussing what all the terms meant, sharing ways they could answer any questions their families might have. Everyone, from the youngest student to the oldest, felt it reflected what we valued in our classroom.

The big day arrived and my students proudly ran home to share their progress with their parents and community. The following morning everyone returned with smiling faces. "No problems," some shouted. "They understood everything." "My mom and dad said this was the easiest report card ever to understand," others added.

Two days later student/parent/teacher interviews were held. All students attended and all families were represented by at least one parent. When I asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the new reporting format I was met with smiles and silence. Students shared their portfolios with their parents and read a piece of their own writing. We discussed individual student's progress and brainstormed together for ideas to improve areas of weakness. In some cases, the students asked to write their goals

while we were reviewing their report cards. For others they wrote them the next day at school.

It appears that all the stakeholders have accepted our new rubric assessment report card: students, parents, and community at large. It has been successful in reporting student progress in a manner which promotes learning and understanding.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this investigation was to determine if a rubric assessment report card would better complement the current assessment practices in my school. This led to a review of the current educational literature, consultations with, and observations of, colleagues who believe in performance-based instruction and assessment, and brainstorming sessions with my students.

The implications of utilizing a rubric assessment report card are many. Foremost is the belief that assessment tools, such as rubrics, will improve student learning and performance. Second, is the understanding that rubrics are meant to be motivational. A third implication of using a rubric assessment report card is the philosophy of allowing students to be involved in their own assessment, taking responsibility for their own learning, and identifying criterion to be met.

The significance of using assessment tools such as rubrics is they can affect students, parents, and teachers in a positive manner. Knowledge and performance expectations will be clear and communicated to students on a regular basis. The scoring guides (rubrics) will be written in precise language with distinct criteria for each level and will be reviewed regularly. Students have an opportunity to reflect on their own progress and will engage in activities that help them achieve success. In doing this, students can take responsibility for their own learning.

Rubrics can also build the development of a common vocabulary that focuses on student learning and is known by all students, parents, and community members. In order to be understood it is necessary for educators to limit their use of technical terms.

By including student, parents, and community members in the process a climate of trust and respect is built.

Teachers benefit from using rubrics because they can provide an objective-measuring tool to assess student progress. They also provide a framework for interventions and support systems to assist students in meeting their goals. Both of these effects are centered on student learning and performance.

The following quotation by Bill Page, in Dr. Harry Wong's (1998) book The First Days of School (p. 38), reminds all educators of the significant role we, as teachers, play: "Each child is living the only life he has – the only one he will ever have. The least we can do is not diminish it."

CONCLUSION

The journey to design and implement a rubric assessment report card for 30 E.S.L. students, their parents, and community is completed. The process has been enlightening for all involved. Our school community is pleased with our rubric assessment report card and everyone has accepted ownership of it.

I have shared this design with other colleagues who were interested. For those who were already using rubrics in a performance-based classroom it made perfect sense. Some have adopted it for their classroom or school as is, while others have made minor modifications and adjustments.

My initial question, “Will a rubric assessment report card better complement assessment practices in my school?”, has been answered. The answer is a resounding, “YES!” I have begun to answer my second question, “What do I need to know more about to design a rubric assessment card?” This is an ongoing process, one which I am sure will evolve more completely with experience, time and further investigation.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Assessment Consortium. (1997). A framework for student assessment. [On-Line]. Available: www.aac.ab.ca.
- Burke, K. (1993). The mindful school: How to assess thoughtful learning. Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing.
- Creech, R. (1999). Grading. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.cisc.k12.pa.us/CISC.pgs/Resources/Classroom7.html>.
- Gardner, H. (1991). The unschooled mind. New York: Basic Books.
- Goodrich, H. (1996-1997). Understanding rubrics. Educational Leadership, 54(4), 14-17.
- Horowitz, S. (1997, December/January). Thoughtful reporting of assessment results can help schools and students achieve goal of improved learning. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 13.
- Horowitz, S. (1996, August/September). It's not what you say, but how it's heard that counts. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 13.
- Kerrins, J. A. (1997, February/March). The 4r's of assessment reform. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 10-11.
- McTighe, J. (1997). What happens between assessments? Educational Leadership, 54(4), 6-12.
- McTighe, J., & Lyman, F. (1988). Cueing thinking in the classroom: The promise of theory-embedded tools. Educational Leadership, 45(7), 18-24.
- Schunk, D. (1990). Goal setting and self-efficacy during self-regulated learning. Educational Psychologist, 25(1), 71-86.
- Wiggins, G. (1998). Assessment guru Grant Wiggins on measuring student progress [On-line]. Available: <http://place.scholastic.com/instructor/classroom/organizing/guru.htm>.
- Wiggins, G. (1996). Honest and fairness: Toward better grading and reporting. Communicating Student Learning, 1996 ASCD Yearbook. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wiggins, G. (1993). Assessing student performance: Exploring the limits and purposes of testing. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (1998). The first days of school. Harry K. Wong Publications, Inc.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For further references refer to the listed authors:

Barr, M. A. (1997, February/March). Linking learning and assessment. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 4-7.

Brewer, R. (1996). Exemplars: A teacher's solution. Underhill, VT: Exemplars.

Cordeiro, P. (1998, December/January). Designing and evaluating student work. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 19-21.

Hartke, K. (1999, February/March). The misuse of tests for retention. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 22-24.

Meisels, S. J. (1995). Equity and excellence in group-administered and performance-based assessments. Equity in Educational Assessment and Testing, 243-264.

Munk, D. D., & Bursuck, W. D. (1997, January). Can grades be helpful and fair? Thrust for Educational Leadership, 44-47.

Perino, L., & Magid, M. (1998, December/January). Making assessment work. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 30-32.

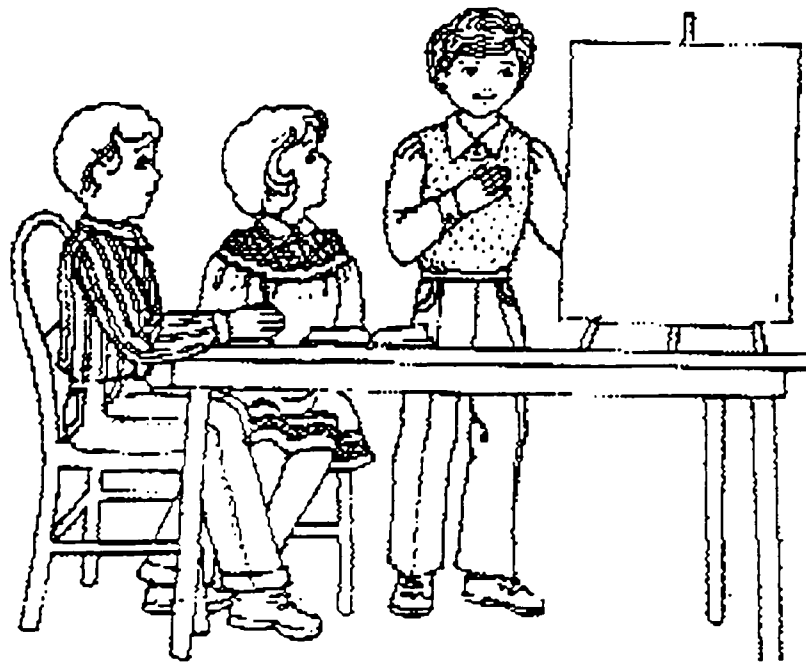
Wiggins, G., (1997). Practicing what we preach in designing authentic assessments. Educational Leadership, 54(4), 18-25.

Wright, E. F. (1997, December/January). Connecting teaching and testing. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 10-12.

Zach, T., Zon, C., Ackley, D., Olds, S., & Wainio, M. (1998, December/January). Standards for improvement. Thrust for Educational Leadership, 14-18.

APPENDIX A

Additional Scoring Guide (Rubric) Examples



Collaboration / Cooperation Rubric

- 4 I participate actively and even help lead the group in setting goals.
I do the jobs assigned to me better than anyone expects.
- 3 I participate in group discussions and show that I care about the group goals. I complete the jobs assigned to me.
- 2 I participate in group discussions and show that I care about the group goals, but I do not do the jobs assigned to me.
- 1 I don't participate in group discussions or show that I care about the group goals; or, I actually work against the goals.

**Sets Up and Carries Out an Investigation that
Effectively Test the Hypothesis Rubric**

- 4 Sets up and carries out an investigation that is a complete and valid test of the hypothesis and addresses all important questions raised by the hypothesis. The investigation is designed to provide complete and accurate data and a model of the investigation design.
- 3 Sets up and carries out an investigation that is a fair test of the hypothesis and addresses the most important questions raised by the hypothesis. The investigation provides accurate data for the evaluation.
- 2 Sets up and carries out an investigation that addresses some of the important questions raised by the hypothesis but omits others. The design of the investigation produces some errors in data collection or interpretation.
- 1 Sets up and carries out an investigation that does not test the central features of the hypothesis. The design of the investigation is seriously flawed and the collection of accurate data is unlikely.

Generic Rubric Grade 4 Mathematics

- 4 Demonstrates a thorough understanding of how basic geometric shapes are used in the planning of well-organized communities and provides new insights into some aspect of their use.
- 3 Displays a complete and accurate understanding of how geometric shapes are used in the planning of well-organized communities.
- 2 Displays an incomplete understanding of how basic geometric shapes are used in the planning of a well-organized communities and has some notable misconceptions about their use.
- 1 Has severe misconceptions about how basic geometric shapes are used in the planning of well-organized communities.

Self-assessment: Communication Rubric

- 4 I communicate ideas by making sure I have a strong main idea or topic and carefully organized details that explain or support the idea or topic.
I make sure the details help make the bigger ideas useful and interesting.
- 3 I communicate ideas by making sure I have a clear main idea or topic and enough details to explain or support the idea or topic.
- 2 I communicate some important information, but I do not organize it well around a main idea or topic.
- 1 I communicate information in unorganized pieces.

APPENDIX B

Past Report Card Format

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY											
MONTH	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	
Days Absent											
Times Late											

NOTE: Unwarranted absence or irregular attendance and punctuality has a negative effect on student achievement.

Achievement on Subjects

A - 80 - 100% Excellent
 B - 65 - 79% Above Average
 C - 50 - 64% Average
 D - 40 - 49% Below Average
 F - 0 - 39% Very Poor

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT				
	5: Consistently	4: Usually	3: Frequently	2: Occasionally
Works Independently				
Completes Assigned Work				
Follows Directions				
Uses Time Effectively				
Respects others				
Works in a Neat and Organized Manner				
Respects School and Personal Property				
Works Well in Groups				
Accepts Responsibility				
Practices Self-control				

REPORT 1				
Language Learning	Reading	Communication	Composition	
Mathematics	Operations	Problem Solving	Composition	
Social Studies				
Science				
Health				
Music				
Art				
Physical Education				
Creative Writing				

APPENDIX C

Sample Report Cards

Achievement Categories

- 5 - Excellent Work
- 4 - Good Work
- 3 - Satisfactory Work
- 2 - Experiencing Difficulty

Work and Study Habits

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Works Independently				
Completes Assignments				
Works Well With Others				
Follows Directions				
Participates in Discussions				
Displays Effort				
Takes Pride in Work				

ATTENDANCE RECORD

Month	Days Present	Month	Days Present
Aug./Sept	/22	February	/15
October	/22	March	/19
November	/18	April	/17
December	/15	May	/19
January	/20	June	/20

EVERETT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT Department of Special Education Grading Worksheet

Student's name: _____

Teacher: _____

Class: _____ Period _____

Ratings

4 - Independent

3 - Needs guidance

2 - Needs to be shown and assisted

1 - Dependent

0 - No attempt is made

Remains on task

Follows routine

Follows schedule

Asks appropriate questions

Follows rules

Social behaviors

Completes work

Goals: 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

A = 3.5 - 4

C = 1.5 - 2.4

F = 0 - .5

Average _____

B = 2.5 - 3.4

D = .5 - 1.4

Grade _____

Used with permission of Everett Area School District

A PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE READING SPECIALIST FOR

STUDENT _____ GRADE _____

TEACHER _____ YEAR _____

E=Excellent G=Good F=Fair N=Needs Improvement

(Areas Not Marked Do Not Apply At This Time.)

MID-TERM

KNOWS BASIC SIGHT VOCABULARY	E G F N
KNOWS LETTER SOUNDS	E G F N
CAN USE SOUNDS TO FIGURE OUT ONE SYLLABLE WORDS	E G F N
CAN USE SOUNDS TO FIGURE OUT WORDS WITH MORE THAN ONE SYLLABLE	E G F N
WORD RECOGNITION	E G F N
COMPREHENSION	E G F N
ORAL READING	E G F N
SEEKS HELP WHEN NEEDED	E G F N
IS ATTENTIVE	E G F N
IS COOPERATIVE	E G F N
WORKS INDEPENDENTLY	E G F N

CONFERENCE YES NO

TEACHER COMMENTS: _____

(PARENT SIGNATURE)

FINAL TERM

KNOWS BASIC SIGHT VOCABULARY	E G F N
KNOWS LETTER SOUNDS	E G F N
CAN USE SOUNDS TO FIGURE OUT ONE SYLLABLE WORDS	E G F N
CAN USE SOUNDS TO FIGURE OUT WORDS WITH MORE THAN ONE SYLLABLE	E G F N
WORD RECOGNITION	E G F N
COMPREHENSION	E G F N
ORAL READING	E G F N
SEEKS HELP WHEN NEEDED	E G F N
IS ATTENTIVE	E G F N
IS COOPERATIVE	E G F N
WORKS INDEPENDENTLY	E G F N

St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2

Phone: _____ Winnipeg, MB Fax: _____

Name: _____ **Grade:** 5
Teacher: _____
Principal: _____ **Year:** 1997-1998

Grade 5 Academic Skills (Based on the Manitoba Curriculum)

PERFORMANCE SCALE:

95 - 100%	Outstanding	Beyond expectations for the grade
85 - 94%	Proficient	At grade expectations
75 - 84%	Competent	
60 - 74%	Satisfactory	
50 - 59%	Marginal	Not yet at grade expectations
0 - 49%	Dependent	

Refer to performance scale descriptions on back of report card envelope.

Where marks are 50% and below, your child may not be ready to proceed to the next grade level.

Language Arts

- Applies listening skills T1 T2 T3 Exam Final
- Applies speaking skills □ □ □ □ □ □
- Reads with understanding □ □ □ □ □ □
- Writes/represents for stated purpose Class Average □ □
- Applies editing skills (e.g. spelling, punctuation)
- Penmanship

Mathematics

- Understands concepts
- Demonstrates knowledge of basic facts T1 T2 T3 Exam Final
- Understands and applies problem-solving strategies □ □ □ □ □ □
- Uses mental math skills Class Average □ □

Science

- Keeps organized records
- Demonstrates understanding of scientific concepts T1 T2 T3 Exam Final
- Participates in activities □ □ □ □ □ □
- Assignments, research, projects, demonstrations Class Average □ □

Social Studies

- Keeps organized records
- Demonstrates knowledge & understanding of concepts T1 T2 T3 Exam Final
- Participates in activities □ □ □ □ □ □
- Assignments, research, projects, demonstrations Class Average □ □

Teacher Comments

GRADE 4 & 5 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SCALE RUBRIC

Definition	OUTSTANDING	PROFICIENT	COMPETENT	SATISFACTORY	MARGINAL	DEPENDENT
	●Performs Beyond Grade Expectations	← ● Performs at Grade Expectations ● →			●Not Yet Performing at Grade Expectations	●Performing Substantially Below Grade Expectations
Grade Range	95-100%	85-94%	75-84%	60-74%	50-59%	0-49%
Performance Scale	●performs beyond curriculum standards	●sometimes surpasses curriculum standards	●meets curriculum standards	●usually meets curriculum standards	●performs below curriculum standards	●performs substantially below curriculum standards
	●has indepth understanding of concepts and skills	●has a clear understanding of concepts and skills	●has an understanding of concepts and skills	●has some evidence of understanding of concepts and skills	●frequently requires teacher assistance to understand the concepts and skills	●does not understand the majority of concepts and skills
	●tasks are completed independently	●tasks are completed independently	●tasks are completed independently	●tasks are usually completed independently / with direction	●task completion is often difficult	●unable to complete tasks , completion is often difficult
	●consistently displays a high calibre of work	●consistently displays a high calibre of work	●usually displays a high calibre of work	●inconsistent command of knowledge and skills	●lacks prerequisites for later learning	●lacks prerequisites for later learning

GRADE 1, 2 & 3 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SCALE RUBRIC

In the following descriptors, **beyond expectations**, **at grade expectations**, and **not yet at grade expectations**, the term **expectations** refers to the standards in the Manitoba curricula required for the grade level.

(6) Outstanding: The student performs beyond expectations for the grade level. The student has an in-depth understanding of concepts and skills taught. Tasks are completed independently, consistently displaying a high calibre of work. The student performs beyond the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

(5) Proficient: The student performs at grade expectations. The student has a clear understanding of skills and concepts taught. Tasks are completed independently, consistently displaying a high calibre of work. The student meets, and sometimes surpasses, the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

(4) Competent: The student performs at grade expectations. The student has an understanding of skills and concepts taught. The student accomplishes tasks independently and usually displays the calibre of work expected at this level. The student meets the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

(3) Satisfactory: The student performs at grade expectations. The student has some evidence of understanding of skills and concepts taught. The student usually accomplishes tasks independently. However, inconsistencies in conceptual understanding and/or application of skills are evident. The student usually meets the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

(2) Marginal: The student is not yet performing at grade expectations. The student frequently requires teacher assistance to understand the skills and concepts taught. Task completion is often difficult. The student is performing below the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

(1) Dependent: The student is performing substantially below expectations for the grade level. The student does not understand the majority of skills and concepts taught. The student is unable to complete tasks independently. The student is performing substantially below the standards as outlined in the Manitoba curriculum.

Name:

Grade: 3

1997-1998

Science

Term: 1 2 3

Understands concepts

Applies scientific processes (e.g. classifies, observes, hypothesizes and predicts)

Participates in activities

Social Studies

Term: 1 2 3

Understands concepts

Participates in activities

Term: 1 2 3

French

Physical Education

Music

Art

Health

Teamwork and Personal Management Skills

Performance Scale:

C = Consistently

U = Usually

S = Sometimes

R = Rarely

Teamwork Skills

Term: 1 2 3

Applies positive listening skills

Works cooperatively

Participates in discussions

Respects others

Displays appropriate social skills

Personal Management Skills

Term: 1 2 3

Demonstrates a positive attitude

Exhibits organizational skills

Completes daily home work

Accepts responsibility

Displays self-control

COMMENTS TERM 1:

COMMENTS TERM 2:

COMMENTS TERM 3:

Teacher:

Administrator:

ILLUSTRATIVE BEHAVIORS

Teamwork Skills

Applies positive listening skills

- understands and follows rules
- demonstrates active listening when others are speaking
- follows oral directions

Works cooperatively

- shares with and assists others
- works willingly with others
- respects the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- handles their role in the group responsibly

Participates in discussions and activities

- volunteers information
- participates actively
- connects their ideas with others
- demonstrates courtesy

Respects others

- shares with others
- demonstrates sensitivity, concern for the feelings of others
- includes others willingly in activities when appropriate

Displays appropriate social skills

- demonstrates manners
- takes turns
- displays appropriate play behavior
- handles anger appropriately
- handles conflict appropriately

Personal Management Skills

Demonstrates a positive attitude

- is proactive
- demonstrates effort with assigned tasks
- takes initiative in finding a productive activity when assigned work is completed

Exhibits organizational skills

- keeps work materials quickly accessible
- has necessary supplies, equipment available
- completes one task before starting another
- takes care of personal belongings

Completes daily/homework

- meets assignment requirements
- completes daily tasks and duties
- meets deadlines

Accepts responsibility

- accepts consequences for own actions
- plans and schedule own work to meet assignment/contract requirements
- demonstrates reliability

Displays self control

- follows and demonstrates respect for established rules and regulations
- avoids interrupting others
- demonstrates evenness of temper
- does not use put-downs

PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT EVALUATION

The evaluation of student achievement is a process of appraisal that involves the acceptance of values as stated in the Board Goals combined with the use of varied observation instruments and measurement techniques to arrive at value judgements.

Because individuals develop at unique rates through interaction with the environment, the board believes that student evaluation should be an integral and continuous part of the teaching process designed to determine what a student knows and can do in all areas of development relative to his/her education.

Evaluation is therefore seen to be more comprehensive than grading students. Student evaluation must be considerate of the present and future needs of the student and, at the same time, be based on the criteria of provincially approved curriculum.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division considers the reporting of student progress to be a multifaceted, two way communication process. The formal reporting of a child's progress occurs in two ways:

1. Written reports
2. Parent teacher conferences.

Written reports will describe the child's development at a particular point in time as it relates to curriculum expectations. Students working on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be evaluated on the basis of the expectations outlined in the IEP.

At the primary level (grades 1-3), progress will be communicated through written description. At the upper elementary level (grades 4-6), student progress will be communicated in the same manner as at the primary level and will be supplemented with a letter grade as follows:

- E Significantly exceeding IEP or grade level expectations
- M Meeting IEP or grade level expectations
- L Working below IEP or grade level expectations

A plus or a minus sign will be used in conjunction with the M to indicated the degree to which the child is meeting IEP or grade level expectations.

Grande Yellowhead Regional Division feels that this process does indeed consider the present and future needs of the student and is based on the provincially mandated Program of Studies.

Parent conferences better facilitate two way communication and allow for a more complete discussion of the progress a child is experiencing. Both ways of reporting provide different types of information for parents and both are of equal importance.

PARENT COMMENTS

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Ap.	May	June	Total
DAYS ABSENT	0	0	1	1½	0	1½	2	½	—	—	6½
DAYS TOTAL	19	20	17	14	18	16	18	13	—	—	135
LATES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	—	—	0

APPENDIX D

New Rubric Assessment Report Card



SUNRISE COLONY SCHOOL

PRAIRIE ROSE REGIONAL SCHOOL DIVISION #8

(STUDENT)

(ID NUMBER)

(YEAR)

19 _____ to 19 _____

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

RUBRIC SCALE EXPLANATION

The assessment of a child's skills, development and personal growth is based upon careful observation of daily work projects, tests, assignments and participation in group and individual activities.

Report cards will be issued to students three times a year.

1. Subject Area Achievement

The achievement scale indicates the extent to which your student is achieving the objectives of the program.

5 Outstanding

A student is surpassing required standards of understanding and applying concepts.

4 Proficient

A student is meeting required standards of understanding concepts.

3 Progressing

A student is progressing toward meeting required standards.

2 Struggling

A student is experiencing difficulty in meeting required standards.

2. Work Habits and Attitudes

The Work habits and Attitudes Scale indicates the Personal and Social Development which your student is demonstrating.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

5 - Outstanding

4 -Proficient

3 -Progressing

2 -Struggling

Work Habits and Attitudes	1 st Report	2 nd Report	3 rd Report
Accepts Responsibility			
Completes Assigned Work			
Follows Directions			
Practices Self-Control			
Respects Others			
Takes Pride in Finished Work			
Uses Time Effectively			
Works Independently			
Works in a Neat and Organized Manner			
Works well in Groups			

Unwarranted absence or irregular attendance and punctuality have a negative effect on student achievement. If your child is going to be absent, please notify the school ahead of time.

SUBJECT	1 st Report	2 nd Report	3 rd Report	Cumulative Report
READING				
Reads Fluently				
Reads with Expression				
Reads with Understanding / Comprehension				
Sight Vocabulary				
Word Attack Skills				
WRITING				
Clarity of Thoughts				
Content				
Mechanics				
SPEAKING				
Oral Language Expression				
Uses Language Effectively / Purposeful				
LISTENING				
Listens with Understanding				
SPELLING				
Units and Tests				
Daily work				
PHONICS / GRAMMAR				
Applications				
PENMANSHIP				
Prints / Writes Legibly in Daily Work				
MATHEMATICS				
Understands Math Concepts / Skills				
Basic Facts				
Problem Solving				
Quizzes / Tests				
SOCIAL STUDIES				
Concepts / Skills				
SCIENCE				
Concepts / Skills				
PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH				
Participation				
Attitude				
Skills				
FINE ARTS				
MUSIC- Participation / Attitude				
DRAMA- Participation / Attitude				
Art- Participation / Attitude				

REPORT 1	COMMENTS
REPORT 2	COMMENTS
REPORT 3	COMMENTS

INTERVIEW 1

STUDENT GOALS for Next Report Period

INTERVIEW 2

STUDENT GOALS for Final Report Period

PARENT'S SIGNATURE:

Report 1
Parent Signature: _____

Report 2
Parent Signature: _____

Report 3
Parent Signature: _____

YOUR TEACHER'S FINAL MESSAGE

Certificate of Student Achievement

(Student)

having worked on the required objectives in Year
_____ will advance to Year _____.

(Teacher)

(Date)