Well-crafted rubrics provide a shared language that lets teachers and students work together to navigate the most important attributes of deep learning and effective performance.

Three types of rubrics are commonly used in schools:

- A holistic rubric provides an overall impression of a student’s performance, yielding a single rating or score. Figure 1 shows a holistic rubric for a project asking students to create a public service message (McTighe, Doubet, & Carbaugh, 2020). Holistic rubrics gauge the overall quality or impact of a student’s work; for example, to what extent did the story entertain its readers or to what extent was the argument convincing?

- An analytic rubric also contains a performance scale but divides a targeted product or performance into distinct elements or traits and judges each independently. Figure 2 shows an analytic rubric for mathematical problem solving.

- A developmental rubric describes growth along a proficiency continuum, ranging from novice to expert. Think of the six different colored belts in karate that designate various proficiency levels. Developmental rubrics are well suited to subjects that emphasize skill development over time, such as physical education or world languages.

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**What Makes a High-Quality Rubric?**

An effective rubric is grounded by clear and appropriate criteria that serve as the basis for judging student responses, products, or performances. In essence, the criteria specify what “success” looks like. In a standards-based system, the criteria should be derived primarily from the targeted standards or outcomes being assessed, rather than from any specific assignment or assessment task. For example, if a teacher is focusing on expository writing, the rubric’s criteria for any such writing task would target accuracy (information presented is correct and appropriate descriptive vocabulary is used); completeness (all relevant aspects of the topic are addressed); clarity (precise, well-chosen, academic vocabulary is used to suit audience and purpose; organization (information is logically framed and sequenced); and conventions (proper punctuation, capitalization, spelling; etc. is used).

When a high-quality rubric is used effectively, teachers and learners benefit. For teachers, good rubrics:

- Specify the salient qualities of successful performance, based on targeted standards.
- Support sound evaluation by describing important distinctions in the degree of understanding, proficiency, or quality from one level to the next.
- Serve as teaching targets, since they reflect the qualities embedded in standards.
- Provide feedback to teachers on how their instruction might need to be adjusted.

For students, high-quality rubrics:

- Serve as learning targets, since they identify the key qualities of successful learning and performance.
- Communicate how their work

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**FIGURE 1. Holistic Rubric for a Public Service Message on a Billboard, Poster, or Website**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert 4</td>
<td>The billboard, poster, or website conveys a clear and compelling message that calls for public action to address a need. The overall graphic design is well coordinated, with words and visuals working together to enhance the message and the call to action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient 3</td>
<td>The billboard, poster, or website conveys a message for the public but does not call for specific action. The overall graphic design is generally coordinated. The words and visuals work together in support of the message but do not communicate needed actions by the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent 2</td>
<td>The billboard, poster, or website suggests a message, but it is unclear exactly what the viewers should take from it. The visuals do not clearly support the words of the message or communicate needed public action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice 1</td>
<td>No clear message is evident. The visuals seem random and do not convey any message. The overall graphic design is sloppy and unappealing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>