SECTION B

EVALUATING THE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO IMPROVING A WRITING RUBRIC

Theresa P. Maue

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Worldwide Campus

ABSTRACT

In 2008, a group of English/Humanities faculty created a writing rubric to help instructors across the curriculum assess student writing and provide specific feedback for improvement. Five months after the rubric was released, a survey revealed that nearly 70% of instructors were not using it. Respondents cited two major reasons: They had not received it or they considered it inapplicable to their courses. They frequently suggested that the rubric be simplified. Project participants took a multidisciplinary approach to answering these objections, which resulted in 14 suggestions. The idea that generated the greatest excitement was an electronic rubric with links to hidden layers of additional information. Training and greater ease of access emerged as keys to increasing usage.

Acknowledgements

The researcher acknowledges with great appreciation the participants in this project, who gave generously of their time and energy. They are (with course prefixes):

Teaching Writing--Whose Job Is It?

"Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." (Gene Fowler, American author, humorist)

If Gene Fowler thought producing the written word was difficult, he should have tried grading it. Writing instructors themselves often differ on strategies for grading. How much more difficult, then, it might be for instructors who do not teach writing, to evaluate their students' efforts and give them useful feedback for improvement.

Instructors across disciplines have long complained about the quality of student writing, but for varying reasons they have felt, not entirely inappropriately, that the responsibility for improving this quality should lie with those who teach writing and not with those who teach management, economics, etc. They have some ground on which to stand; after all, their subject matter expertise does not lie in nouns and verbs and how to make them work together effectively. Like any discipline, writing has its own vocabulary, its own arsenal of tools and strategies for effective use, its own pedagogy. Not all those who can write, can teach writing; just as not all those who can manage, can teach management, and not all economists can teach economics.

On the other hand, there is a good argument to be made that writing is every instructor's business, since it is through the written word that comprehension of any discipline is most often demonstrated. As more than one instructor has put it: Of what use is it if the student understands the problem or situation but cannot communicate that understanding?

Creation of the ERAU Writing Rubric

This was the dilemma that inspired the creation of the ERAU Writing Rubric. Over a ten-month period in 2007-2008, and supported by a faculty assessment mini-grant, a group of 30 instructors in English/Humanities disciplines engaged in a process to design an assessment tool that could be used by all instructors to evaluate the writing portion of any assignment. As they worked through the process, they found themselves struggling to balance two objectives: Create a rubric that was comprehensive enough to provide good guidance for evaluation and improvement, but one that did not appear to be so difficult or complex that instructors and students would not use it.

The issue of what to include generated lengthy discussions. As teachers of writing, the instructors often had to remind themselves that particulars of language use that might be crucial to them would probably not be as important--and rightly so--to instructors who did not teach writing. A second challenge was to make the language of the rubric clear enough so that a wide range of instructors would interpret it consistently. Even among the rubric-creation group, there were wide variations in interpretation of the initial working models (Maue, 2008).

Eventually, a draft rubric was created, tested, refined and tested again. The final product, *ERAU Writing Rubric 6.1*, was disseminated to the Worldwide Campus in May 2008, along with some suggestions for ways that instructors could use it in their classes. (The rubric is attached as Appendix A).

Based on comments from raters in the test group (Maue, 2008), the rubric seemed to hold significant potential for enabling non-writing instructors to provide useful feedback to their students.

- The rubric helped me sort through my thoughts and have a clearer vision of the weaknesses of the paper. I found myself grading more exactingly than I usually do, but I also felt that I was better able to pinpoint specific things that the student could work on to improve his/her writing.

- The rubric is very thorough. ... [I]t makes an instructor think about relevant categories that relate to a successful essay.

- I found the rubric helpful because it expands on what I do and shows me how I should pay closer attention to shortcomings on submissions by students (pp. 7-8).

However, in order for the rubric to fulfill its potential, it would have to be in widespread use. It was expected that frequent exposure to the rubric across disciplines would familiarize students with the elements of good writing and the terminology used to express them, so that not only a specific assignment would be improved, but the level of writing skills in general would rise. Thus, after the rubric was released for general use in May 2008, the next logical step seemed to be to do a follow-up and see how the rubric was being used, as a way to evaluate the new assessment tool.

The researcher won a second assessment mini-grant, and a follow-up project was launched in October 2008 to determine how many instructors were using the rubric, what kinds of barriers existed to greater use, and what particular elements of the rubric were working well. These project learning outcomes would drive additional actions to

improve usage of the rubric, which should, in turn, support achievement of the ultimate

goal of improving student writing.

The Writing Rubric Follow-Up Project

Phase One--The Survey

The Writing Rubric Follow-Up Project was conducted in two phases. The

objective of phase one was to discover how much the new writing rubric was being used,

what the obstacles were to wider and/or easier use, and what was working well. This

objective would be considered met if sufficient and representative data were collected

from which to draw conclusions with reasonable confidence regarding the percentage of

instructors who were using the rubric, reasons for not using the rubric, and which

feature/s of the rubric the instructors found easiest to use.

The strategy employed in phase one consisted of an electronic survey that was

made available to all instructors who had courses ending in each of four terms: October

2008, December 2008, January 2009, and March 2009. This survey was constructed by

the Office of Institutional Research, consulting with the researcher. Institutional

Research administered the survey and collected and collated the responses. (A copy of

the survey is attached as Appendix B.)

Worldwide instructors completed 770 surveys, covering courses with 24 different

prefixes, at both graduate and undergraduate levels and in all delivery models (Office of

Institutional Research [OIR], May 2009). Since the survey was anonymous, and since

instructors were asked to complete the survey for each course taught in a term and for

each term taught, it is highly likely that some number of instructors completed more than

one survey in a term and more than one survey throughout the total survey period (four administrations).

The Mathematics Chair's analysis of the responses to the survey indicated that the criteria of collection of sufficient and representative data had been met. He wrote:

The 95% confidence interval for proportions was calculated for each category in the survey. If the assumption is accepted that the sample data collected via the survey is representative of all ERAU Worldwide classes, one can say with 95% confidence that the true population proportion has been captured by the interval (Allen, 2009, p. 1).

The assumption that the sample data is representative of all ERAU Worldwide classes could be defended by noting that 29.5% (770) of the surveys (2607) were completed (OIR, May 2009; OIR, November 2008; OIR, January 2009; OIR, February 2009; OIR, March 2009); and the respondents represented courses with 24 different prefixes, 75% of the prefixes listed in the *2008-2010 Worldwide Catalog*, disregarding BA, which was not listed, and CE and FACD, which are not courses for academic credit (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2008). Courses represented were at both graduate and undergraduate levels, and 51.4% were delivered face-to-face, 43% were delivered online, and 5.5% were delivered in a blended format (OIR, May 2009).

The major findings from the survey are summarized below:

- Only about 30% of ERAU instructors were using the writing rubric (between 26-38% at 95% confidence interval).

- The two most commonly cited reasons for not using the rubric were that the instructor had not received it or that the instructor believed the rubric was not applicable to the course being taught.

- There did not appear to be instructors in any one discipline who disproportionately stated that they did not believe the rubric was applicable to their courses.

- Instructors who used the rubric consistently said the greatest benefits were that it helped them to be consistent in grading and to provide useful feedback to their students.

- The major suggestion for improving use of the rubric was to simplify it.

Phase one of the follow-up project thus confirmed that the goals of the rubric were being met; however, a disappointingly small percentage of instructors were using it.

One Immediate Action with Results

One important learning outcome from the first administration of the survey was acted upon immediately and produced measureable results in subsequent administrations of the survey. Data from the first administration of the rubric (term ending in October 2008) revealed that more than a third of the respondents who did not use the rubric, said they did not use it because they had not received it or did not recall receiving it (OIR, December 2008). The original rubric had been disseminated via the deans, who were asked to distribute it to their campuses. Based on the size of the October 2008 response, two actions were taken:

- The rubric was re-sent to the deans, who were asked to re-distribute it to the campuses along with a message encouraging Directors of Academics to give the rubric to all instructors and encourage them to use it.

- The rubric was posted to Blackboard.

Subsequent administrations of the initial survey (terms ending in December, January and March) revealed that the percentage of respondents saying they did not use the rubric because they did not receive it declined significantly enough to be identified as a trend (Allen, 2009). This trend lent support to the idea that more widespread use of the rubric could be encouraged by making it more easily available and encouraging its use. This idea was built upon during the later brainstorming in phase two of the project.

Phase Two--Generating Ideas

The objective of phase two was to generate feasible ideas for improving the use of the rubric, at least some of which could be implemented at little to no cost and relatively quickly. The generation of ideas for improvement that could be implemented over a longer term would also be considered an acceptable outcome. The list of suggestions that was derived from the activities in phase two provided clear indication that the objective had been met.

Once it was revealed that approximately 70 percent of instructors were not using the rubric, phase two took on added urgency. The focus became to identify the reasons for such low usage, so that appropriate actions could be taken to address them. Two questions arose:

1. Was the rubric properly measuring the relevant criteria?

2. Was the language in the rubric clearly understood?

The major themes in research on rubrics emphasize that criteria specified in a good rubric must clearly answer the question of what constitutes quality work (Artler & McTighe, 2001; Montgomery, 2002; Moskel, 2000).

Moskal and Leydens (2000) write in "Scoring Rubric Development: Validity and Reliability," that constructing a good rubric involves identifying content, delineating facets of the process that need to be measured, and clearly stating the levels of competency that must be demonstrated to meet the standard for quality.

Put more simply, a good rubric clearly describes all the important learning outcomes and only those outcomes, with nothing extraneous or irrelevant. And it clearly sets out the standards of measurement that constitute a quality product, apportioning the proper weight to each standard.

The first task in phase two would be to try to determine whether the writing rubric met that description. In other words, was the low usage due to flaws in the rubric itself?

Because many respondents to the original surveys suggested that the rubric be simplified, another task in phase two became to solicit ideas for simplification. Saddler and Andrade (2004) stress that rubrics must be written in language that students can understand. Although their remarks are directed at efficacy for students, their rule holds for instructors, as well.

Responses in the original surveys indicated a notable level of confusion about the category labeled *Content*. The creators of the rubric had intended that category to measure writing content, such as how clearly the topic was revealed. However, many instructors interpreted the *Content* category as directed at subject matter content. These

instructors objected to the relatively low weight assigned by the rubric to what they essentially felt was the heart of the paper, the demonstration of the student's knowledge in the subject area.

Another problem with simplifying the rubric concerned the need to clearly state the quality standards in ways that would be useful.

Andrade (2000) explains it this way:

A rubric that reflects and reveals problems that students experience is more informative than one that either describes mistakes they don't recognize or defines levels of quality so vaguely that it is practically meaningless ("poorly organized" or "boring"). The gradations of quality allow students to spot weaknesses in their writing and give them concrete ways to improve their shortcomings (para 7).

As in constructing the original rubric, the question became: How much can it say before it becomes too overwhelming? And conversely: How little can it say before it becomes incomprehensible?

Phase two of the project consisted of three activities: an email follow-up survey, follow-up telephone calls, and two brainstorming teleconference calls.

Follow-Up Emails and Telephone Calls

An email follow-up survey was sent to 212 instructors from the first three administrations of the original survey, all of whom had indicated a willingness to give further input. This survey attempted to measure the importance of the various categories in the rubric, to determine whether the rubric was focusing on what instructors believed was important in grading writing. A total of 80 surveys were completed, a return rate of

37.7%. Although they can be considered only anecdotal, the results showed that the rubric was, indeed, measuring all the important criteria. The email survey also requested specific suggestions for improving use of the rubric, and some good suggestions were submitted. (A copy of the email survey is attached as Appendix C.)

Follow-up telephone calls were made to 24 respondents to the fourth administration of the original survey who indicated a willingness to be contacted for further input. These phone calls were focused on soliciting as much specific information as possible about how the instructor used the rubric, or if the instructor had not used the rubric, determining the factors that precipitated that decision. The phone calls confirmed the comments on the original survey and in the follow-up emails: the rubric was greatly appreciated by those who used it, and the most common reason for not using it was that it was seen as not applicable to the course being taught. The most common suggestion for improvement remained to simplify it; the most frequently mentioned ideas were to combine categories, eliminate categories, or reduce verbiage.

The Brainstorming Teleconferences

A group of 14 volunteers was assembled to study the results of the surveys and follow-ups. This group was highly diverse, including instructors representing seven disciplines at both graduate and undergraduate levels plus GCPP and FACD courses, and including one Director of Academics, three Directors of Academic Support, and the 2009 Online Faculty of the Year. These instructors were provided with all the data collected and given two weeks to study the information and come up with specific recommendations for increasing the use of the rubric.

Two 90-minute conference calls were held, in which the group members shared their thoughts on the data and their recommendations for increasing use of the rubric. Recommendations fell generally into two categories: how to simplify the rubric and how to increase usage by providing training for faculty and students. The two were seen as complementary efforts. Instructors would be more inclined to use a rubric that appeared simple yet was sufficiently comprehensive, and training would reduce apprehension and enhance familiarity and proficiency.

The surveys had revealed that although only about 30% of the respondents had used the writing rubric, nearly 59% of them said they had used rubrics in the past (OIR, May 2009). This suggests that instructors might use rubrics that they are familiar with and find helpful.

The Electronic Rubric.

By far the idea that generated the greatest excitement and support was to create an electronic version of the rubric, with layers of information and examples that could be accessed via hot links from a much more simplified "front page."

This format would solve a number of problems. The simplified front page of the rubric would appear much easier to use, reducing some fears of too much complexity and mitigating the feeling of being overwhelmed by words and descriptions. However, for those who needed it, additional explanations of any category would be available at a click on a link. Other links could provide examples of poor usage, common errors and proper usage. In this way, the hidden levels with additional information could also function as on-the-spot "writing lab" help.

This format would be user-friendly for veterans as well as novices. As instructors and students became more familiar with the rubric and more adept at using it, they would no longer have to wade through unnecessary verbiage. The front page could serve as a checklist, a reminder to ensure that students considered all aspects of writing as they finalized the assignment and instructors considered all aspects of writing as they graded it. Eventually, instructors could conceivably use the front page as an actual grading sheet for the writing portion of the assignment.

Some strong notes of caution were expressed, however. It seemed likely that instructors and students would still need encouragement to use the hidden levels, and some would simply not use them unless required to. Also, care needed to be taken to ensure that the simplified front page still provided some information about each category of evaluation, not just a title.

The brainstorming group participants were overwhelmingly in favor of the electronic form for the rubric; however, given that an electronic version with this level of complexity would likely require resources which might not be quickly available, it was felt probable that a simplified paper version of the rubric would be implemented first.

Other ideas for simplifying the rubric are summarized in the following list:

- Reduce the number of topic areas (categories).

- Add a category focused on meeting assignment parameters (did the student actually do the assignment and not get off track).

- Add a blank area for instructor comments.

- Allow the instructor to shift the percentage of weight per category (including N/A).

- Insert the rubric in the web course at the grading point; make it easy to use (choose bubbles, automatic point calculation) so faculty actually use it to grade assignment.
  - o Caution: Students would still need to get their papers back with comments; the instructor could include a hard copy of the rubric, as well.

The second most popular suggestion for increasing use of the rubric was to provide training for both instructors and students. Also, given that increased usage resulted from re-sending the rubric and usage suggestions to the deans for re-distribution, there were suggestions for ways to make the rubric more accessible. It was the consensus that the rubric's current location in Academic Support for Faculty and Staff--WW required too much effort to find.

The training ideas are summarized in the following list:

- Include the rubric in new faculty training as part of FACD series.
- Refresh the training periodically as part of quarterly faculty meetings (perhaps by using it to grade a sample paper and then discussing results) and/or on a website for faculty who teach once a year; make completion mandatory before teaching again.
  - o Caution: Instructors must understand that they must clarify meanings and expectations; the rubric is not self-explanatory.
- Provide a training video or PowerPoint on ERNIE.
- Give training at regional meetings for DA and DAS.
- Add a quiz to online training.
- Add the rubric to the *Start Here* page with or without a quiz for students.

- Create a website for students to see sample papers with commentary; also provide ERAU-specific examples, such as how to cite FARs. This website could also contain FAQ and a blog or web forum--a place for people to ask questions and share ideas.
- Add to CTLE online writing lab.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The follow-up project yielded valuable information for improving the use of the ERAU Writing Rubric. It also provided an outstanding opportunity for instructors from various disciplines and various teaching delivery methods, as well as administrators from local campuses, to work together to create an assessment instrument that should be a greater benefit to everyone.

Recommendations

These have been rather arbitrarily categorized in a broad timeline, based on the researcher's assumptions of the work that might be involved and the resources that might be available. As noted earlier, the most popular suggestion was to create an electronic version of the rubric with layers that are accessed by hot links. This, however, seems likely to take some time and resources that may not be available right away. Therefore, it has been relegated to the *FUTURE* category, although everyone involved would be very pleased to see it in the *LATER* or even *SOONER* category. The researcher recommends that the ideas brought forward as a result of the rubric follow-up project be prioritized according to resources available and implemented as soon as possible.

SOONER (3-6 months)

- Revise the rubric to simplify it and conduct a norming session with volunteers (seven have volunteered already).

- Refine the rubric as necessary after the norming session.

- Create training materials for DAs to use at faculty meetings.

- Release the rubric and training materials in a coordinated roll-out for use in Worldwide campuses.

LATER (6 -12 months)

- Add rubric training to new faculty training FACD.

- Create a training video or PowerPoint to post on ERNIE.

- Give training at regional meetings.

- Add the rubric and training/quiz to course shells in the *Start Here* page.

- Create a blog/forum for discussion of ways to use/improve the rubric.

- Create a website with sample papers, ERAU-specific examples, blog/forum and FAQ.

- Add the rubric to the writing lab.

FUTURE (longer than 12 months)

- Create rubric in electronic form with layers.

- Insert the rubric in web courses at grading points; make it easy to use to grade/give feedback on assignments.

Conclusions

The researcher draws two conclusions from the project.

First, assessing improvement in student writing is a long-term project, and it is too soon to know how well the writing rubric supports achievement of this purpose. However, critically important information was obtained by doing an early assessment of the usefulness of the evaluation instrument. An excellent suggestion arising from the brainstorming group was to add one or more questions to the end-of-course evaluations for students and faculty. This would provide a simple method for long-term follow-up and continuous improvement.

Of course, using a writing rubric cannot be the sole strategy upon which improvement depends. Other strategies and means of measurement for Embry-Riddle include the creation of developmental/refresher courses, implementation of a writing proficiency assessment for incoming students, development of an online writing lab, and consideration of a pre-graduation writing assessment, sometimes called a W course.

The second conclusion is related to the first. The initial project to create the rubric was conducted primarily by instructors in English, Speech and Humanities. In the follow-up project, the researcher deliberately reached out to instructors in other disciplines to help evaluate and improve the assessment tool. This was eye-opening and a bit humbling to the researcher's proprietary sense with respect to all matters of language instruction. However, the experience of seeing the rubric project through the eyes of management and marketing instructors, as well as others, has convinced the researcher of the value of input from instructors across disciplines.

Additionally, the researcher notes with some irony how blind she has been to the usefulness of differing angles of vision, especially considering that the composition course she developed stresses that concept repeatedly. She will hold this lesson in mind

as she works on other strategies to improve student writing at ERAU. If writing instruction is at least partially the responsibility of instructors across the curriculum, then design and evaluation of writing assessment instruments should be considered in their purview, as well. Happily, blood sacrifice, Gene Fowler notwithstanding, is not required.

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Appendices

Appendix A

ERAU Writing Rubric 6.1

WRITING CONTENT

Content	A	B	C	D	F
<u>Topic/ Focus/</u> <u>Purpose & Depth of Treatment</u> (includes thesis statement if required, and main points; evidence of higher order thinking: synthesis, analysis, evaluation, and/or interpretation)	Topic etc. very clear throughout; treatment clearly goes well beyond the obvious connections among ideas; exhibits insight and original thinking	Possibly some irrelevant information on topic etc., but very little; treatment goes beyond obvious connections among ideas	Topic etc. vague in places; some irrelevant or distracting information; treatment may be little beyond the obvious	Topic etc. unclear or confusing: OR treatment is very superficial; paper may be well written but says nothing (*eloquent emptiness*)	Topic etc. not discernable; OR treatment is vague, misleading, confusing, and/or off topic
<u>Support</u> (quality & quantity of examples, details, etc.; ideas are developed in proportion to their importance)	Fully supports and develops ideas in proper proportions	Sufficiently supports and develops ideas but possibly some minor disproportion-ate emphasis	Too few **or** of lesser quality for good support; ideas are not thought through well	Too few **and** of lesser quality; most points are not supported or development is missing	Support is missing completely; little to no development of ideas

LANGUAGE & STYLE

Language & Style	A	B	C	D	F
<u>Vocabulary</u> (appropriate for audience and purpose; avoids jargon, slang, and overly emotionally charged words; sufficient variation)	Skillful word choice that is precise, purposeful and always appropriate	Relatively few (1-5?) minor errors in word choices; perhaps too much repetition of words	More than a few (6-10?) word choices are inappropriate for audience or purpose, lack precision, are too vague or general and/or are overused; 1-3 uses of jargon, slang, or overly emotionally charged words	Many (more than 10?) word choices lack precision for purpose or audience, are vague, general or repetitious; more than 3 uses of jargon, slang, or overly emotionally charged words	So many errors in word choices that writing is difficult to comprehend or offensive or irrelevant
<u>Grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction</u> (fragments, run-ons, etc.)	Few to no errors (total 1% or less of assignment word total?)	Some errors (total less than 2% of word total?)	Frequent errors (total less than 3% of word total?)	Many errors (total less than 4% of word total?)	Errors detract significantly (total more than 4% of word total?)

ORGANIZATION

Organization	A	B	C	D	F
Introduction & Conclusion (Introduction provides necessary contextual information such as background, definitions, expectations and scope; possibly a forecast); (Conclusion decisively ends paper; provides a sense of completion; ex: summary, strong final impression; call to action)	Intro-clearly provides all necessary information; avoids giving too much; clearly sets expectations; Con- ends paper decisively; creates a fully satisfying sense of completion	Intro-clearly provides necessary information but may give too much; or expectations may be unclear; Con- ends paper clearly without ambiguity; creates a reasonably good sense of completion	Intro-minor lack of information or lack of clarity in setting up paper; Con- weak ending; e.g. poor summary, weak impression, simple repetition	Intro- confusing, vague or missing necessary information Con-weak ending; possibly vague ending; possibly introducing new idea/s	Intro & Con missing
Body Structure, Paragraphs & Transitions (logical progression of ideas including those stated in introduction; avoidance of logical fallacies; transitions clearly show how ideas relate to one another; paragraphs are unified—one major idea in each & coherent—sufficient, relevant supporting details)	All ideas are clearly and logically related; transitions very clear and easy to follow; paragraphs always unified and coherent	**1-2** lapses in clear or logical relationship; 1-2 violations of transitions (missing or incorrect); 1-2 violations of unity or coherence in paragraphs	**3-4** lapses in clear or logical relationship; 3-4 violations of transitions; 3-4 violations of unity or coherence in paragraphs	**5-6** lapses in clear or logical relationship 5-6 violations of transitions; 5-6 violations of unity or coherence	**More than 6** lapses in logic; more than 6 violations in use of transitions; more than 6 violations of unity or coherence

RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION

Research & Documentation	A	B	C	D	F
Sources/Number Quality & Variety (enough sources to show an in-depth exploration from several points of view; clear indication of credible authorship; present fair and unbiased info; good variety)	Significantly more than the minimum required; effort beyond expectations to explore topic; use of both primary & secondary sources; all information meets quality criteria	Slightly more than the minimum required; effort to ensure breadth and depth; possibly no primary sources; all information meets quality criteria	At least the minimum required; reasonable breadth and depth of exploration; 1-2 sources lack quality criteria (ex: Wikipedia)	Less than the minimum required; or providing only surface coverage; most sources lack quality criteria	Very few sources; no attempt to explore various points of view; all sources lack quality criteria
Sources/ Integration & Citation (avoiding the 'paper as a string of references'; quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing; citations in-text and on references / bibliography page adhere to required style)	Sources interspersed with writer's own analysis or synthesis; quotes are less than 10% of paper; accurate use of summary and paraphrase; all sources are documented; 1-3 minor errors (such as incorrect punctuation)	Sources interspersed with writer's own work; quotes are less than 20% of paper; accurate use of summary and paraphrase; all sources are documented; 4-6 minor errors (such as incorrect punctuation)	1-2 instances of stringing source references together with little of the writer's own work; quotes are 25% or more of paper; 1-2 citations missing or with major errors (ex: authors missing or incorrect)	More than 2 instances of stringing source references; quotes are 40% or more of paper; OR paper includes few references to sources; 3-4 citations missing or with major errors	No references to sources; OR there is evidence of plagiarism; 5 or more citations missing or with major errors

ERAU Writing Rubric Survey

*This survey will be used to determine to what extent the ERAU Writing Rubric is being used and how it is being utilized in various courses.

*Please complete this survey once for each course you taught in the previous calendar month.

*If you have not used the Rubric please complete the survey as it will assist our research.

Directions:
*Be sure to read all options before selecting an answer.

*When you are finished with the entire survey click the "SUBMIT SURVEY" button at the bottom of the form.
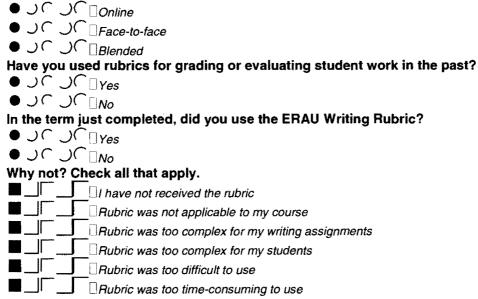
*If you make a mistake or wish to start over, click the "CLEAR FORM" button also at the bottom of the form.

*Note: It is important to let your responses navigate you through the survey and not use the "back" or "forward" buttons of your browser.

What month and year did the term begin?
[drop-down menu listed months and years]

What course did you teach in the term just completed?
[drop-down menu listed all ERAU courses]

What delivery method did you use?
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *Online*
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *Face-to-face*
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *Blended*

Have you used rubrics for grading or evaluating student work in the past?
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *Yes*
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *No*

In the term just completed, did you use the ERAU Writing Rubric?
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *Yes*
● ◡◠ ◡◠ ☐ *No*

Why not? Check all that apply.
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *I have not received the rubric*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Rubric was not applicable to my course*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Rubric was too complex for my writing assignments*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Rubric was too complex for my students*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Rubric was too difficult to use*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Rubric was too time-consuming to use*

■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *I use a rubric that I like better*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *I don't believe in rubrics*
■ ⌐ ⌐ ☐ *Other*
If other, please explain.

How much did you use the rubric?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *For all writing assignments*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *For most writing assignments*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *For a few writing assignments*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *For the major assignments only*

Did you use the original rubric or did you modify it in some way?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Used original rubric*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Modified the rubric*

Did you modify the Content category?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Yes*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *No*

Did you modify the *topic/focus/purpose & depth of treatment* subcategory, and if yes, how?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Did not modify*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Changed wording*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Eliminated*

Did you modify the *support* subcategory, and if yes, how?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Did not modify*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Changed wording*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Eliminated*

Why did you modify the Content category?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was not applicable to my course*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my writing assignments*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my students*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was too difficult to use*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was too time-consuming to use*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Other*
If other, please explain.

Did you modify the Language & Style category?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Yes*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *No*

Did you modify the *vocabulary* subcategory, and if yes, how?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Did not modify*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Changed wording*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Eliminated*

Did you modify the *grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction* subcategory, and if yes, how?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Did not modify*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Changed wording*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Eliminated*

Why did you modify the Language & Style category?

● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was not applicable to my course*
● ⊃⌐ ⊃⌐ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my writing assignments*

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my students*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too difficult to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too time-consuming to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*

If other, please explain.

Did you modify the Organization category?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Yes*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *No*

Did you modify the *introduction & conclusion* subcategory, and if yes, how?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Did not modify*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Changed wording*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Eliminated*

Did you modify the *body structure, paragraphs & transitions* subcategory, and if yes, how?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Did not modify*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Changed wording*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Eliminated*

Why did you modify the Organization category?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was not applicable to my course*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my writing assignments*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my students*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too difficult to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too time-consuming to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*

If other, please explain.

Did you modify the Research & Documentation category?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Yes*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *No*

Did you modify the *sources/number, quality & variety subcategory*, and if yes, how?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Did not modify*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Changed wording*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Eliminated*

Did you modify the *sources/integration* subcategory, and if yes, how?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Did not modify*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Changed wording*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Eliminated*

Why did you modify the Research & Documentation category?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was not applicable to my course*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my writing assignments*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too complex for my students*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too difficult to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Original content was too time-consuming to use*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*

If other, please explain.

Which of the following benefited you the most from using the rubric?

- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It helped me analyze the writing portion of the paper*
- ● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It helped me give more precise and useful feedback to the student*

● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It helped me grade consistently*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It saved time after I became familiar with it*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It provided no benefits*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*
If other, please explain.

What was the hardest part of using the rubric?

● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It took a lot of time*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Some of the language in it was hard to understand*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It was difficult to decide precisely where to place the grade in the categories and subcategories*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *There were many areas to evaluate*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It was not difficult to use*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*
If other, please explain.

What was the easiest part of using the rubric?

● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It was not time consuming*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It was comprehensive, but not overly complicated*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *The language was easy to understand*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *The categories were easy to understand*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *It was not easy to use*
● ⊃⌒ ⊃⌒ ☐ *Other*
If other, please explain.

How could the rubric be improved?

If you would be willing to be contacted for a few follow-up questions, please provide your name, email address, and phone number.

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:

Appendix C

Follow-Up Survey

Dear

You are being contacted because you indicated on your survey that you would be willing to provide additional input on the ERAU Writing Rubric. I would like you to do two things:

1. Mark your preferences on the table below. You can copy it into your reply to this email and add your marks.

2. Provide any additional comments or suggestions.

   If possible, I would like to have your response by [DATE]. Thanks for helping us improve the ERAU Writing Rubric!

   The most common suggestion for improving the rubric was to simplify it. Specific suggestions focused on either simplifying the language in the rubric or reducing the number of categories. One the scale below, please rate (by placing an **X** in the appropriate box) the importance of the categories and/or subcategories to you *as an instructor who must take your students' writing ability into account as you grade their papers*.

   Before you mark your ratings, though, please read the following about the *Content* portion: There appears to be some confusion about this portion of the rubric. *Content* was not meant to refer to the subject matter of the paper, but to how well the subject matter was expressed in the writing. For example, was the topic and/or purpose of the paper clearly identified? Was the follow-up treatment and support clearly and logically expressed? **Do you think that this category could be included in the *Organization* category? If so, please indicate by putting an O (instead of an X) in the appropriate box in the table in the *Content* sections.**

Category	Not important in grading writing	Somewhat important in grading writing	Very important in grading writing	Absolutely critical in grading writing
Content: topic, purpose & depth of treatment				
Content: support				
Lang & Style: vocabulary				
Lang & Style: grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction				
Org: introduction & conclusion				
Org: body structure, paragraphs & transitions				

Res &Doc: sources/ number, quality & variety				
Res & Doc: sources/ integration				

Please return your responses by <u>January 30</u>. Thank you again for your help!

Dr. Terri Maue

Discipline Chair, English & Humanities

ERAU Worldwide

513 899 4421 (home office)