ASSURANCE OF LEARNING: ADAPTATONS OF STANDARDIZED WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION RUBRICS

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ABSTRACT

Schools of business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business are familiar with standards for Assurance of Learning, which require systematic processes for documenting student learning, determining the extent to which learning goals are being achieved, and ensure that needed curricular and pedagogical changes are implemented to improve outcomes. Written and oral communication are the most frequently and most consistently measured skills in AACSB business schools. This practice-based study reviews the literature on the impact of rubrics on faculty and students and explores faculty adaptations of standardized writing rubrics used by an AACSB-accredited school of business. It demonstrates from multiple faculty perspectives and courses the positive impact of rubrics on teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

Employers agree that higher education graduates need discipline-specific knowledge and cross-cutting skills such as written and oral communication, teamwork, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the ability to apply knowledge to real-life contexts (Association of American Colleges & Schools, [AAC&U] 2011, 2015; Hart Research Associates, 2015). These skills are reflective of a liberal education, or "an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change" (Association of American Colleges & Schools, [AAC&U], n. d.).

College graduates agree these cross-cutting skills are important and researchers have observed that graduates rate the quality of these skills much higher than employers (Hart Research Associates, 2015; Schneider, 2015). For example, 65% of recent college graduates surveyed indicated being well prepared in written communication while only 27% of employers felt graduates possessed adequate writing skills (Hart Research Associates, 2015). Consequently, institutions of higher education must not only design learning experiences that help students develop cross-cutting skills, but also help students accurately assess their own abilities.

Schools of business accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) are familiar with standards for Assurance of Learning (AoL). AoL requires the use of "well documented, systematic processes for determining and revising degree program learning goals; designing, delivering, and improving degree program curricula to achieve

learning goals; and demonstrating that degree program learning goals have been met" (AACSB, p. 32). Written and oral communication are the most frequently and most consistently measured skills in AACSB business schools (Martell, 2007; Kelley, Tong, & Choi, 2010; Wheeling, Miller, & Slocombe, 2015), while rubric-scored written assignments are the most common assessment method reported by AACSB deans and are in place at 89% of schools (Wheeling et al., 2015). However, faculty members in schools of business may have difficulty adapting standardized rubrics used for these assessment purposes to their specific course assignments.

To address this challenge, this practice-based study explores faculty adaptations of a standardized writing rubric used by an AACSB-accredited school of business. The authors define rubrics broadly as a document that communicates expectations for an assignment and provides consistent criteria for grading. Rubrics help students self-evaluate their work and provide formative assessment; they are using for teaching purposes rather than only evaluation purposes.

In this paper, the authors first discuss the impact of rubrics on key stakeholders. Then they share how a standardized rubric was adapted and implemented by faculty in three different courses, and their perspectives regarding rubric implementation and learning. They conclude with thoughts on the efficacy of rubrics for the enhancement of teaching and learning. The purpose of this paper is not to report on learning gains for purposes of AoL but to demonstrate how a school-wide writing rubric can be adapted to reflect course- and assignment-specific needs for faculty and provide formative feedback to students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

AACSB standards indicate that business schools must strive to meet the expectations of stakeholders, such as employers and students, and establish faculty-led processes for the development and measurement of learning outcomes. The faculty determines learning goals, curricular content, delivery methods, and learning measures. It also acts on assessment findings to improve curricula and pedagogy (AACSB, 2013; AACSB International Accreditation Coordinating Committee and AACSB International Accreditation Quality Committee, 2007; Attaway, Chandra, Dos Santos, Thatcher, & Wright, 2011). In this section, the authors consider research relevant to the impact of rubrics on faculty members and students.

Faculty

Engaging faculty members in the assessment of learning, particularly for accreditation purposes, can be a challenge. They may not perceive the need to change current practices or may view AoL as an additional demand on their time (Bennett, Smart, & Kuma, 2017). In particular, designing rubrics may entail considerable effort (Amantea, 2004); however, when faculty invest this effort upfront, they save time on grading and find less need to make extensive comments on student work (Donathan & Tymann, 2010; National Institute for Learning Outcomes, 2009; Mora & Ochoa, 2010; Petropoulou, Vassilikopoulou, & Retails, 2011). Another strategy for addressing time concerns is adopting dual purpose rubrics—used for both grading and program assessment (Garfolo, Kelpsh, Phelps, & Kelpsh, 2016).

Rubrics provide the opportunity for faculty members to openly discuss learning and measure it in an objective, reliable, and valid way across assignments, course sections, and departments (Garfolo et al., 2016; Smith, 2008; Petropoulou et al., 2011). Collaboration on rubric development may involve providing structures for faculty to work across departments to create shared understanding of outcomes and establish consistency of practice (Bennett, Smart, & Kumar, 2017), or forming teams of faculty members, markers, and teaching and learning staff to create and validate rubrics (Calma, 2013).

Collaborative rubric development results in greater insight into how concepts and skills can be introduced and reinforced across the curriculum (Bennett et al., 2017). It can unify faculty and encourage the alignment of learning goals and measures with the school's mission (Rau, 2009). Collaborative practices support AACSB standards that "curricula management facilitates faculty-faculty and faculty-staff interactions and engagement to support development and management of both curricula and the learning process" (AACSB, 2013, p. 33).

Collaboration among faculty and academic staff in the creation of rubrics can be enhanced by incorporating the perspective of employers, which is critical in preparing business graduates for their professions. These perspectives can be used to create rubrics to judge student work, and thereby help instructors prepare students for collegiate marketing competitions, client-based projects, and ultimately for their professions (Spiller & Marold, 2015). This approach is also clearly aligned with AACSB standards indicating that "learning goals and curricula [should] reflect expectations of stakeholders" (AACSB, 2013, p. 33).

Rubrics help faculty measure and identify deficits in student knowledge and skills, including cross-cutting skills. For example, an analysis of student writing samples rated as *poor* or *fair* on a rubric with four broad categories (organization and coherence of ideas; clarity of sentences and paragraphs; spelling, grammar, and use of English; and use of references) helped one school of business identify specific issues in students' written communication, such as tense confusion, unnecessarily complex language that obscured meaning, use of technical jargon, incorrect use of apostrophes, lack of sentence clarity, the need for greater coherence, and failure to review work prior to submission (Calma, 2013).

Such findings can be used by faculty and departments to change their approaches and assist students in mastering needed skills. Findings help individual instructors monitor progress, determine if content has been sufficiently addressed, and know when concepts need to be revisited (Rau, 2009). They "provide both professors and departments with aggregate information about the development and evolution of competencies of a group of students" (Mora & Ochoa, 2010, p. 242). The analysis of information obtained from rubric-based assessment assists in determining "deficiencies in a particular course or program" so that faculty can take "corrective action" (Rau, 2009, p. 32). In one case, a marketing program was able to determine that writing skills, as measured by a rubric, improved by 50% by the third week of the semester (Rau, 2009). Similar to the study cited earlier (Calma, 2013), rubrics helped the program identify the specific aspects of writing with which students had the most difficulty. Without a rubric, specific strengths and weaknesses in student performance is difficult to ascertain.

An issue with the use of rubrics is the spread of scores. Findings differ on this with some reporting a range of scores with the use of criteria-referenced rubrics (Burton, 2006; Kuisma,

1999) and others identifying problems with assessors clustering scores at the high end (Miller, 2003). The latter occurs when evaluators cannot discriminate levels of performance, the language in the instrument is difficult to interpret, or insufficient scoring choices are offered (Miller, 2003). A related issue is instructors evaluating their own students' work (Mok & Toh, 2015). Blind marking is more objective and can address issues with insufficient spread of marks (Mok & Toh, 2015). Other factors that impact the effectiveness of grading with a rubric are the quality of the rubric itself, the experience of the raters, and the presence or absence of rater training, particularly when rubrics are used across assignments and courses (Mok & Toh, 2015).

These studies demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration in the development of rubrics, in identifying weaknesses in skills, and in measuring cross-cutting skills in business disciplines. When faculty understand the purpose of AoL, the need to change current practices, and the value of rubrics, they recognize that rubrics provide an opportunity for feedback on their teaching and curriculum, enabling them to see needed areas of improvement and close the assessment loop (Bennett et al., 2017). Extensive evidence exists that rubrics assist faculty members in measuring learning so that "the school can evaluate its students' success at achieving learning goals, use the measures to plan improvement efforts, and . . . provide feedback and guidance for individual students" (AACSB, 2013, p. 33).

Students

From the student perspective, rubrics clarify expectations, provide guidelines for performance, identify issues needing to be addressed (Bolton, 2006; Mora & Ochoa, 2010; Rau, 2009; Smith, 2008), and indicate potential learning goals (Garfolo et al., 2016). Students experience greater comfort when they are familiar with expectations, know their standing in a course, and can identify what to improve on future assignments (Gibson, 2011; Mora & Ochoa, 2010). Commentary on rubrics can also reduce the frequency of students' questions about grades (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998), an advantage to both students and instructors. Conversations can be redirected from grades to faculty-student dialogue on learning (Garfolo et al., 2016). Rubrics help students know what the instructor considers important (Mora & Ochoa, 2010).

Getting student input about rubrics and grading preferences is critical to improving teaching and learning. Students in a marketing class preferred rubrics on writing assignments that had ratings as well as explanatory comments; the comments helped them understand the ratings and make improvements, and they appreciated feedback on both strengths and weaknesses (Smith, 2008). The rubric/matrix approach was preferred over two other methods—a paragraph that stated problems within the paper and areas of improvement, and a paragraph that identified three positive traits as well as areas for improvement. Students preferred the rubric as it provided clarity, assignment information, objectivity, and standardization. It also conveyed to them that instructors had thoughtfully prepared the assignment. Overall, students appreciated grading matrices that identified traits, weights for those traits, and assignment descriptions (Smith, 2008).

Rubrics are more successful when they are shared and discussed with students and their use is reinforced throughout the semester (Rau, 2009). Effective use of rubrics involves including them in syllabi or course learning management systems, ensuring that students are

familiar with rubrics specific to each assignment (students may even be asked to cut and paste the rubrics into their assignment submissions to demonstrate their awareness of them), and connecting rubrics to course objectives (Gibson, 2011). Even so, students may have varying opinions about their value, which may depend on the specific rubric being used. In one study, students rated seven different rubrics that had been implemented in their program of study; they scored an oral rubric the highest and an analytic rubric as the least useful; those who scored one rubric low, scored all the rubrics low (Rau, 2009). Rationale for the ratings was not collected.

These studies indicate the value of student input in rubric development. As with faculty and staff collaborations and employer input, students are also identified in AACSB standards as a critical stakeholder. AoL documentation suggests that "schools incorporate perspectives from stakeholders, including organizations employing graduates, alumni, students, the university community, policy makers, etc., into curricula management processes" (AACSB, 2013, p. 32). Rubrics also "facilitate and encourage frequent, productive student-student and student-faculty interaction designed to achieve learning goals" (AACSB, 2013, p. 33).

RUBRIC DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

All students at the university where this study occurred are required to take two writing enriched courses beyond their general education writing course. The writing enriched courses for business majors are a business communication course and an introduction to organizational behavior course. Business school faculty who attended an AoL assessment workshop collaborated to create a standardized rubric to measure written communication for AoL purposes. The writing rubric is used in the writing enriched courses and encouraged for all courses that emphasize written communication.

The rubric was designed so that faculty members could adapt it to a range of assignments. It contains three major categories – content (what is said), organization, (when and where it is said) and style (how it is said); however, the specifics of each of these sections can vary by instructor (see Appendix A). The authors acknowledge that in some respects the rubric provides standardized guidelines rather than descriptors for varying levels of performance. The primary intent of this paper is demonstrate how standards for writing can be adapted yet address the need for consistency.

The authors next provide examples of how the writing rubric has been implemented in the writing enhanced introduction to organizational behavior course, a marketing with social media course, and a consumer behavior course. The authors share faculty perspectives on the use of the rubrics and their perspectives on student learning. It should be noted that in some cases, the rubrics are not specifically organized by the school of business rubric categories, yet still retain the intent of these categories.

It should also be noted that the assignments described are not collected and analyzed for AoL purposes. A specific pre/post writing assessment is measured for AoL purposes. The intent of the rubric is to ensure that all faculty are using consistent (yet flexible) standards for written communication so that students writing skills are focused on throughout the curriculum and

students receive formative feedback and increase their awareness of what is involved in mastery of those skills.

Organizational Behavior

All business majors take an introduction to organizational behavior course. The course is designated as a writing enriched course, meaning that students receive instruction in writing and feedback on their writing. All sections of the course are consistent in that instructors use the same textbook. They also require a community project, which entails students working in teams to consult with a local business. Students identify a problem, collect data, examine the problem through the theories and concepts in the course, and make recommendations. The purpose of the project is to obtain real life experience applying the concepts of organizational behavior and to learn to work effectively in teams.

Rubric application and adaptation. Students create an artifact in their team ePortfolios to report on their consulting project. The ePortfolios are a compilation of various management challenges, reflections, and other assignments that students complete during the semester with the project being the culminating task. ePortfolios are an alternative form of assessment that have been recently added to the list of high impact practices (HIPs) (Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2017; Watson, Kuh, Rhodes, Light, & Chen, 2016). They provide students with the opportunity to explore and apply course content, thereby deepening their learning.

Students are provided with a course-specific adapted version of the school of business writing rubric which outlines expectations for the project artifact (See Appendix B). The rubric, specifically the categories of content, organization, and style, can be adapted to reflect the goals and parameters of any assignment. While the categories remain constant, the specifics within each category are instructor identified. Additionally, point values can vary by instructors for each of the categories.

Students are required to meet with writing tutors to review two drafts of the consulting project artifact with revisions in between. They use the course-adapted rubric as a guide to draft their papers and prepare for the tutor appointments. Ideally, all team members are present for the tutoring appointments so that all have the opportunity to learn effective writing skills. This can be facilitated by arranging for tutors to attend class for face-to-face delivery or virtual appointments for online courses. The tutors assign points to each team based on their level of preparation as reflected in a checklist based on the rubric. This reinforces the importance of the rubric in guiding students and helping them understand expectations. When the assignment is submitted, the instructor provides commentary in the rubric matrix within the learning management system and allows additional revisions before assigning a final grade.

It should be noted that the ePortfolio artifact for the team project provides students with the opportunity to be creative, incorporate graphics and digital media, and present their work in an appealing, professional way. It helps them develop their writing skills as the content for the artifact is the same as for a traditional written report. This format has numerous applications for the business world as it entails writing, presentation, design, and technology skills.

Outcomes. The checklist and accompanying rubric have resulted in high quality projects. Use of the rubric is encouraged by means of the tutor appointments. Teams are motivated to

receive points toward their grade for these appointments, thus they focus on the rubric descriptors. The rubric helps them know what is expected (Bolton, 2006; Mora & Ochoa, 2010; Rau, 2009; Smith, 2008). If they do not focus on the rubric, this is brought to their attention in the first tutor appointment. They then revise the paper as needed adhering more closely to the rubric for the second appointment.

Examining project grades is not the best measure of rubric benefits as students complete at least two drafts prior to submission and the instructor provides feedback if students submit the artifact prior to the deadline. In these cases, use of the rubric is further reinforced as the instructor provides comments within the rubric matrix. Grades are generally high as a result of multiple revisions and the guidance provided by means of the rubric. This motivates students to improve their writing skills. They know how they will be graded and receive feedback directly related to set standards.

Giving rubric-based feedback across multiple project drafts has distinct advantages. It motivates students to improve as they discuss the feedback in their teams. They benefit from the skill sets of team members, learn from each other as they modify their work, and further develop their skills and knowledge. They learn to value diversity, collaborate, and manage differing points of view. Teams may even set goals such as improving their communication processes to ensure individual responsibilities are fulfilled and work is submitted on time or having an error-free paper on the next draft. The rubric results in focused efforts as students understand expectations, are enabled to produce higher quality work, and as a result, earn higher scores.

Rubrics also create an opportunity for open discussions about performance. This occurs between the tutors and students and the faculty member and students; thus, students obtain feedback from multiple sources, and may need to manage differing viewpoints. This is often the case as different tutors are assigned to teams for the two tutor sessions, and the instructor may add a third perspective. Tutors typically offer writing-focused commentary while the instructor may remark on the writing and also direct students to theories and concepts to strengthen their recommendations. As such, students not only develop writing skills, but also critical thinking as they consider the different perspectives on their work to determine what to change and how; they also cultivate the ability to integrate course concepts and apply them to real-life contexts.

Overall, the rubric-based writing, feedback, and revision process prepares students with key cross-cutting skills valued by employers, such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, application of knowledge, and experiences with diversity, thereby providing them with a strong foundation for lifelong learning (AAC&U 2011, 2015; Hart Research Associates, 2015). The practices described also offer insights into the degree to which course learning outcomes are met. For example, in the organizational behavior course, the instructor obtains a clear perspective on students' ability to explain and apply the theories on which their consulting project recommendations are made.

Although the consulting project artifact is not used specifically for purposes of AoL in the school of business, the standardized rubric categories reinforce the importance of written communication and help students understand its elements. As such, all written communication assignments in business courses help reinforce standards and prepare students for the writing assessment, administered in the capstone course, that is officially used for AoL purposes.

Marketing with Social Media

Students who major in digital marketing are required to take a marketing with social media course as a core requirement. Faculty teaching in other majors also promote the course as an elective. The course learning objectives require students to create written content for a marketing blog and social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. While not officially designated as a writing enriched course, students write seven blog posts, ten social media posts, and an end-of-semester social media plan for a local client.

All sections in the course use a consistent course design, textbook, and social media ad buying simulation. Additionally, students create a student blog that uses the business written communication rubric. The purpose of these assignments is to give students a real-life experience writing social media content and learning how consumers engage with content on social media platforms. Students are taught how to write blog posts and how to write for social media audiences. While writing for social media has similarities with traditional academic writing, it uses a casual voice with simple and short communication that is personal to the reader. The writing style at times breaks traditional rules with the hope of motivating the reader to like, comment, or share (Scott, 2010).

Rubric application and adaption. The standard business school rubric was adapted and used for the student blog assignment. The faculty member used the school of business writing rubric and adapted the specific sections to teach the difference between traditional writing and writing for social media. The faculty member maintained the basic categories of the rubric (content, organization, and style) and included more detailed information in the rubric for how these may change for social media. Students were taught the basic concept that written communication needs to have strong content, organization, and style, while at the same time students were taught that these elements are different for the fast-past, shorter social media platforms. Students were also taught that in the business world all writing needs to have content organization, and style, but the written medium of delivery may change how those elements appear. The student blog rubric (Appendix C) provides clarity about required elements along with level of performance expected for each section of the business school rubric. Showing students, the required elements at the beginning of the project may reduce anxiety and the frequency of questions asked to the professor (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998). Additionally, the rubric can be used as a framework for graders to evaluate the work. Using a consistent rubric in the learning management system with points assigned to sections of the rubric may also reduce questions about grading subjectivity.

Instructors who provide a clear rubric create guidelines for how to build a project allows student to have more timely, clear communication (Chang & Kang, 2016). Each week during the semester, the professor orally reviewed the rubric while showing a written version of the rubric on the classroom screen. Students were able to both hear and see the rubric weekly. In addition, the instructor spent more detailed time on sections of the rubric that correlated to what the students were learning that week in class. The rubric was broken into small parts and the students were given sections of the rubric each week to learn and implement on their student blog.

Outcomes. Using a rubric has positively impacted the students' blogs in terms of learning adoption curve, student discussion, student awareness of different sections of the blog, and student work quality. The social media marketing class is usually taken during the senior year. At this point, students are familiar with the standard business school written communication rubric. Students no longer question the need for the written requirements; rather students are interested in how the frameworks works in a social media medium. Ultimately, students discuss with the teacher how to take this traditional writing framework and make it work for a writing platform that limits words and characters. Using the standard framework from other classes helps students move to more advanced ideas about writing rapidly because they have already mastered the basic framework in previous classes.

Students see the rubric, and they ask clarifying questions about the assignment. This may be difficult or it may not occur at all, if no concrete rubric is given to students. The rubric prompts clarifying questions that rapidly turns into a quality class discussion. For example, a student may ask about the style of social media hashtags. Taking the question from the rubric, the teacher engaged in a detailed description about how hashtags are used in social media not just for searching but to communicate an idea to the reader in a clever, concise way. Students then ask more questions, and they suggest hashtags to see how the class—acting as a reader—would respond to the hashtag. Another discussion that occurred from the rubric was the discussion about types of blog posts. Students asked what are the required blog posts after seeing the rubric in class, which created a class discussion about blog types and how to write a list style post versus a narrative style post.

Students are also asked to review the rubric as they complete a blog peer review toward the end of the semester. When students participate in a blog peer review, the students are exposed yet again to the rubric as they peer grade their assigned classmate's blog. When students review their classmate's blog, the student internalizes their own performance on their blog using the rubric. When students see a clear expectation from the rubric, they are motivated to compare their blog to the rubric to ensure they have all sections of the assignment completed. Rubrics increase students' ability to see the entire assignment and students miss fewer assignment requirements.

Overall, the use of the business written communication rubric enables students to produce higher quality work because students are shown how the assignment should look from the beginning of the semester. Because the rubric is discussed weekly in class, students become familiar with the requirements for the blog and their learning increases, which makes the task of creating a blog easier. Finally, students use the rubric to evaluate their peers, which motivates them to improve their own blogs after comparing how they are doing with their fellow students.

Marketing Consumer Behavior Course

The consumer behavior course, required for all marketing students, employs a common textbook across all sections. The course includes an analysis of consumer spending and saving habits, product preferences, shopping behavior, leisure time patterns, and social change, exploring the influence of advertising, selling and fashion trends on consumption behavior.

Course objectives include establishing a basic understanding of the psychological, sociological, and economic processes and influences affecting consumer choice, to examine implications of these factors for marketing, to examine implications of these factors for consumer well-being, to gain experience and familiarity with research in consumer behavior, to improve ability to express knowledge and ideas appropriately in writing and through verbal presentations, and to improve the ability to use appropriate procedures, frameworks, models, and experience to gain knowledge, solve problems, and make appropriate decisions based on various informational sources.

The term paper assignment is a qualitative research paper performed individually by each student enrolled in the consumer behavior classes. The term paper project is a small-scale qualitative field study involving some aspect of high-involvement consumer behavior. It is a study about consumers, how they are motivated, and ultimately, how important it is for marketers to better understand their attitudes and their motivations for marketplace behaviors.

Students interview two or three respondents, and all field notes and journals are submitted before the term papers are due. Formal research findings presentations of the studies will be made to the class during the last 1-2 weeks of the semester. The term paper assignment rubric appears in Appendix D.

Rubric application and adaptation. This assignment and writing rubric have evolved in quantity and quality of details required over the past four semesters based on student feedback and faculty member observations. Thus, the learning has been two-way between the students and the instructor, affecting improvement and learning for each. The demonstration of professional written communications skills is required in each section of the semester term paper. The rubric is delineated by sections *Content, Organization and Style* addressing the application of additional course objectives and learning goals by section as follows:

Content: This rubric section identifies the nature and required attributes of the term paper's introduction. Students apply their knowledge of course content using demographic variables to describe their study's respondents. It also requires students to apply theory to their data through the analysis of respondents' motivations for behavior. Analytic and critical thinking skills are emphasized and demonstrated in the detailed analyses of respondent data. Students are required to integrate the findings of at least three peer reviewed published articles into their study, comparing their own findings with those of others through critical thinking skills.

Finally, students step back after a detailed analysis of their respondents' behaviors in the marketplace, and they address, "Why would marketers care and how could they benefit from this study's findings?" This step leads students toward viewing the bigger picture of research and how it can meaningfully contribute to the marketing discipline.

Organization: This section assesses the overall organization of the term paper, including the requires sub-headers of Introduction, Introduction of Informants, Theory and Findings, and Conclusion. The organization and connection of paragraphs and the requirement of page numbers are also assessed.

Style: This section provides an overview of the assignment requirements for APA formatting and the preparation for writing a scholarly article. In addition to focusing on

demonstrating effective communication skills, this section also addresses APA formatting requirements and the preparation for the reference page required for a scholarly article.

Outcomes. After completing the research term paper assignment, students have demonstrated and applied their knowledge of consumer behavior terms including the psychological, sociological, and economic processes and influences affecting consumer choice. Students also have reflected on the implications of these factors hold for marketing practitioners. Students have learned and demonstrated qualitative research protocol and the application of theory in data analysis. Written communication skills are emphasized heavily in this assignment, as well as, the demonstration of analytical skills and critical thinking.

Student comments after completing this assignment have emphasized the surprise of being able to accomplish and produce scientific consumer behavior research themselves, the fun and excitement experienced while performing their consumer studies, as well as, how generally fascinating the study of consumer motivations and behavior can be. Thus, while students tend to experience at least some anxiety at the beginning of the semester when they are told the scope of what they will be doing in the course, after the assignment has been accomplished, they frequently communicate how much they learned, and how proud they feel to have contributed knowledge to the field of marketing through their own work.

BENEFITS OF RUBRICS ACROSS STAKEHOLDERS—MEETING AACSB CRITERIA

Through the development and application of assignment rubrics across the organizational behavior and marketing disciplines within the authors' school of business, the implementation, applied measurement of student outcomes over several semesters, and the refinement of rubric instruments over time have evidenced many similar and shared benefits realized and discussed by previous authors. These are summarized in Appendix E.

Two major stakeholder groups, faculty and students, have been individually and/or collectively assisted toward the accomplishment of learning objectives and program goals through rubric use and application. Benefits specific to faculty have included time saved in grading; the dual use of rubrics for both grading and program assessment; the role of rubrics serving to develop and encourage faculty collaboration and unifying faculty through shared goals; the development of greater insight related to the integration of core concepts, course objectives and skills across curriculum; the creation of a shared understanding of desired outcomes and consistency of practice across course sections and departments; increased objectivity, reliability and validity in the measurement of learning across course sections and departments; the encouragement of the alignment of learning goals and measures with the school mission; assistance to faculty in facilitating student placement; the identification of deficits in student knowledge and skills; the identification of deficits in courses and programs; and the usefulness of rubrics in monitoring student progress.

Using rubrics has benefited students specifically by serving to be formative in students' life-long learning; clarifying expectations, providing guidelines for performance, and identifying student learning deficits; indicating potential individual learning goals; and developing a

classroom environment where more focused student efforts are possible, thus resulting in the production of higher work quality and higher grade accomplishment.

Benefits of rubrics to both faculty and students have included the creation of the opportunity for open discussions for grading and learning throughout the semester; the development of greater insight related to integration of core concepts, course objectives and skills; assistance to faculty toward the goal of facilitating student placement; the identification of deficits in student knowledge and skills; the identification of deficits in courses and programs; the monitoring of student progress; and the reduced frequency of students questioning grades. Correspondingly, each of the benefits realized by both stakeholder groups have meaningfully assisted in the process of continuous improvement, as well as serving to assist the school in its goal toward meeting AACSB accreditation criteria.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Together, results from the courses highlighted in this practice-based study showed that rubrics benefited both faculty and students. Faculty were given opportunities to assess written and oral communication skills using standardized, but adaptable, rubrics which reinforced what faculty were teaching and how it was perceived by students. The rubrics allowed the school of business to meet AoL standards while providing faculty with flexibility for adapting the rubric to specific assignments. Finally, faculty used the rubrics to establish consistency in assessing both disciplinary content and cross-cutting skills. From the student perspective, using rubrics resulted in higher quality work and grades. Also, students reported greater clarification of assignment expectations. These findings contribute to the existing literature showing that rubrics are a key component to effective teaching pedagogy. In additional to theoretical contributions, this study provides practical implications for business schools who may want to adopt standardized flexible rubrics to improve their AoL practices.

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APPENDIX A
School of Business Writing Rubric

Requirement	Weight	Excellent		Adequate		Marginal	
		+	-	+	-	+	-
Content Audience Appropriately Addressed Context Understood Purpose Achieved Logical, Analytical, Critical, and Creative Accurately Supported Correct, Considerate, and Complete Concise Graphics Included When Appropriate							
Organization Appropriate for Genre Headings Effective Information Easily Accessible Paragraphs Use Topic Sentences Sentences Use Specific, Concrete Words Transitions Create Coherence							
Style Uses Unbiased Language Creates an Appropriate Tone Uses Concise Language Draws the Reader into the Message Wording Does Not Draw Attention to Itself Has a Consistent Point of View and Mood Contains No Errors or Only Minor Errors in Punctuation, Grammar, Capitalization, Number Usage, Spelling, Other Mechanics Uses the Correct Format for the Genre							

APPENDIX B
Organizational Behavior Team Consulting Project Rubric

Content. Sufficient information is provided about the company and the problem.	15 points / 100% Exemplary	14 points / 93% Competent	13.5 points / 86% Partly competent	11.5 points / 76% Developing
Content. Data collection and analysis provide insights into the problem.	15 points / 100% Exemplary	14 points / 93% Competent	13.5 points / 86% Partly competent	11.5 points / 76% Developing
Content. Recommendations are directly linked to the data analysis.	20 points / 100% Exemplary	18 points / 90% Competent	17 points / 85% Partly competent	15 points / 75% Developing
Content. Recommendations are clearly based on theory; theory is explained to provide understanding of why the recommendations will be effective.	20 points / 100% Exemplary	18 points / 90% Competent	17 points / 85% Partly competent	15 points / 75% Developing
Organization. Paragraphs are well-organized; ideas are connected across sections; appropriate headings and transitions are used.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Style. Design is professional; use of spacing, layout, color, graphics, and media contribute to the presentation of the information.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Style. Ideas are clear and writing is grammatically correct.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing

APPENDIX C
Social Media Marketing Student Blog Rubric

Content. The written content on the blog homepage provides information about the blog topic for the targeted blog reader.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Content. The student needs to write at least 7 posts *(5 pts each)* from your student blog content schedule. Remember to use the posting formats we discussed in class which include lists, sectional, narrative, and multi-media posts. Each post needs to be at least 500 words except for the HOW TO post. At least one of your posts needs to be a HOW TO video showing your readers how to do something. Please follow the format discussed in class for how to create a HOW TO video. The minimum length of the HOW TO video is 1 minute 30 seconds.	40 points / 100% Exemplary	37 points / 93% Competent	34.5.5 points / 86% Partly competent	30.5 points / 76% Developing
Content. The frequently asked question page highlights the most important questions your blog reader may have with short, concise answers.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Organization. The blog has four required pages which include, static homepage, blog roll, frequently asked questions, and contact us. The tab navigation and pages are well-organized; ideas are connected across tabs; appropriate, consistent branding appears on the pages of the blog.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Organization. The blog has a sidebar and header with the appropriate sections. The header needs a subscribe now feature. The sidebar needs to have a search bar and links to social media accounts.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Style. Design of the blog is professional; use of spacing, layout, color, graphics, headers and media contribute to the presentation of the blog content.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Style. Ideas are clear and writing is grammatically correct. The blog uses appropriate hashtags and calls-to-action to communicate with the blog reader.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing

APPENDIX D
Consumer Behavior Rubric

Content. Details the activity to be covered and the author's interest in the activity in one brief paragraph. In another brief paragraph, describes all attributes of the informants (demographic and psychographic) that are relevant to the activity.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 93% Competent	8 points / 86% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Content. Makes use of at least 3 peer-reviewed journal articles for additional background. Ties theory/ information from all three articles to the quotations from the informants.	15 points / 100% Exemplary	13.5 points / 90% Competent	12.75 points / 85% Partly competent	11.25 points / 75% Developing
Content. Data analysis is clearly based on theories of motivation; theory is explained to provide understanding of why consumers behave. Under a sub-heading "Conclusion," offers a conclusion consistent with the theories and the informants' quotations. Ties conclusion back to CB theories applied (motivations) and to the Marketing industry.	30 points / 100% Exemplary	27 points / 90% Competent	25.5 points / 85% Partly competent	22.5 points / 75% Developing
Organization. Contains necessary sub-headings including: Introduction, Introduction to Informants, Theory and Findings, and Conclusion; page numbers; follows correct APA citations format, descriptors and details the subject of the paper. Paragraphs are well-organized; ideas are connected across sections.	25 points / 100% Exemplary	22.5 points / 90% Competent	20 points / 80% Partly competent	18.75 points / 75% Developing
Style. Is appropriate in tone and APA structure for a marketing journal; design is professional; use of spacing, layout, color, graphics, and media contribute to the presentation of the information.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing
Style. Contains all articles used for the paper on a separate "References" page and employs correct APA formatting.	10 points / 100% Exemplary	9 points / 90% Competent	8 points / 80% Partly competent	7.5 points / 75% Developing

APPENDIX E
Rubric Benefits for Stakeholders

Stakeholders	Outcomes	Authors
Faculty	Save time grading; Dual purpose rubrics: Use for grading and program assessment; Create open discussions for grading and learning throughout the semester; Serve to unify faculty; Develop greater insight related to integration of core concepts, course objectives & skills across curriculum; Create shared understanding of desired outcomes & consistency of practice across course sections and departments; Measure learning more validly, reliably & objectively across course sections and departments; Encourage alignment of learning goals & measures with school mission; Helps the faculty in accomplishment of the goal of facilitating student placement; Identify deficits in student knowledge & skills; Identify deficits in courses & programs; Monitor student progress; Reduced frequency of students questioning grades; High quality student projects and grades, improved engaged learning teaching techniques, improved communication with and between students, increased open dialogue between faculty and students about grading and course expectations, improved clarity in establishing student course expectations and how to succeed, improved demonstration of course learning objectives, improved class structure and course organization, improved strategy for consistently improving the course materials, assignments and teaching methods; improved overall learning through reciprocity with students.	Donathan & Tymann (2010); NILO (2009); Mora & Ochoa (2010); Petropoulou, Vassilikopulou & Retails (2011); Garfolo, Kelpsh, Phelps & Kelpsh (2016); Smith (2008); Rau (2009); Bennett, Smart, & Kumar (2017); Gibson (2011); Calma (2013); Spiller & Marold (2015); Walvoord & Anderson (1998); Andrade, Workman & Gardiner (2020)
Students	Create open discussions for grading and learning throughout the semester; Develop greater insight related to integration of core concepts, course objectives; Help in preparation for marketplace; Identify deficits in student knowledge & skills; Monitor student progress; Formative in students' life-long learning; Clarify expectations, provide guidelines for performance, identify deficits; Indicate potential individual learning goals; More focused student efforts, production of higher work quality, earning of	Garfolo, Kelpsh, Phelps & Kelpsh (2016); Smith (2008); Petropoulou, Vassilikopulou & Retails (2011); Rau (2009); Bennett, Smart, & Kumar (2017); Gibson (2011); Calma (2013); Spiller & Marold (2015); Mora & Ochoa (2010); Brookhart (2003); Bolton

	higher grades; Reduced frequency of students questioning grades; High quality student projects and grades, increased understanding of course expectations, increased motivation to engage, learn and succeed, increased speed of learning, increased focus on School learning goals, increased engagement about writing skill development, increased awareness of the importance of diversity within teams, increased goal setting, increased critical and analytical thinking skills; improved group collaboration and performance, improved qualitative research protocol and application of theory in data analysis, increased learning beyond initial expectations, increased excitement about learning, increased pride about personal capabilities and market value.	(2006); Smith (2008); Andrade & Du (2005); Walvoord & Anderson (1998); Andrade, Workman & Gardiner (2020).
AACSB	Create shared understanding of desired outcomes & consistency of practice across course sections and departments: Serve to unify faculty; Develops greater insight related to integration of core concepts & skills across curriculum; Measure learning more validly, reliably & objectively across course sections and departments; Encourage alignment of learning goals & measures with school mission; Identify deficits in student knowledge & skills; Identify deficits in courses & programs; Monitor student progress; Insights into the degree to which learning outcomes are met; Informed tactics for AACSB loop closing: Contributes toward meeting AACSB criteria.	Donathan & Tymann (2010); NILO (2009); Mora & Ochoa (2010); Petropoulou, Vassilikopulou & Retails (2011); Garfolo, Kelpsh, Phelps & Kelpsh (2016); Smith (2008); Rau (2009); Bennett, Smart, & Kumar (2017); Gibson (2011); Calma (2013); Mora & Ochoa (2010); Brookhart (2003); Bolton (2006); Spiller & Marold (2015); Walvoord & Anderson (1998); Andrade, Workman & Gardiner (2020).