



## Thinking Through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops 4-12 by Heather Lattimer

### **Evaluating Student Work**

This appendix includes several sample evaluation rubrics and guidelines that were used in the studies profiled in the genre-based chapters of this book. As with the studies themselves, these rubrics are intended to provide ideas, not mandate evaluation standards. There is no one right way to make a rubric, as the variety of the rubrics shown here will attest. The methods and standards that are used in individual classrooms should derive directly from the original expectations of the study for that genre in that classroom. Readers should adapt, rearrange, revise, or rework these rubrics as appropriate for their classrooms.

### **Guidelines for Developing and Using Evaluation Rubrics in the Classroom**

#### *Develop Rubrics in Collaboration with Students*

In each study, teachers spent time with the students developing the rubrics that would be used for evaluation. Teachers kept a running list of the lessons that were taught and the strategies that were studied. These lists provided many of the criteria that were incorporated into the rubrics. Published texts or models of proficient reading behaviors and responses were analyzed by the classes to provide benchmarks of mastery. Work from former students was also analyzed to benchmark various levels of proficiency.

#### *Use Rubrics During the Study for Student Self-Evaluation and Progress Assessment*

Once rubrics were developed and benchmarks established, students were encouraged to assess their own work using the rubrics. Reviewing their writing or responses to literature with specific standards in mind helped students to recognize both strengths and weaknesses and to improve their work, where appropriate, during the study itself.

#### *Evaluate Reading and Writing Separately*

Both reading and writing need to be evaluated; each should be evaluated on its own. Although reading and writing within a genre go hand in hand, student achievement in one does not automatically indicate ability in another.

Suggestions follow for evaluating reading and writing.

#### **Reading Evaluation**

Teachers in the studies used one or more of the following methods to evaluate student reading:

- Review of reading response journals. Students were asked to select reading response journal entries that they believed demonstrated achievement of specific evaluation criteria. These entries were then evaluated by both teacher and students against the rubric.

- Individual exit conferences. With journals or specific readings in hand as evidence, students sat down with teachers to discuss specific readings and their individual progress.
- Final reading tests. Using a previously unseen reading, students were asked to read, demonstrate the use of appropriate strategies, and respond to questions appropriate to the genre. Student work was then evaluated against the reading rubric.

### **Writing Evaluation**

The primary method for evaluating student writing was to read and assess the final written product within the genre study. Additionally, teachers conferred with the students individually and considered their self-evaluations when determining final rubric placement.

### *Award Grades for Both Achievement and Effort*

In addition to making a final evaluation of academic achievement, teachers regularly evaluated students' effort. Students were held accountable for turning in drafts, participating in classroom discussions, and reading and responding to common classroom texts and independently selected texts. Regular reading conferences, review of reading response journals and writer's notebooks, classroom observation, and occasional taping of classroom discussions were used to ensure that students regularly participated and put effort into the work of the study.

Writing Rubric Memoir

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Event Selection	Event seems very significant to the author's life.	Event seems kind of significant to the author's life.	Event does not seem significant to the author's life.	Author does not seem to be aware of significance of the event.
Structure	Memoir is clearly focused on a single memorable moment. All additional text events directly support the significance of the memorable moment.	Memoir is mostly focused on a memorable moment. Some of the additional text events support the significance of the memorable moment.	Memoir has a central event. Other events are included that have some relevance to the central event but do not necessarily show its significance.	Memoir includes multiple events that are disconnected and do not reveal significance.
Style and Technique	Author consistently reveals the significance of the events through engaging details, compelling language, and a balance of action, thoughts, and dialogue.	Author sometimes reveals the significance of the events through details, compelling language, and a balance of action, thoughts, and dialogue.	Author tells the significance of events through direct statements.	No effort is made to reveal the significance of the events to the reader.
Mechanics and Presentation	No mistakes in spelling, grammar, or punctuation; neat and clean.	A few minor mistakes that do not interfere with the reader's ability to comprehend the text; neat.	Many minor mistakes. Mechanics and presentation make text somewhat difficult to read.	Many or careless mistakes and sloppy presentation make text very difficult to read.

Comments:

Score: