

**Q&A: Rubrics**

A couple of people wanted to know how many categories do your rubrics typically have? And if we have a good criteria, then is a rubric really necessary?

Yeah. I'll pitch up that one first, Rebecca, if you don't mind. I love a single point rubric. I love concise language. I love the conversation that happens around a rubric. So I tend to try to minimize the categories and get to the language. And I do love single point rubric. So I do think you, whatever the rubric is, if it's a single point rubric, you still have that criteria laid out. So I'm not sure if I'm dissecting the two too clearly or meaningfully for the listeners in the webinar. But if you have really specific feedback or criteria, excuse me, and it's one column, a single point rubric. I love that. And as students are using that rubric, hopefully it's a co-designed rubric, I should say.

Even the rubrics that are given to me by the Ministry of Education or by my faculty saying, "This is a rubric we want you to use." I never just come into my classroom and say, "Kiddos, here's the rubric. This is how I'm going to assess you." I always tuck that rubric aside on my desk and I ask my students, "Hey, the assessment tool is going to be this," whether it's an essay or it has to do with speaking. Whatever that assessment tool is, I ask them, "What does that look like? What's some language we can put in to create this rubric together?" And then, I'm constantly listening and looking at the rubric I have on my desk and suggesting things that perhaps they're missing. Maybe I write some powerful language from that master rubric on the board and I encourage them to use that language in their discussions and essentially through our co-designing, we get to the exact same rubric.

But through student voice, which ensures accuracy and self-assessment when they get there because they know what it is they're actually self-assessing. And then achievement increases because they actually understand again, what it is they're being assessed on. So I took that to a bit of a different direction Dean, in terms of how we can co-design rubrics but I do believe that simplifying it a little bit and not making it too wordy or too overwhelming. As long as the wording is concise and direct and intentional.

Yeah. I think, one of my favorite articles is Alfie Kohn writes "The Trouble with Rubrics" and one of the things he's pointing out and you addressed it with your response, Trevor, is the fact that rubrics can be limiting and saying well, this is all I have to do. And kids are just trying to get to here. And so the way you've approached that suggests that it not only is a co-created, but it doesn't have limitations. It allows some freedom to be able to expand that. And again, at the same time, I think having some of those structures in place can be helpful for particularly newer teachers to know that. So there's probably an evolution there.

Yeah.

Next question. And this was a couple of people asked this one. So can you speak a little to how teachers could help students in this back to the rubric question in IB schools with set rubrics to have more ownership over that? So it probably is a bit of a variation I don't know of Rebecca. Trevor, you want to handle that one? But that's could be a challenge for people that already have these rubrics in place, and that what they're stuck with.

Right. I don't know a ton about using set rubrics because as I said, as Trevor spoke too, I'm always trying to have, especially in kindergarten, a very specific where we're going that's co-created. What do we think? Whether it's writing. What do we think makes a piece of writing or an illustration big, bold and beautiful? And then we'd come up with like two or three things max for five-year-olds. But being given a

set rubric, I would try to look it in the sense of perhaps weaving in student ownership could be maybe breaking down what each piece is and really coming up with a couple of things that we're hoping for in each area. Or I would maybe look at it as a chance to set a personal goal. And maybe that's kind of where you're weaving in. And of course, you're still working towards that rubric.

And maybe Trevor, you can speak to this a little bit more in your practice but maybe that's where the goal setting comes in. And that goal can be a little bit more individualized and personal that honors where I am in my journey. And oh, I can see some alignment in the rubric, or you could be tweaking that goal to fit the rubric.

Yeah. I work with a lot of IB schools and I love what the IB has planned. The intentionality around student agency and inquiry. And I think I kind of scratched at this answer a little or this question in my previous answering that even with the mandated rubric, the thing that IB be saying, "This is how you're going to assess." I still co-design it and I kind of partner it up so we get to the same rubric but through student voice. And I think that perhaps, that's one area, if I am at all bold in this webinar that perhaps I'll say that IB falls a little short is, "Where is the genuine voice in this really rich curriculum where students are more co-designers and co-constructors and partners in learning?" And so I love what the IB has offered up for IB schools and IB educators.

A lot of the work I'm doing with IB schools around the world is let's embed that student voice into this curriculum. So it's just not a curriculum being done to kids, it's where is the voice throughout. And that co-designing of the rubric that I just referenced in the to the previous question, allows you to see that even when you're given something powerful, let's start it with student voice, Dean.

Yep. Excellent.

### **Q&A: Parents and Assessment**

How can we impact education and get parents on board with the process of assessment when, perhaps, all they want is a mark? So I'm sure you've all dealt with this one for a while.

Yeah. And I understand why. As a teacher I taught in a framework as a student in our system. And as a university student, I was trained to teach a certain way and it's taken me some time to unlearn. And I'm continuously on that journey as a settler. I'm constantly unlearning and coming back to my practice. And so I encourage those questions from parents. I'm very transparent as to why we're doing things the way we're doing them. I think transparency is key. Again, there's no me behind the curtain. I speak really openly to my values of competencies and student involvement. And I think there's some great research and some great articles and some great resources that we can share to help parents be a part of this conversation, this discourse.

And they're not our books. I would never say to a parent, "Read this book on inquiry." Those books are for teachers. There's some great brain science around what is happening with the child's mind, an adolescent mind and why do they need agency. Why is curiosity and creativity, why are those competencies that are more valuable in today's world than perhaps they were 30 years ago?

And so with some of the schools that I work with, we do book clubs with parents. And again, they're not my books. They're not our books. They're these books by other researchers that allow parents to come together and read some of the research around why schools are considering change. I also work with

schools that embed parent voice, like all stakeholders in the new vision for the school. So if we say we're an inquiry school, do parents know what that mean? Have they been a part of that new envisioning process to determine where you're going to go as a school community? Because families are a part of our community, so I invite parents into these schools that I work with to be a part of that reimagining. And like I said, there's a bunch of great resources, books, documentaries that allow parents to see why we're making this shift. I guess, the short answer is I never look at question as being a cause for being on the defense. I always look at the questions as being an invitation to talk about their children's learning and how I'm doing my best to support their learning.

I think another piece just to add in is having the opportunity and that practice of making the learning that is happening in your classroom visible to families. So whether there's so many different tools and ways to connect with families if you're doing a blog or you do... Maybe not right now, but you invite families in to see that showcase and that highlights the process. You're making them part of the learning. I know that I use, I send pictures and videos all the time of things that we're doing and reflections and conversations that we're having.

And I think we have so many tools at our fingertips right now to create that window into the classroom and to allow families to really see, "So they are learning. It just may look a little bit different perhaps than what I experienced when I was in school." It's really important. And I think it's a huge part of our job that sometimes is overlooked because we're still full as educators, right? And that is something that would kind of happen more at the end of our day or when we have that extra minute that we don't often have. But that piece of making the window into the classroom-

Yeah.

Yeah.

... and drawing back the curtain on our own practice and just being open as Trevor said, impressions are huge.

Yeah. And our greatest advocate for what's happening in the classroom are our kiddos.

Yeah.

When our students go home and they tell mom and dad, "Hey, we did this thing or I learned this thinking routine or we talked about this concept or I co-wrote my report card. Read that comment because those are some of my words that we have in a conversation." They're going to speak to why these changes perhaps are most meaningful to them. And that's where parents... In my virtual parent-teacher interviews at the start of the year, I received all this really great feedback from parents for doing things the way that are happening in our classroom because they're excited to see why the change that they're seeing in their kiddos or what is the cause of that change. And that happened after a mere two weeks of co-designing and co-constructing and student voice.

#### **Q&A: Helping Students with "What's next?"**

Well, how do you ask learners what's next when they don't know? I think a lot of times when we think about inquiry, people are quite afraid of it just because you're going to have kids who are going to shrug their shoulders and not be as engaged or to be challenged in this one. So this to me is really about

helping those maybe reluctant learners or less confident learners sort of get to that next stage. So what are your tips on helping those particular learners?

Yeah.

Oh, go ahead, Rebecca. No, you go.

I think it goes back to when we talked right at the beginning about the swimming pool and inquiry and when we are able to just like any other subject and this is like that myth, right? That we're going to burst in inquiry... Is that inquiry can be structured and it should be structured and it should be ribboned from the big ideas in your curriculum, the competencies, all of that. And it's just like you would in numeracy or in literacy, you're not just going to hand a book to the kids and say, "Good luck," right? We're going to be giving them supports and strategies and we're going to be developing their toolkit. And so we're hoping that you're supporting your learners that whole way from the shallow end.

And perhaps, you're getting closer to the deep end so that when we are asking our learners we can fall back onto the toolkit and the experiences that we've had. We can't expect our learners to be successful and to know where they're going next when they haven't had the experience in a structured, supported, guided and modeled way. I think that we see that so much in their primary years, right? We're spending so much time honing in on those skills. And just as if we're asking questions our learners where they're going with their learning or where they're going with their assessment and what's coming next. We can't expect them to answer that unless they've had the experience over and over and over and over again. Sorry Trevor, I totally cut you off.

No, that was great. I was just going to share really briefly. Oftentimes I ask my students, "On a scale of one to 10 where are you at now?" Whether it's about content knowledge or developing a competency or project kind of management. And if a student says, "I feel like I'm a six out of 10 right now," I say, "How do you become a seven or eight in the next couple of minutes or the next day? What are your steps that you're going to take to move up that scale?" And if they can't identify that, I crowdsource it in their group. "Can kiddos who are part of this group right there, can you help give some feedback as to what those next steps could be?" And I back away and I listen. This is that vigorously listening.

And if they don't have one of those strategies laid out to take a next step, that's where I jump in. I think we have a tendency of saving kids from some of that risk taking and some of that uncertainty and we tend to have a lot of control over those steps. And clarity is important, intentionality is important but I want them to troubleshoot. I want them to collaborate and crowdsource some of that strategizing, and then I jump in.

So I love that reflection on a scale of one to 10, where are you at? How do you move yourself along? And then let's crowdsource and collaborate. And then I lift that up a bit, right? So I'd say, "Hey, I'm just listening to Dean or Rebecca talk over here. Dean said he's a six out of 10. He knows how he can get to an eight out of 10. Dean, what are you going to do next?" And then everyone in the room hears Dean's next step. So I'm not having that conversation 30 times or 20 times. I'm having that conversation once, vigorously listening and then lifting it up. And so every student can kind of see where they need to go to next.