

## Curriculum Activities

Assessment is a very important but also difficult part of a teacher's practice. Especially when it comes to formative assessment techniques and project-based work, teacher candidates (TCs) need to explore possible approaches before they should be expected to design quality assessments themselves. This is part of why we created the MetaRubric game, but we don't expect TCs to solidify their understanding of the use of rubrics just from one game. These suggestions for surrounding curriculum activities make up a sequence that you can use to build a foundation for the game experience, then reflect on it and apply the relevant skills to a realistic classroom challenge. **This is a resource not a mandate, so feel free to modify and rearrange these activities as you see fit for your own classes!**

1. Types of Assessment
2. MetaRubric Game
3. Reflection Discussion
4. Readings
5. Classroom Use Case

### 1. Types of Assessment

The goal of this activity is for TCs to start thinking critically about the strengths and weaknesses of different types of assessments, and what learning goals each one can evaluate. This will set the stage for the MetaRubric game in which they will explore more deeply the strengths and weaknesses of rubrics.

#### Introduction

Ask your TCs what they think assessment is. This will likely draw on previous conversations they have had together.

#### Brainstorm

Have your TCs work in small groups to come up with a list of different types or formats of assessments.

*Tip: If the groups' lists mainly consist of traditional assessment types, you may want to encourage them to consider some more progressive types such as group projects, game creation, peer assessment, etc. The goal here is to have a list with a lot of variation!*

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## Analyze

Ask the small groups to think about each kind of assessment and decide what it is good at. This could be any aspect of the assessment - what content area it works best with, what skills it can or can't assess, even logistical aspects.

Come back together as a whole class and put the group lists together on the board, forming one big list with notes about the strengths of each. This could be in table form such as the following example:

Assessment Type	Strengths
Multiple Choice Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Useful for assessing factual content knowledge with clear right answers</li><li>• Quick Assessment Method</li><li>• More subjective, won't be misinterpreted</li></ul>
Rubrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project-based work</li><li>• Addresses deeper learning goals</li></ul>
Etc.	

## Apply

Use the list below of learning objectives and student work examples. (Feel free to add your own items to the list as well.) Present the items on this list to your class one at a time. Ask TCs to decide which type of assessment would be the best fit for evaluating each one. As they explain their reasons, facilitate discussion around the pros and cons of using each type for the given purpose. (Feel free to do this part in small groups as well, and then ask them to share the items they felt the least certain about to discuss with the class.)

- Spanish vocabulary
- Predator-prey relationships in a pond ecosystem
- Calculate the hypotenuse of a right triangle
- Collaborate with peers
- Use ratio and proportion to solve problems
- The French Revolution
- The Doppler Effect
- Series and parallel circuits
- The three branches of US government
- Mathematical modeling
- Complete a Punnett square for a genetic cross
- Make claims backed by evidence
- Identify themes in a novel
- Investing money as part of financial literacy

## 2. MetaRubric Game

[Game Materials](https://playful.mit.edu/metarubic/) <https://playful.mit.edu/metarubic/>

This is a game that your TCs can play on their own, outside of class time. They will play in groups of 3-5 and can use anywhere from 1-2 hours. Before you facilitate the post-game discussion, it would be a good idea for you to have played the game with one group as well.

## 3. MetaRubric Reflection Discussion

After your TCs have played the MetaRubric game, help them reflect on their experience by facilitating some discussion. Different groups may have had different experiences in the game, depending on the group dynamics, so be sure to highlight different perspectives. You can choose from the following prompts to get the discussion going.

- What do you think this game was meant to teach?
- How did the game make you think differently about rubrics, if at all?
- What types of learning objectives or student work can rubrics assess better than other types of assessment? Why are they well-suited for this?
- What pitfalls do you see with using rubrics? Are they always a useful tool?
- What ways can you think of to use rubrics in the classroom that would be more innovative and go further beyond traditional types of assessments?
- Based on your own student teaching or other classroom experience, what opportunities and challenges do you see in using rubrics to assess open-ended work?

**Option:** Instead of a group discussion, you could use some of these prompts to assign a written personal reflection piece. This could be a journal entry, blog post, essay, or whatever fits with your class format. This may help you understand what individuals got out of the game rather than the class as a whole.

## 4. Readings

[Formative Assessment: Why, What, and Whether](#) <sup>link</sup>

Chapter 1 of Transformative Assessment by W. James Popham

In the first chapter of his book, Popham presents a definition of formative assessment and explains why he thinks it's so great, and why all teachers should use it.

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Possible reflection question:

- How do you imagine rubrics could be used to fit all the parts of Popham's definition of formative assessment?
- In formative assessment there is an emphasis on informative feedback that can be used to adjust teaching and learning. Do you think the rubric you came up with during the MetaRubric game could provide that?

## [The Unfulfilled Promise of Classroom Assessment](#) <sup>link</sup>

By Richard J. Stiggins, published in Educational Measurement (you will need access to this publication through your institution)

Stiggins explains his views on the dismal state of classroom assessment and how it got that way. He also describes why he is optimistic about the future of classroom assessment and what can be done to turn it around.

Possible reflection question:

- This article was written in 2001. Based on your time in classrooms and in a teacher education program so far, how much progress do you think has been made in the last 15+ years?
- Given what you know about the art of classroom assessment, how can you make progress in your own future classroom, and how can you build your own skills in this area?

## 5. Classroom Use Case

Now that your TCs have some experience with designing and using rubrics, have them come up with a use case for the role a rubric might play in their classroom. They will design each element of the implementation of some classroom activity and write it up into a short lesson plan. Ideally this would be something they can try out in their student teaching setting.

1. Decide on an activity or project that you will have your students do. You may be limited to the upcoming topics in the curriculum, but try to think of something that you feel could benefit from the use of a rubric. Describe the activity or assignment, and the setting in which it will take place.
2. Create the rubric for your activity. Design the criteria that get at your learning objectives and the format you think will work best. Explain what choices you made in your rubric design.
3. Plan how you will use the rubric. When will you show it to the students and what will you tell them about it? Who will be using the rubric to evaluate student work and how often? What will the results of the rubric tell you and how will you and your students use the information to move their learning forward?

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4. Implement your activity and the rubric-based assessment in your student teaching class. Don't worry if it doesn't go according to plan, things never do the first time! Reflect on what you saw that was inspiring and what you would do differently next time.

**Option:** If it's not feasible for TCs to implement this in a real classroom, have them write up their use cases and share them with each other. However, instead of simply reading each other's writeups, have TCs "pilot" their activity ideas on each other. Once they swap use cases, ask them to complete the project or activity described. They can then take the rubric they created and evaluate their classmate's work based on those criteria. Finally, they will show the results to their partner and discuss whether the rubric seems like a good fit for the project. This way TCs not only have the experience of designing a rubric but also putting it to use.

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