EDITORIAL

Lana Hibbard

A quality assessment task is one that promotes student learning whilst being both fair and ethical. If my assessment tasks are to reach this standard, I must ensure that the student is fully aware of the assessment process prior to the commencement of any assessment. Students need to know what will be assessed, when it will be assessed, how it will be assessed, and importantly, how it will be marked.

I have fallen in love with the beauty of rubrics as a tool for combining student learning and assessment. I am drawn to the way a rubric clearly articulates the key criteria of a given performance and describes performance at various levels of competency; giving students access to "insider" information as they prepare for a task. For the teacher, a rubric minimises subjectivity and increases consistency in grading, thus contributing to fairness.

Despite the wealth of information contained within, there are always a few who fail to take notice of the rubric and thus fail to address key performance criteria. Some of these may believe they have done well only to find they missed the point. God has given a set of guiding criteria to support us in the development of our lives. Nevertheless, just like my students, many will show that they have not made themselves familiar with the marking scheme. "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Rev 3:17 NIV). Whatever it is we do in life, there is one criteria that we must address if we are to pass God's assessment, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt 6:33 KJV). If you fail to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" (Mark 12:30 NIV), you're going to score poorly.

Although I love rubrics, I've concluded that God uses quite different methods in His judgement of me.

A rubric allows me to be more reliable in my judgement of a student's performance. I can determine which and to what extent, criteria are present in a performance; however, I cannot assess what was happening inside the student as he / she constructed the response. God, on the other hand, is not limited to measurable outcomes. As the Lord said to Samuel, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam 16:7 NIV). While people can only see the outward appearance of actions, God can see the heart from which actions spring. Can I trust God, as my assessor? Abraham knew the answer, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen 18:25 NIV).

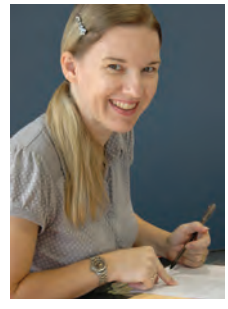
The feedback contained in a rubric plainly shows what a learner did well and what they should continue to work on. This contributes to the development of an independent learner who is able to set goals and self-monitor performance, thus facilitating future success. All this pales into absolute insignificance, however, compared to the feedback from God's assessment. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'" (Matt 25:34 NIV).

Unlike my rubrics, God's assessment allows for only two levels of performance. My actions are either approved by God, or not approved by Him. They are either pleasing or displeasing to Him. I will be found faultless or sinful. There is no middle ground. The Laodiceans were told, "Because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Rev 3:16 NIV). My rubrics are constructed to accommodate the level of competence of the students but God's criteria calls for a standard that is beyond my ability—I can never achieve the 'perfect' band. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23 NIV). None can do well enough to gain God's approval. When the disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:25–26 NIV).

My rubrics usually value hard work and originality and discourage plagiarism. God, on the other hand, encourages all to plagiarise. Jesus has done the task, it is finished, we just have to put our name on it and hand it in. "God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!" (Eph 2:4–5 NLT)

If I accept this free offer, I cannot fail. TEACH

> ***"Jesus has done the task, it is finished, we just have to put our name on it and hand it in"***



[Photography: Ann Stafford]