**Rubrics as assessment for learning**

Through the pedagogical changes proposed by the Bologna process, European higher education has been challenged to move towards a more student-centered approach to teaching (Hyland, Kennedy & Rust, 2006). One particular area of challenge is student assessment, which is often viewed as a summative practice whose sole purpose is to equip students with a grade. In light of recent pedagogical developments, however, assessment procedures are gradually changing, and more teachers are using assessment as a formative activity (Rust, Price & O’Donnovan, 2003, Nicol 2010).

The context of the paper is an ESP course at the introductory level of the Shipping and Logistics program at Chalmers University of Technology. The aim of the paper is two-fold. The first aim is to shed light on the usefulness of one method of assessment, the rubric. A rubric can be defined as a grid of assessment criteria describing different levels of performance associated with clear grades (Reddy & Andrade, 2010:435). Usefulness is assessed both from the teacher perspective, in terms of facilitated marking and increased fairness of marks, and from the student perspective, in terms of enhanced understanding of the goals and purposes of the course. The second aim of the paper is to present and evaluate a method of using rubrics *for* learning rather than *of* learning, i.e. as a feedback tool between the traditional poles of formative and summative feedback.

The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings support tentative claims made in the literature that rubrics increase student understanding of how to approach academic writing and enhance student involvement (Cohen, Lotan, Abram, Sarloss & Schultz, 2002, Reddy & Andrade, 2010). Thus, the study suggests that the integration of rubrics in teaching activities is a fruitful move towards a more student-centered approach to assessing ESP, a step that will hopefully lead to increased explicit knowledge of what writing is all about.

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