

External Evaluators' Initial Report—June 2002

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Narrative

Meeting with Planning Group

The visit started on Monday, April 15, 2002 with a meeting of the evaluators and the Project planning group. Gary Brown indicated an interest in finding out whether those instructors currently using the Rubric were talking to their colleagues about trying the Rubric in their courses. He also wanted to know which parts of the Rubric fit into the courses and which might not. Were teachers discarding parts of the Rubric? How were they adapting it to assignments? In what ways did they find it difficult to use? A second concern was the use of the Rubric as an evaluation tool--both for the evaluation of students and teachers. Others in the group wanted input from students on how the Rubric had been used in their courses and feedback on whether the Rubric constrained creativity. A third concern looked more directly at future changes in the way the planning group was disseminating the Rubric. How could they engage more faculty, bring in more disciplines, foster more applications and modifications, and intensify current use?

During this first day, meetings were scheduled with faculty and students. Although this discussion will not be in strict chronological order, it seems best to divide the discussion into these categories.

Meetings with Students

The only meetings with "true" students were during the first day, when we interviewed two. One was a graduate student in Counseling and Psychology whose instructor used the Rubric in a course on Research Methods. The instructor had attached the Rubric to assignments and told the students their papers would be evaluated on each category of the Rubric with a numerical assessment as well as written comments. The student felt that the feedback was better in this course than in others, with the writing becoming progressively more analytic as in later papers the student focused in on the categories that had previously earned lower scores. The student felt that her instructor, who was a new teacher, was sometimes insecure in her teaching of the Rubric, but later in the semester, the student felt that she got good suggestions for revision when drafts of

longer papers were responded to using the categories of the Rubric. Class discussions benefited from students being asked to think on a deeper level. She felt that she was fairly evaluated in the course. The student said that she would like professors in other courses to use the Rubric because, although they desired critical thinking, they were not encouraging it by appropriate feedback to the students. Students have not been prodded to think more deeply. As a graduate student, though, she felt that she was writing better than she had previously. The student said she would recommend courses that use the Rubric to her fellow students because she felt she learned a lot and she became a better writer. She felt that there should have been more discussion in the class about using the Rubric not only for writing but also for reading and for class discussion. She said that if the Rubric could be integrated into all courses, this would help students get better as the semesters went on. In summary, this student believes that she has benefited from her engagement with the Rubric and would recommend to other students and faculty that the Rubric be used.

The other student, a botany major, was in an UH 440 class. We interviewed her with her teacher, circumstances that may have encouraged her to withhold some information, though we have no doubt as to the honesty of her comments. The teacher uses the Rubric as a criterion sheet to give feedback on the first paper of the semester (he does not use it on a later, more “researchy” paper). Students are given the Rubric with the assignment and know that it will be used to evaluate their essays. The student at the interview liked the process, although she noted that it wasn't used a great deal in the course. In her composing, she used it very much as the teacher would later, as a point-by-point check of her first draft, to see what she had written “was OK” Apparently she does not use it--at least consciously--as a heuristic to help her discover ideas or organize and elaborate her paper while she is writing it. Although she said she turned to it to clarify what the teacher wanted on the paper, she uses it mainly as a post-writing evaluation tool, somewhat as she also might use spell-check. She believed that the Rubric would help her in the future.

Other students who were interviewed about the use of the Rubric were functioning as "Hypernavts" in the Freshman Seminar course (GenEd 104). This course is available in the fall semester for students who feel they need help in the transition between high school and college. It is required in the second semester of students whose grade point average falls below 2.0 in their first semester of college work. Understandably, in general, students who take the course voluntarily in the first semester have a more positive attitude toward it than do students who are required to take it in the second semester. In part, the Freshman Seminar consists of work toward a final research project that turns into a Web page. (One purpose of the course is to teach students

how to develop a Web page using graphics, bullets, hypertext, and other features.) This “bridge” course is linked with a content course such as World Civ, and in a typical semester there may be 21 seminars linked with different courses. The Freshman Seminar sections consist of 15 students who are all taking the same content course. There are co-facilitators in the Freshman Seminars, a peer facilitator who sits in on the general course and a Hypernaut who assists the students with preparing the final project for the Web page. In addition, the Hypernaut assists the students with the drafts for the final project, leads discussions, and teaches technical skills. The students in each section select a topic related to the linked course, break into 3 groups which each research an aspect of the topic, and then prepare their sections and integrate them into the larger work which is formatted as a Web page. Students are told that their final project will be evaluated on the basis of the Rubric.

The Rubric is explained to the students early in the semester. Students work individually and in small groups; they later come together to formulate joint conclusions for their project. Students seem to have the most difficulty with the *purpose* and *thesis* dimensions of the Rubric. The general language of the Rubric is also sometimes difficult for the students to understand. The Hypernauts attempt to put the Rubric into language the students can grasp. The instructor of the linked or bridge course comes to the Seminar four times over the semester to assist the students. The Hypernauts are trained in a course and sit in on Freshman Seminars to see how the Rubric is integrated into the course. They are mentored at first by more experienced Hypernauts. Occasionally the Rubric is used to assess student online discussions, but the main use is with the Web-page project. The students are first given a project produced by an earlier class and asked to critique it. The Rubric is as a “check-sheet” for this evaluation. After the students have prepared a rough draft of their own project, this draft is shown to another class and critiqued. The Hypernauts then work with the students to help them revise their drafts and prepare the draft for final evaluation. This evaluation, including a norming session, is carried out by librarians, teachers, and others involved with the project. On a ten point scale, the final Web project must receive a 4, 5, or 6 to pass. The project counts for 20% of the final grade in the Freshman Seminar course.

Over two days, we interviewed five Hypernauts. The first Hypernaut we talked with was one of the Co-facilitators of the Freshman Seminar. He told that us after the Rubric was introduced, each of the students wrote individually, turning in their source materials. Students then worked in the small groups, and finally all came together for the final presentation. The students received

individual grades. He said that, particularly for students taking the course the second semester, some felt that the course work was only "busy work," and they only had more positive feelings after the Project Fair at the end of the semester when all the Web pages were shown. This Hypernaut was the one of the two among those we interviewed who told us that he had been a student himself in the Freshman Seminar in his first semester at the college. Originally, he said, he took the course "as a study hall." But after completing the Freshman Seminar, he had been recommended to become a Hypernaut. He took a course in Educational Administration, watched more experienced Hypernauts, was mentored, and then became a Hypernaut himself. He felt that his own writing improved as he became a teacher as a result of seeing how the students worked. He is now a junior and he is continuing in the program.

Another Hypernaut, who had just graduated from WSU, was the Assistant Coordinator of the Hypernauts after having worked in the Freshman Seminar for three years. He told us that the students were evaluated on the basis of their participation, attendance, research work and the final project. He said that since the Rubric had been introduced into the course, the students better understood the basis of the evaluation of their work because they would get specific responses to it. A third Hypernaut, who was a senior in Management Operations, told us that the students benefited more from the Rubric as they worked with it. She has used the *audience* dimension of the Rubric to control flaming in student online discussions. She said that she believed there was some carryover to other courses as students thought more about the points they were making in their writing. She herself thinks about the Rubric in her own writing.

The fourth Hypernaut we talked with was using the Rubric in the Freshman Seminar in a distance learning course. He said that the course was developed by collaboration between a faculty member and a course designer. There were interactions built into the course between students and teacher and students and students called "threaded discussions." These interactions helped the students with their group work. Students were made aware of evaluation criteria based on the Rubric. At different times, one or two aspects of the Rubric would be emphasized; at other times instruction would build to all aspects of the Rubric. The Hypernaut would pick out activities that emphasized certain aspects of the Rubric and help students to shape their discussions. He was aware of what had to be done to keep the discussions going among the students on the topics of the bridge course. He gave feedback to the students on their drafts in relation to the dimensions of the Rubric and shared this information with the instructor of the bridge course. This Hypernaut had been in a course where students had developed their own rubric for their writing and

evaluation. He said that he had to learn what his professors were looking when they didn't articulate their goals explicitly. He also felt that this process of rubric construction kept him from being so frustrated since he had a better understanding for himself about what was wanted. This student had just graduated from WSU and was hoping to attend law school. He had been recruited to the Freshman Seminar course in his freshman English course and had been working in the program for three years.

The fifth Hypernaut we interviewed, like the first one, had also taken the Freshman Seminar his first semester at the college. In that course, he learned to use the library and how to use Web materials. The following semester he took an instructional course and then became a Hypernaut. This was now his second full year in the program. He said that students had the most difficulty with the *thesis* and *purpose* dimensions of the Rubric. The Rubric helped students develop their papers more fully as they became aware of sections where their writing was too scant. It also helped him explain grades to students. The central way he imagines the Rubric is as an explanatory tool. He felt that dimensions 5 and 6 and dimensions 1 and 3 in the Rubric overlapped and that perhaps the Rubric could be better refined, perhaps cast into a language the students can better understand. He is a broadcast major and hopes to become a reporter.

In general, although the Hypernauts felt that the use of the Rubric was helpful to the students in the Freshman Seminar, they were even more enthusiastic about how their work in the program was helpful to them. They consistently reported that their own writing had improved when they participated in the program.

Meetings with Teachers

During the first day, we met with five teachers who were participating in the Critical Thinking Project for the first time. The second day we met some older users of the Rubric. The contrast eventually led to some insights that may be of value to the Project.

On the first day, the first interviewee was the teacher of the UH440 (Domain of the Arts) student whose response we have already described. He said that the 27 students enrolled in the course consisted of a mix of backgrounds in the field, and that the Rubric was helpful in evaluating student papers because the students knew what to expect. He adapted the Rubric by simplifying some of the points and showing the students how aspects of writing would be assessed across the

dimensions of the Rubric. It is “an enlightenment tool” that helps him give careful and explicit instructions on how papers are to be developed. He used the Rubric as a grading tool and as a help in writing comments on the papers. He said that the Rubric was especially useful for the insecure students who needed help with structure, but he was concerned that some students used the Rubric too rigidly, e.g. rotely applying each point of the Rubric as the basis for a paragraph. (This is a caution that we will hear many times over from faculty.) He doesn’t want the Rubric to stymie or control “good Honors-student writing.” As we have noted, he doesn’t use the Rubric with a second course paper that is more research oriented. Still, he felt that the Rubric helped students focus their energy and he received better papers with better writing and more developed critical thinking. This teacher had attended the workshop on the Rubric in December and was, therefore, a new user of it. He would recommend that other instructors use the Rubric in their courses, especially for evaluation of student writing.

The next professor we talked with was teaching a senior-level Communications course on Stereotypes and the Media with 31 students. As in the Domain of the Arts course, the students in this course came from mixed backgrounds and levels. He introduced the Rubric to the students when he assigned the first paper of the course. He talked with the students about the grading criteria. His full use of the Rubric, however, is unique among the teachers we interviewed. A few years ago, he had started to break up the semester paper into separate assignments. The Rubric helped him see how this could be done more productively. The three assignments--which in the end form one paper--are (I) Problem or Issue Identification, (II) Complexities and Perspectives, and (III) Conclusions and Recommendations. His students now understand that each of these parts is informed by different dimensions of the Rubric. Part I is informed by *problem identification* and *other perspectives*; Part II by *assumption*, *evidence*, and *author’s own perspective*; Part III by *context* and *conclusions*. The Rubric allowed him to give explicit instructions for the various sections of the paper and clear definitions of the bases for evaluation. He had reservations, however. He felt that the more formal the patterns of the papers he was receiving from students, the more he was tempted to abandon the Rubric. He wanted the assignment to be a guide or heuristic, not “a set of instructions,” but he wanted the papers to be varied and he didn’t want the students to match the organization of the paper with the Rubric. In fact, he was first attracted to the Rubric because it was less structured than criterion sheets that his colleagues had shown him. He felt that the Rubric was useful for many of the students, especially those whose writing was poor, but he found that the Rubric wasn’t the best guide for evaluation when the papers were good. He said he also used the points of the Rubric in class discussions. It

was difficult for him to find time to attend the seminars on using the Rubric. Over all, he likes the “efficiency” of the Rubric and he has shared it a colleague at Penn State. He learned of the Rubric from his wife, then attended the monthly seminars.

The third professor we spoke with was in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the School of Education. She is coordinator of Social Studies for Elementary Education and Graduate Research. She was using the Rubric in a course on Social Studies Methods which is a requirement for elementary education majors. Some time ago she had been influenced by the work of Neil Browne and Stuart Keeley (*Asking the Right Question: A Guide to Critical Thinking*), and she had been using an analytic rubric for a long time in her courses. In WSU’s Rubric she saw a way to introduce critical thinking at the college level. With it she made some changes to the assessment rubrics she had been using. She was trying to prepare the prospective teachers to become critical teachers. In the course she first introduced the Rubric merely as an example of an assessment rubric. Then she told the students that it would be used to evaluate them in the course. At least one of her students, she said, appreciated the fact that the Rubric would be used to critique more than just their writing. She wanted these students to learn how to use the Rubric for evaluating their own teaching and she told them that they would be evaluated in their writing with the Rubric to demonstrate to them that good writing really needs to include critical learning. They first used it in a paper that presents a rationale for including social studies in a K-8 curriculum. She advised the students to go to the Rubric before they began their writing. Her observation is that students use the Rubric to plan the paper (making sure they are covering what the teacher wants), to check it over after it is written, and (rarely) to provide them with an organizational scheme. This last illustrates a hazard with the Rubric (“students want recipes”). The language of the Rubric was clear to the students except in the *context* dimension, which she had to explain more fully-- although in doing so it allowed her to put new emphasis upon what she saw as a very important dimension of critical thinking). The students reported that they liked using the Rubric and that the assessments and feedback were fair and useful. One student is using the Rubric for a Grade 5 unit plan. This teacher is using the Rubric for the first time, having learned about it in last December’s workshop.

The fourth teacher is a young assistant professor in Environment Science/Regional Planning. Here we had the advantage of watching him teach as well as talking with him afterward. The course was ES/RP 150, an introduction to the discipline taught in an auditorium with 50-60 students in attendance. The topic was energy sources, comparing methods, safety, disposal, and

long-term effects of oil, nuclear, solar, wind, and other types of fuel production. The format was lecture via a PowerPoint presentation (the daily format for the course). It was obvious that critical thinking underpins this teacher's course. Whether the Rubric had influenced his lecturing was not made clear, but in presenting his topic (choice among energy sources) he did an excellent job of setting the problems, providing other perspectives, indicating context and supporting evidence, and even inserting his own perspective (he objectively outlined Bush's energy plan while admitting, "I'm not a big fan of it"). He ended the hour, however, with a shift in format that, he told us later, had been explicitly suggested by the Rubric. Five minutes before the bell, he stopped lecturing and said, "Time to think." Thus began a standard part of his class, in which he encourages students to think critically about the presentation through question and answer. The question he proposed this hour was, Should we drill in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge? And indeed there was time for a couple of students to express their opinion, though we have to note that the announcement of "Time to think" prompted the large majority of the students merely to start packing up their bags and putting on their coats. After class we had a few minutes to talk with the teacher (he had a faculty meeting to get to). He said he liked the motive behind the Rubric but found it difficult to apply in a large-lecture class, especially to apply in a PowerPoint format (to which he is committed through several years of developing the course). He explained that he has used the Rubric to shape the writing assignments that students do weekly. These are synopses of articles that they find on environmental issues. His assignment sheet follows the Rubric to the extent that it explicitly requires a "critical analysis" with the following components: stating the issue within the context of the course, discussing the author's perspective and especially the assumptions behind the author's special interests, discussing the facts, and presenting your own perspective or opinion. Students, he said, have the hardest time with the dimension of *assumptions*. This critical analysis counts for 50% of the grade on these papers.

The fifth teacher who used the Rubric in her classes was a Ph.D. candidate in Management. She used the Rubric in an upper-division course on Leadership in Business and Economics. In some ways her use is similar to that of other teachers we talked to. She presented the Rubric to the students as a set of criteria through which to analyze their own writing, and as a way to show students the objectives of her course. But unlike other teachers, she also encouraged students to use it to read critically, in particular to analyze and critique assigned technical literature in leadership. But she further adapted the Rubric in one of the most creative ways that we encountered. She is teaching management leadership, somewhat surprisingly, through film. First she asked students to use an adaptation of the Rubric to review a film, challenging them to assess

the appropriateness and effectiveness of such elements as plot, storyline, director's vision, cinematography, interpretations of actors, reviewer's perspective, and outcome, conclusions, implications and consequences. Then they continue using this adaptation of the Rubric in their final project, the production of an original short film, working in groups of 3 to 5. She felt that the cooperation required in this production--writing, casting, directing, filming, editing, etc.--would be a meaningful experience for the students in learning how to use leadership and cooperation in a new task. She said she also plans to use the Rubric for an essay question on her final examination. Although as a Ph.D. student, there was more pressure on her to do research than to spend time preparing for teaching, she felt that it was crucial to use the Rubric creatively and that writing assignments needed to be thought about clearly in relationship to the assessment tools that would be used. She added that an instructor had to use the Rubric for one semester before she could fully understand its implications and then would be in a better position to develop its use for the following semester. Some parts of the Rubric are harder for students to absorb (especially the *own perspective* dimension). She recommended that the Project schedule a mandatory mid-term meeting of new teachers with half of the stipend attached to it, instead of the frequent optional meetings, which were not well attended.

This last comment provides us with a segue to two other teachers, who in fact were at the monthly seminar, which we also attended. One was the presenter. To the group he discussed how he uses the Rubric in a lower-division, general-education World Music course, and in particular how his use of it had changed over the span of several years. Initially he had adapted the Rubric "as a rubric for my grading," which he handed out at the beginning of courses. But he became concerned about the way he and even the best of his students were turning a taxonomy of critical thinking into a checklist. The rubric nature of WSU's Critical Thinking Rubric subverts, he said, the critical-thinking nature of it. Now he has discarded this hard-copy use of the Rubric. Instead he models it, "recursively," de-structuring it in order to teach critical thinking itself. He described several ways he does this. He said it is best advanced through class discussion--we assume through the kinds of topics, questions, and responses the teacher generates. But he has also created an online database of music that students can access--a corpus of pieces written by composers and performed by artists mentioned in class but not played in class, a corpus that students can explore on their own. He further encourages students to pursue, critically, their own perspectives by insisting that with class projects they find something that emerges from personal curiosity. In office conferences he will not provide the student with a topic. In all of this he is

hoping that students will actively absorb the critical-thinking activities outlined by the Rubric at a deeper and more committed level.

After the seminar, the presenter and the two of us talked with another teacher about the way a teacher's use of the Rubric may change over time. Perhaps not coincidentally, this second teacher is in the department of Human Development. He described problems he is having adapting a senior-level course on public policy issues as they impact families to a distance-learning format. He wants students to critique an issue but--just as the seminar presenter has seen--he is bothered by the way the Rubric may subvert this course objective. He said he has observed how less able students will use the Rubric to structure their writing, which "is not critical thinking." With the better students he has gone so far as to tell them that if the Rubric gets in their way to forget it. Ideally, the students should generate the Rubric on their own, but that would entail the formal Rubric entering into the construction of the course and disappearing. This is hard enough to do in the standard classroom, but how can he write an online course that will move in that direction? In a distance-learning environment, students will have to "eat, drink, and live" the Rubric in order to make it truly operable. Unfortunately, there are no models available for such a course.

This issue of teachers' modifying their use of the Rubric over time came up in our meeting with the last three teachers. They were all long-time users of the Rubric, and they contrasted in some ways with the first-time users that we had interviewed earlier.

One of these faculty taught in Crops and Soils. She has been using the Rubric for several years and almost always gets positive feedback. Students sometimes say that it is the first time a teacher has told them what he or she really wants from students. Some students are overwhelmed, but they get over it. In part the teacher likes the Rubric because it helps her deal with her concern for consistency and fairness in evaluating papers. She has seen, however, some of the same ways in which the Rubric seems to defeat itself that other teachers mentioned to us. She put it as an inverse correlation that sometimes holds: the more thorough the application of the Rubric, the poorer the paper. Partly as a result of this observation, she has modified the Rubric several times (she didn't say what those modifications were). Currently her problem is developing a Soils course for distance learning, and she wonders how she will again have to adapt the Rubric for it. All in all, though, she is very high on the Rubric--as are many of the faculty in Crops and Soils. She couldn't explain why so many in her department had taken to the Rubric. She guessed that it is more personality than discipline that accounted for it.

The second of these long-time users of the Rubric teaches mathematics in the Physics department. This teacher mentioned an application of the Rubric that was new to us. She has used it in her role as an editor, helping textbook writers revise old editions. In this context, she noted that the Rubric can become a platform that allows teachers from different disciplines to converse with one another. From a scientist's point of view, she said, the Rubric at first appeared not of much use. Especially she had a hard time appreciating the dimensions of *perspective* and *context*. It was with use in her classes that she learned the applications. Now she asks her students to return to problems in physics and write on their previous choice of particular systems and approaches in solving them. She too has learned from using the Rubric in courses for a number of years, first noting problems, then making adjustments in subsequent semesters. Some teachers, she has observed, try out the Rubric and then either stick to that format, if it works, or else discard it if it does not work. When we asked how could teacher development proceed with these faculty, she at first said they needed clear incentives in the form of money or release time. She also suggested an end-of-the-semester debriefing for new teachers. But then she remembered that in her case, she had been much assisted by a support person (one of the members of the Project), and cited several other instances where teachers were encouraged and backed up by administrators. She recommended the funding of a permanent support position for faculty development.

The third of these teachers, in fact, has served as such a support person. In her position with the Teaching and Learning Center she helps teachers develop new courses. Unfortunately in this group interview, we did not hear much from her. She mentioned that the Rubric has augmented the kinds of questions she asks of teachers, but she did not mention how she may show teachers ways to adapt it to their courses.

Conclusions

Generally we were impressed with the way the Project is moving through its first year. It is clear that the Rubric is making concrete changes in the teaching and learning at WSU through an astonishing variety of academic programs and courses. We cannot comment, however, on the dissemination part of the Project, having seen only participant evaluations of the state-wide retreat, comments which were not very informative.

On the other hand our interviews with personnel at WSU proved informative and thought-provoking. In total, we talked to 17 individuals, teachers and students who have been impacted by the Rubric. At first this does not seem a lot, but as it turned out, it was sufficient for us to note some common tendencies in the way the Rubric is being used and to form a few recommendations. We could not answer all of the questions posed by the planning group at the start, but we made some progress. We'll start with commonalities and end with our recommendations.

Commonalities

- (1) The teachers we talked to were uniformly enthusiastic about the benefits of using the Rubric for their students. None had suffered major problems, and all had seen clear benefits.
- (2) Their engagement with the Rubric is marked by care and appreciation for it. Not once did we hear anyone describe it as unimportant or shallow.
- (3) Part of this appreciation is demonstrated by the way all of the teachers had adapted the Rubric to the requirements of their courses and the needs of the students. The adaptations ranged from selection among the dimensions to wholesale revision of the dimension definitions to fit specific discipline and discourse aims.
- (4) While the locus of use of the Rubric ranged from class discussion to reading heuristic, by far the most common was course writing assignments, where it was used as a criteria set for both student and teacher.

(5) Indeed, it is as a means of communication between teacher and student that teacher and student seem most to agree on the benefits of the Rubric. The students like it because it makes the teacher's goals explicit, and the teachers like it because it conveys in clear and structured language some of the deeper aims of their teaching ("critical thinking").

(6) According to teachers, the two dimensions students have most trouble internalizing are *purpose* and student's *own perspective*.

(7) Word of mouth seems the most common means of spreading the Rubric through the teaching corps, but the way that happens defies categorization.

(8) By far the one most common reservation teachers had about using the Rubric was the unthinking, rote way some students applied it.

(9) A pattern seems to emerge in which teachers of lower-division courses felt that the better students were using the Rubric productively and the students at the other end using it rotely or having trouble understanding it--and teachers of upper-division courses felt that it was too basic for the better students, who might be well advised to set it aside.

(10) With experience in using the Rubric, over several courses, teachers almost always make changes in it and in the way they use it.

Recommendations

(1) Initially, new teachers seem to turn naturally and sometimes only to one restricted use of the Rubric, namely as part of their method of assigning and evaluating course papers. Or perhaps the Project has done an especially good job in selling this use. It might be productive for the planning group to develop and promote ways that teachers can learn other possible uses, for instance as a means of deepening class discussion, improving critical reading, generating more substantial ideas for writing, or shaping the actual content of the course.

(2) Explore the differences in the development of the Rubric for lower-division and upper-division courses, especially courses in the major?

(3) Investigate changes over time with use of the Rubric by individual teachers. Is there a tendency to modify the Rubric with use? Do these modifications show any patterns? Can teachers be helped over the disillusionment stage that might follow the initial enthusiasm stage? How can long-term use of the Rubric be maintained?

(4) Take advantage of the amazing range of adaptations. It is one of the more remarkable outcomes of the Project so far. The adaptations might be better advertised, theorized, and utilized within the growth of the Project.

(5) Notice the tendency of new teachers to turn the Rubric into evaluation criteria--usually as part of a writing prompt with the understanding that it will be used as a grading rubric. The danger is in it becoming little more than a mindless checklist for students. Develop ways that the rubric can be integrated into the content of the course, via lectures, controlled discussions, and student presentations. Students could well be shown that the critical thinking that underlies the Rubric is not just "something to learn" or "something to be evaluated on" but central to the way sophisticated professionals work and live.

(6) Explore ways the Rubric might be conceived and applied with different formats of courses: small class, large lecture, networked, distance, etc. The whole-course application with online distance-learning courses seems especially urgent.

(8) Consider re-scheduling the meetings with new teachers after the initial workshop. Instead of (or perhaps along with) open monthly seminars during the semester, plan a mid-semester meeting of the new teachers to discuss their experiences, as well as an end of semester meeting with required written suggestions for modifications of their use of the Rubric or of the Project. Part of their stipend could be attached to these meetings. This recommendation is based on teacher reports that they didn't have "time" for the open seminars. They need, however, a way to keep their applications from solidifying prematurely.

(9) Assign each new teacher a mentor from the Project group during the first semester of participation in the Project. Dialogue between old and new Rubric users can't help but be valuable.