

Reflection Report

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1. CBC, CBE, and CBA as a System

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), Competency-Based Education (CBE), and Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) are three interconnected elements that form the foundation of a learner-centered approach. CBC provides a structured framework of clear, observable, and measurable learning outcomes. CBE emphasizes individual student progress based on demonstrated mastery of those outcomes, and CBA ensures that assessments are aligned with competencies rather than simply measuring content recall. In my Academic Writing course for high school students, I introduced the CBC/CBE/CBA framework by designing a unit on argumentative writing. I identified key competencies such as organizing ideas logically, integrating evidence from credible sources, and using correct citation formats. During one semester, I allowed students to progress at different paces through the writing process—some spent more time revising their thesis statements, while others focused on incorporating counterarguments. A successful example of integration was when students wrote editorials on current social issues of their choice. The use of personalized topics increased engagement and gave students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in contextually meaningful ways. However, a less successful implementation occurred when I used a generic rubric that lacked clear alignment with the defined competencies. As a result, both student feedback and scoring consistency suffered. This experience taught me the importance of transparent and competency-aligned rubrics in maintaining both validity and fairness in assessment.

2. Curriculum Development and Learning Goals

Effective competency-based curriculum design begins with clearly articulated learning goals that describe observable student behavior. In the context of Academic Writing, competencies such as “Students can write a thesis-driven essay supported by textual evidence” and “Students can revise written work based on feedback” serve as anchors for instructional planning. In one project-based unit, students conducted short research on a topic related to environmental sustainability. They developed research questions, synthesized information from various sources, and wrote analytical essays. I aligned each activity with specific competencies: for example, note-taking and paraphrasing aligned with source integration skills, while peer feedback sessions targeted the revision competency. What worked well was the sequencing of learning activities to gradually build toward independent performance. Students moved from guided paragraph construction to full essays, allowing for scaffolded practice. However, I noticed that some students struggled to connect research evidence with argumentation. In retrospect, I should have included formative assessments earlier in the unit to diagnose this gap. Moving forward, I will incorporate mini-rubrics during the drafting stage to provide timely feedback on key sub-skills.

3. Assessment Quality: Validity, Reliability, and Fairness

Validity in assessment refers to how well the task measures the intended competencies. For example, in my summative assessment on literary analysis, students were asked to write essays exploring character development using textual evidence. The task was valid because it directly assessed critical thinking, structure, and textual support—core competencies of the course. Reliability, or scoring consistency, was initially a challenge. I conducted blind scoring with a colleague, and discrepancies emerged, especially in evaluating the quality of analysis. To improve reliability, we revised the rubric to include precise descriptors for each performance level and held a calibration session using sample essays. This significantly increased our inter-rater agreement. Fairness was addressed through the use of differentiated supports. For English language learners, I provided sentence stems and bilingual glossaries. Additionally, students with IEPs received extended time and access to oral feedback. I also allowed choice in topics and formats (e.g., written essay or multimedia presentation) to honor diverse learning profiles. Still, I recognize the need to make the feedback process more inclusive and am exploring the use of audio comments to increase accessibility.

4. Grading and Standard Setting

In my school, grading is based on proficiency scales aligned with competency levels rather than traditional percentage scores. For each major writing task, students receive a score from 1 to 4: 1 – Beginning, 2 – Developing, 3 – Proficient, 4 – Advanced. Each level is tied to clear descriptors within the rubric, which ensures alignment with learning goals. Cut-off scores are established collaboratively within our department, often referencing anchor papers that exemplify each level. However, I noticed variability in teacher interpretations. To enhance consistency, I advocated for the use of annotated exemplars as part of the moderation process. This helped clarify expectations and supported more transparent standard setting. While the system is competency-based, I observed that students and parents still struggle with interpreting non-numeric scores. To address this, I now include narrative feedback that explains what the student has mastered and what the next steps are. This not only increases clarity but also promotes a growth mindset by shifting the focus from grades to learning progress.

5. Use of Rubrics

Rubrics have played a crucial role in both instruction and assessment in my Academic Writing classes for high school students. One notable example of effective rubric use was during a unit on argumentative essays, where students were required to take a stance on a contemporary issue and support their argument with evidence from multiple sources. At the beginning of the unit, I introduced a detailed analytic rubric that outlined four core competencies: 1. Thesis clarity and argument strength, 2. Organization and coherence, 3. Use of evidence and citation accuracy, 4. Language use and grammar. Each criterion had descriptors for four performance levels: Beginning, Developing, Proficient, and Advanced. This rubric served as a transparent guide for students and a diagnostic tool for me as a teacher. Example of Rubric Supporting Instruction: During the drafting stage, I used the rubric for formative assessment. Students completed a peer review activity where they assessed each other's essays using a simplified version of the rubric. This helped them internalize the success criteria and provided concrete goals for revision. One student, for example, realized that their paragraphs lacked topic sentences and reorganized their essay for better coherence. I also used the rubric to give targeted feedback, focusing on specific criteria like evidence integration and argument development, which allowed students to revise more purposefully. Example of Rubric Supporting Assessment: In the summative assessment, the same rubric was used for grading. Because students were already familiar with the rubric and had applied it during peer reviews, there were fewer disputes over grades. They understood the rationale behind their scores, and I was able to justify my evaluation with objective descriptors. Furthermore, I used the rubric data to identify class-wide trends — for instance, many students struggled with citation formatting — and planned a mini-lesson to address that specific gap in the next unit. Key

Success Factors in Developing and Implementing Rubrics

1. Alignment with Learning Goals: The rubric must be directly tied to the competencies being assessed. Each criterion should reflect a specific, observable skill that has been explicitly taught.
2. Clarity and Specificity: Language in the descriptors must be student-friendly but precise. Vague terms like “good” or “adequate” are replaced with observable behaviors such as “uses three or more relevant sources” or “organizes ideas using clear transitions.”
3. Transparency and Student Involvement: I introduce rubrics early and, when possible, co-construct them with students. This increases motivation and ownership, and helps demystify assessment.
4. Consistent Use Across Activities: Rubrics are most effective when used not just for final grading, but throughout the learning process—for self-assessment, peer feedback, and teacher guidance.
5. Training and Calibration: When rubrics are used across multiple teachers, calibration sessions are important to ensure reliability. Reviewing student work samples together helps build a shared understanding of what each level of performance looks like. By embedding rubrics into both instruction and assessment, I have seen significant improvements in student writing and in their ability to reflect on their learning. More importantly, rubrics have helped shift the classroom culture from one focused on grades to one focused on growth and mastery.

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