Official Writing Scoring Guide and the Smarter Balanced Performance Task Rubrics: Analysis of Purpose

Overview

A frequent question received by ODE relating to writing assessment is whether teachers should be shifting to the use of the OSAS Performance Task Rubrics, created by Smarter Balanced, rather than continuing to use the Official Writing Scoring Guide. The purpose of this document is to frame this discussion by identifying key features of each, a process that gets at their respective purposes and functionality.

The Official Writing Scoring Guide

Oregon's Official Writing Scoring Guide remains the approved tool for scoring locally-administered writing work samples for demonstrating Essential Skills proficiency and Local Performance Assessment requirements*.

- The existing Official Writing Scoring Guide is, to a large extent, strongly aligned to Oregon's writing standards. To solidify this alignment, the scoring guide has been developed with terminology and criteria that align with the language in the Oregon writing standards.
- The Official Writing Scoring Guide utilizes a six-point scale and has scoring criteria for up to seven different traits or attributes, depending on writing purpose. This allows for rich feedback to students on aspects of their writing and, with the additional score points (six as opposed to four), a greater capacity to measure growth over time and differentiate performance feedback and instructional implications.
- Feedback using this assessment tool at the earlier grades familiarizes students with the expectations of demonstrating writing proficiency as aligned to Oregon's writing standards and provides a more in-depth feedback tool across the writing traits and skills.
- With such a long history of use, raters throughout the state, for multiple decades, have been trained and calibrated using the Official Writing Scoring Guide.
- Therefore, the Official Writing Scoring Guide is a common educator resource at all grades and allows educators to retain a multitude of student examples for both instruction and calibration purposes, regardless of the instructional materials adopted across multiple districts.
- The Official Writing Scoring Guide includes student friendly materials, which help define expectations for students at grade levels from grade 3 to high school

* Work Sample scored by a common scoring instrument, or another scoring guide adopted by the district

Smarter Balanced Performance Task Rubrics

Oregon administers the Oregon ELA Summative Assessment and utilizes the Smarter Balanced Writing Rubrics to measure the "full write" from the ELA Performance Task. The Smarter Balanced Writing Rubrics were developed to measure a very specific type of writing that is part of the ELA assessment.

- The OSAS Summative ELA Performance Task Rubrics were developed to contribute *"points"* to the Writing Claim score on the OSAS English Language Arts Statewide Summative Test.
    - As such, they were not developed for use during classroom instruction or for classroom assessment. While they have a practical use in the classroom to help make students aware of the criteria that will be used to score the performance task segment of the OSAS ELA PT Full-write, they are tools that were developed to score a very specific assessment.
- The OSAS Summative ELA Performance Task Rubrics consists of the following scored trait dimensions: Purpose & Organization, Elaboration & Evidence, and Conventions.
- The OSAS Summative ELA Performance Task Rubrics are *"condensed"* so that Purpose and Organization were folded into one trait and Evidence and Elaboration were combined into another. Each of these two condensed traits are scored on a four-point scale, while the area of conventions is reduced by half to be on a 0 to 2-point scale.
- While this alteration has simplified the scoring associated with the test (which is the primary purpose of the rubrics), it has resulted in a less robust instrument for giving students feedback on their writing from a classroom perspective.
- Additionally, it means that some of the original six-traits of writing can overlap into multiple scoring dimensions (e.g., Ideas and Content is associated with both *"Purpose"* and *"Evidence and Elaboration"*).
- The OSAS Summative ELA Performance Task Rubrics were designed to contribute points to a writing dimension or raw score that is eventually converted to a scale score, the rubric writers did not have to focus on criteria or score points that described a specific level of proficiency.
    - A score of "3" in either of the two traits being measured on a four-point scale was not designed to describe proficiency or *"Meets"* in that trait, although many unfamiliar with these rubrics assume this to be the case.
    - The criteria does frequently use the term *"adequate"* to describe student performance at the *"3"* level, but one could argue that the terms adequate and proficient are not comparable in meaning.

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