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Do rubrics help to inform and direct teaching practice?

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Overview of Rubrics

Typically consist of three parts:

- performance criteria,
- performance level, and
- a description of features evident in the performance level.

The predominant format of rubrics is that each criterion has the same number of performance levels



Rubric for composing an Email

Down loaded 23 July 2009 http://www.thinkinggear.com/graphics/sample_rubric.gif

	4 - Excellent	3 - Good	3 - Fair	1 - Unsatisfactory
TONE	The tone is polite and constructive suggesting the problem can be solved.	The tone is polite but makes no explicit effort to suggest that the author expects the problem to be resolved.	The tone is neutral, and open to interpretation by the reader as either positive or negative.	The tone is brusque, maybe even rude or angry.
INFORMATION
STYLE/ MECHANICS	The note uses common email style features such as greeting and closing lines. Spelling, punctuation, grammar etc. , meet professional standards.	Formal features are present, some problems with mechanics should be fixed.	Either spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct or author uses formal features but not both.	Problems with spelling, punctuation, grammar and/or formal features make the note look unprofessional.



Rubric for the assessment of narrative writing

Strand: **Writing**

2

Strand Outcome Statement
The student produces brief written texts to communicate experiences, information and feelings; discusses some of the purposes for writing; knows that writing can be planned, reviewed and changed; and produces texts that follow some of the conventions of writing and can be read by others.

Students typically use writing to convey meaning and write about real and imaginary experiences. They experiment with familiar forms of writing, demonstrating that they can use these forms in appropriate contexts. They use some basic language structures and features that enable others to interpret their writing. They can discuss what they are going to write and usually attempt to spell unfamiliar words by sounding out as they write.

Students typically produce a small range of text types that communicates their experiences and feelings and conveys ideas and information. They attempt texts such as lists, letters, recounts, narratives, instructions, messages, rhymes and simple descriptions. These texts generally contain at least two or more relevant ideas which link together logically. They use familiar examples as models for their writing.

Students typically see writing as purposeful and can explain the different purposes for writing, such as to inform or entertain. They initiate writing for their own purposes and may write greeting cards, messages and notes for their peers and family. They recognise that writing can record information and ideas, understanding that it is used to enable communication over time and distance.

Students typically write from top to bottom, left to right and leave spaces between words. They use simplified oral language structures, usually with correct word order. They may repeat familiar words and phrases to extend their writing. They accurately use some punctuation marks such as full stops and capital letters, but may over-generalise when experimenting with, for example, apostrophes and exclamation marks. Their spelling shows an awareness of sound-symbol relationships.

Category 2
Writes a text with two or more connected ideas. For longer texts, overall coherence is not observable.

Category 2
Chooses a narrow range of simple or common words that represent people, places or things. May repeat a favourite word or description.

Category 2
Spells some common words accurately. Attempted spelling based on how words sound and/or how words look.



Structure of the guide

	CAT 1	CAT 2	CAT 3	CAT 4	CAT 5	CAT 6	CAT 7
OBJ							
SP							
VOC							
SC							
PUNC							
FORM							
SM							
TO							
PA							

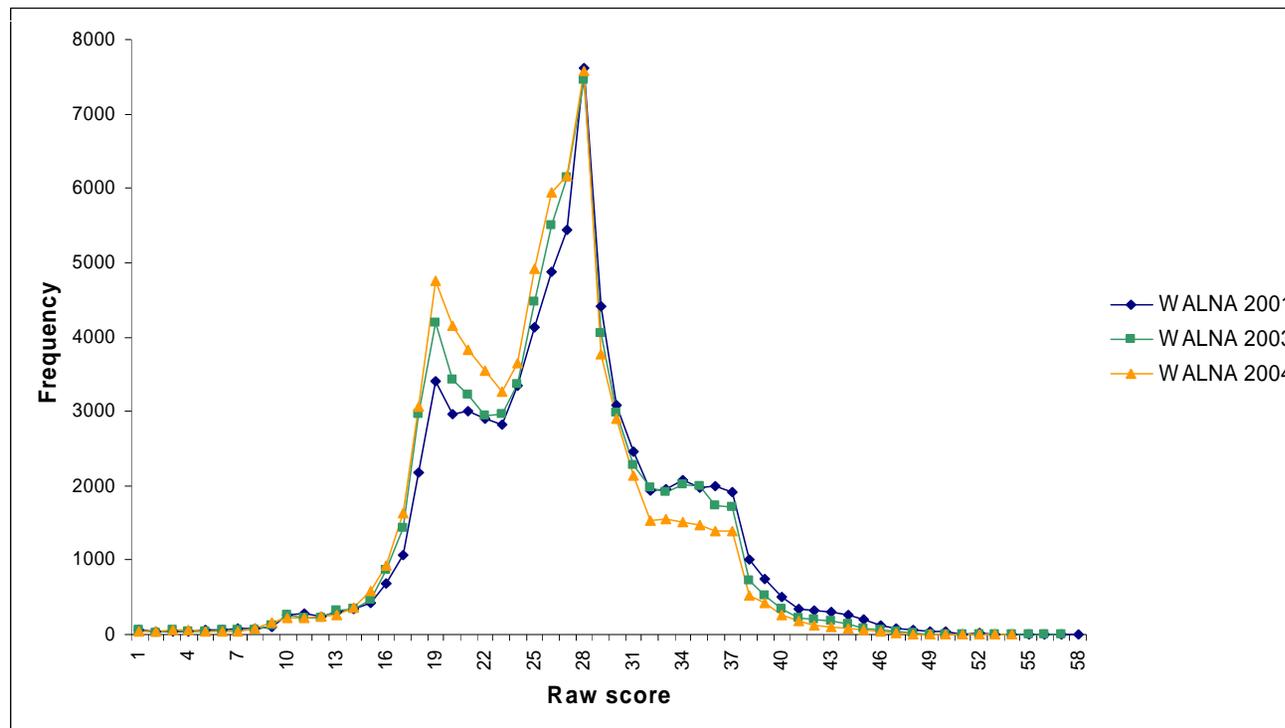


Narrative Form

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
emonstrates beginning use of narrative.	Writes a story with a beginning and a complication. Provides two or more events in sequence and may attempt an ending.	Writes a story with a distinguishable storyline in which events are related to the resolution of the problem. There is not much development in their stories.	Writes a narrative in which ideas, details and events are developed and at least loosely connected to the storyline.	Writes a story where setting, problem, events and consistent narrative point of view are developed and relevant to the storyline and resolution. The narrative is sustained and unified and attempts to present more than action and events.	Writes a detailed and unified narrative. They may adopt a persona different from themselves. The setting, problem, events and consistent narrative point of view are evident and relevant to storyline and resolution.	Writes a sustained and unified narrative that reflects on attitudes and values or that may experiment with different perspectives through, for example, narrative point of view, time sequencing, ironic twists.



Student raw-score distributions under existing approach to Writing assessment



- An example of the implications of this is that in one large school, approximately 40% of students fell within a range of four score points (25-29) in Year 7 Writing, 2004.



Dependencies within dichotomous (two category) data: the extreme cases

Ability and difficulty equal

Probability of success for any given person on either item is 0.5

The prescribed alignment results in interdependence between judgements.

Considering the extremes provides an insight into the issue.

At one extreme, independent information about performance is obtained from different items.

On the other hand, with complete dependence, information from one of the items is redundant.

	Case 1:		Case 2:	
	No dependencies		Dependencies	
	Itm 1	Itm 2	Itm 1	Itm 2
1	1	0	1	1
2	0	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	1	1
5	1	0	0	0
6	0	1	0	0
7	1	1	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
Total	4	4	4	4
Residuals (standardized)				
	Case 1		Case 2	
	Itm 1	Itm 2	Itm 1	Itm 2
1	1	-1	1	1
2	-1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	-1	-1	1	1
5	1	-1	-1	-1
6	-1	1	-1	-1
7	1	1	-1	-1
8	-1	-1	-1	-1
	r 0.00		r 1.00	



Sample of scoring patterns of the type that indicates dependencies

Person	Marker 1									Marker 2								
	OBJ	Sp	V	SC	P	F	SM	T0	PA	OBJ	SP	V	SC	P	F	SM	T0	PA
1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3
5	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
6	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

- The patterns indicate dependencies within markers, which result in apparent but false consistency (examples selected to highlight the issue).
- Information from different judgments by the same marker is largely *redundant*, as in the earlier example for dichotomous data.

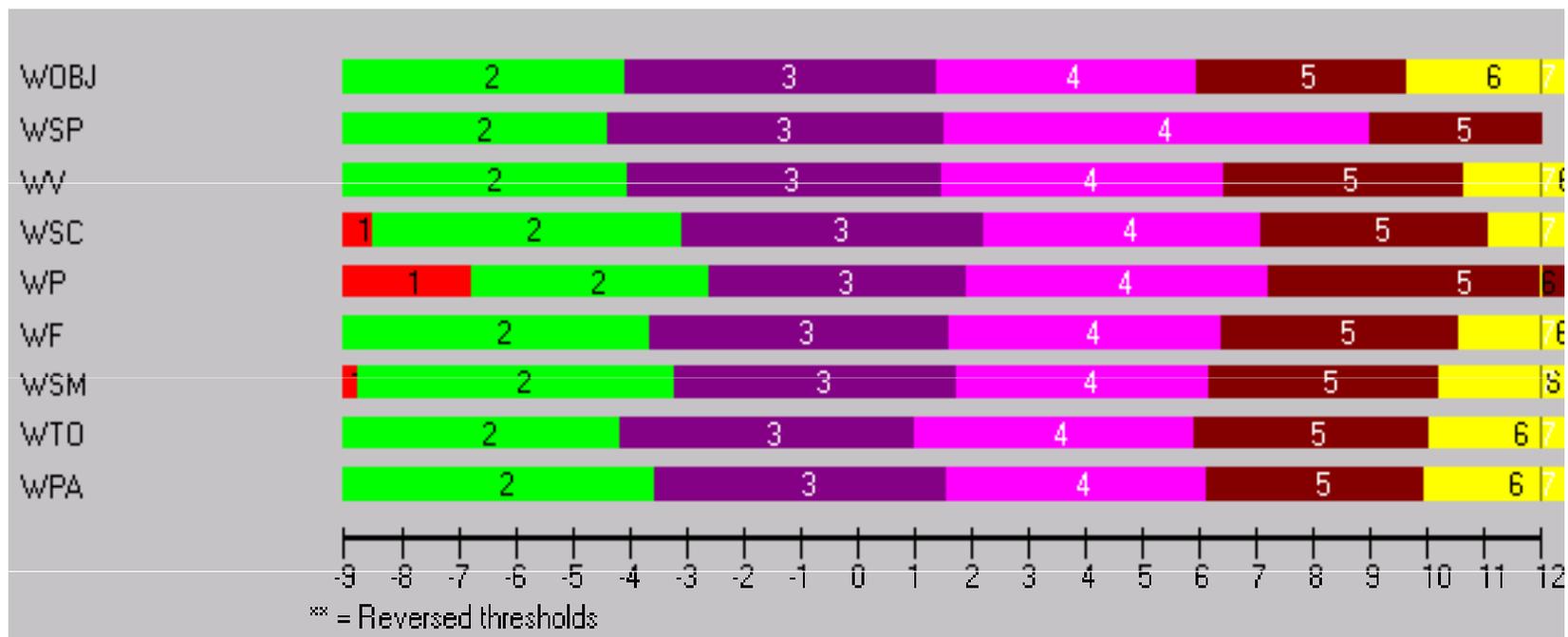


Semantic overlap in the guide

	Category 1	Category 2
Form of writing	Demonstrates a beginning sense of story structure, for example opening may establish a sense of narrative	Writes a story with a beginning and a complication. Two or more events in sequence. May attempt an ending.
Subject matter	Includes few ideas on conventional subject matter, which may lack internal consistency.	Has some internal; consistency of ideas. Narrative is predictable. Ideas are few, maybe disjointed and are not elaborated.
Text organisation	Attempts sequencing, although inconsistencies are apparent.	Writes a text with two or more connected ideas. For longer texts, overall coherence is not observable.



WALNA categories when there is prescribed and explicit alignment between categories





The issues

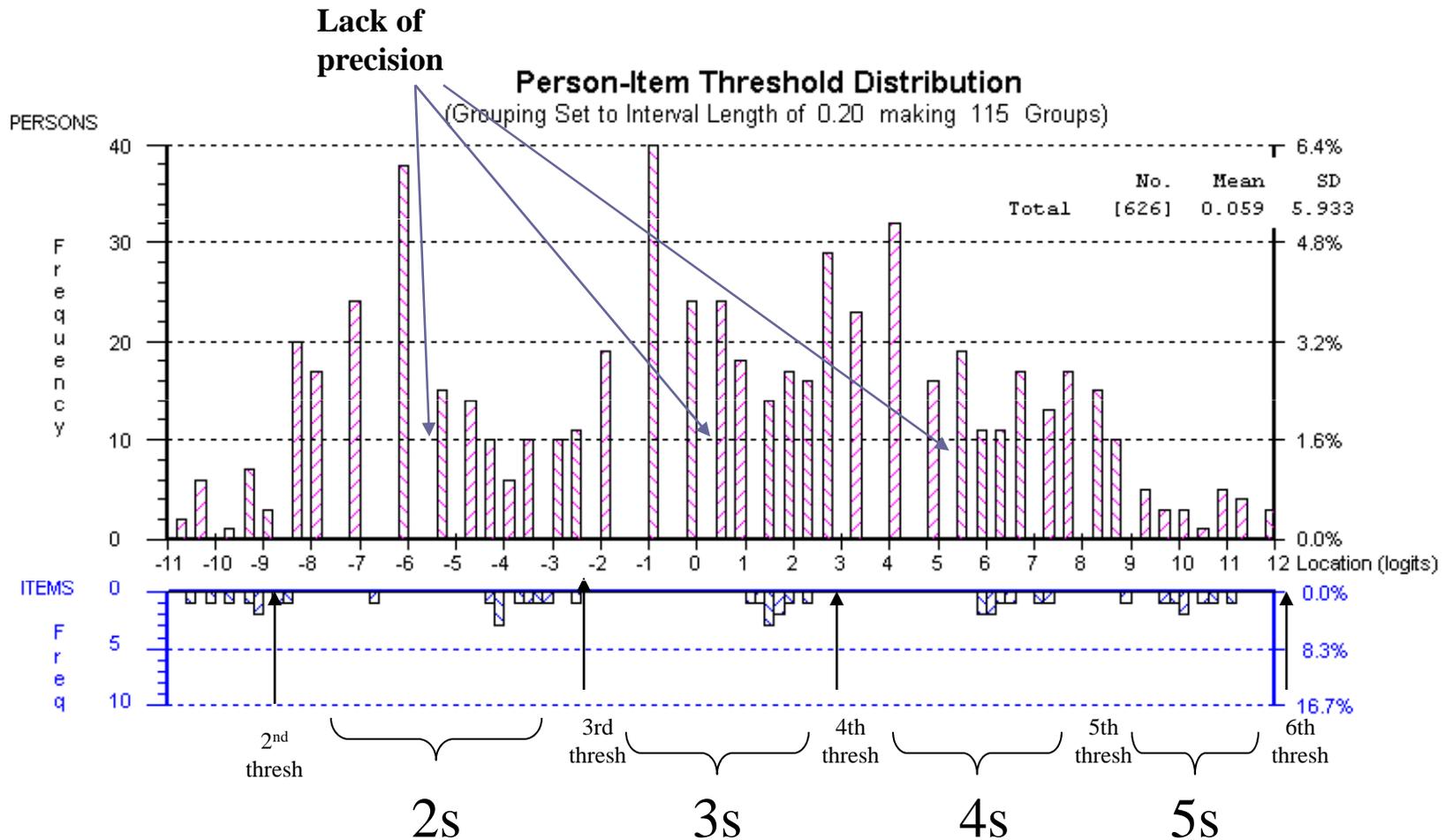
The major source of dependence is structural alignment of categories across the criteria of the guide, coupled with.

With prescribed alignment to levels across marking criteria (e.g. outcomes), teachers are forced to revert to a global judgement.

In essence, a single global judgement is made several times, and this judgement is at a very coarse level.



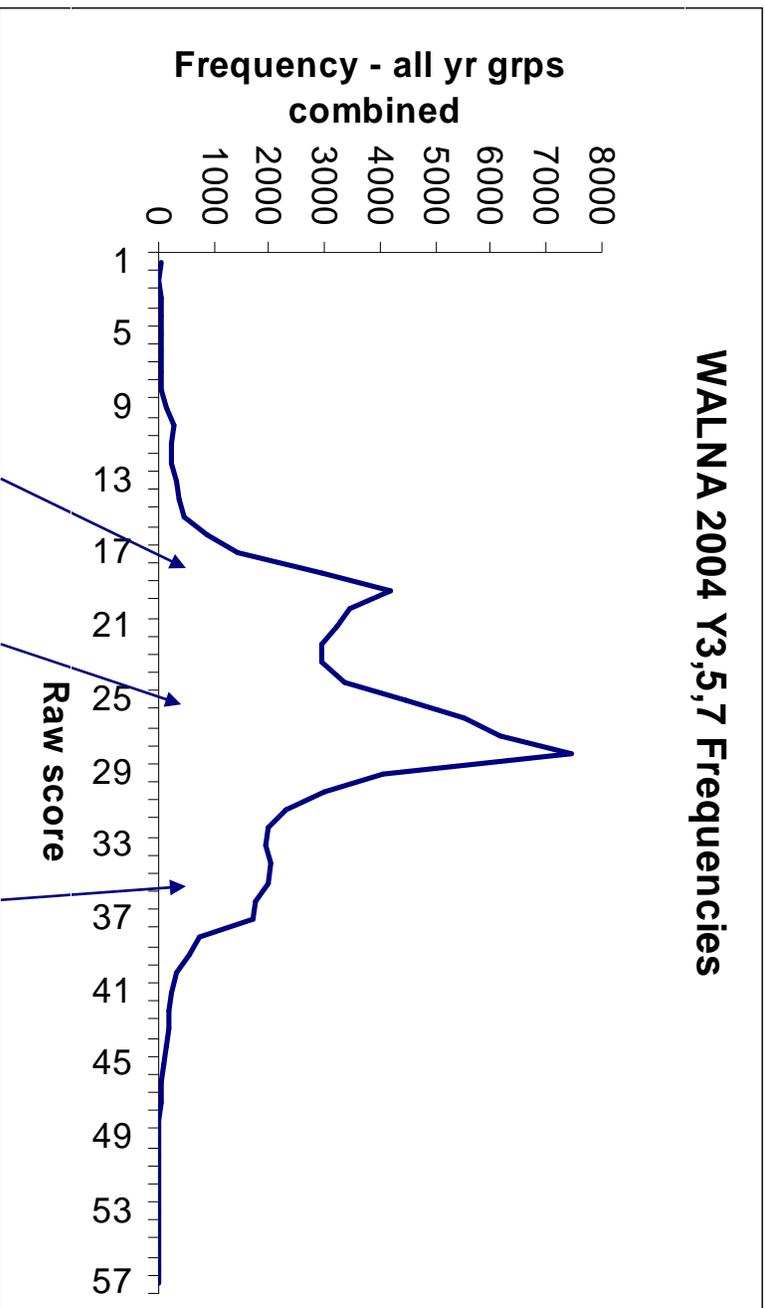
Person-threshold distribution with prescribed and explicit alignment between categories





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WALNA 2004 Y3,5,7 Frequencies



All 2s All 3s All 4s

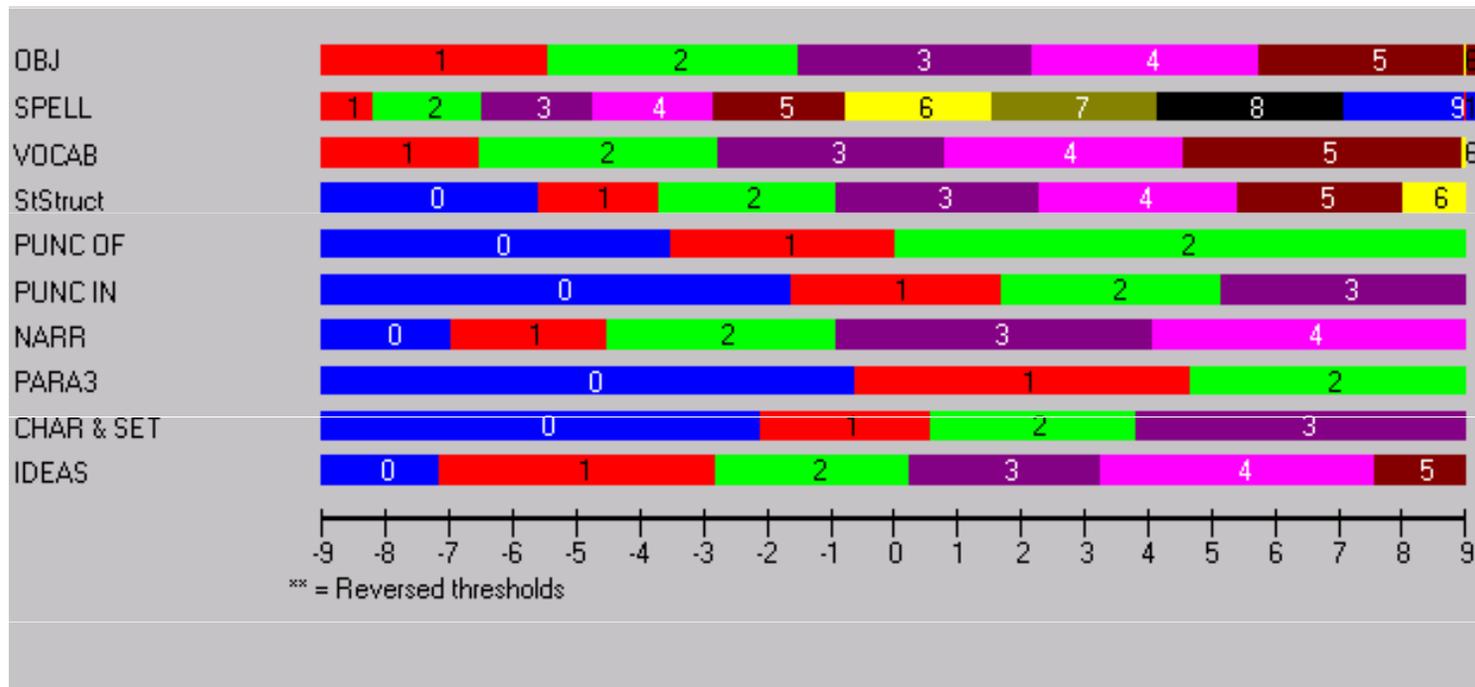


The new approach that was developed

- Rather than prescribing categories so they artificially align with levels in the outcomes framework, natural gradations were obtained based on conceptual and empirical analysis, relevant to the specific task (e.g. narrative, essay).
- Reduces direct artificial, structural alignment between categories across criteria, eliminating the problems of coarseness, and pervasive halo effect (or judgement dependence).

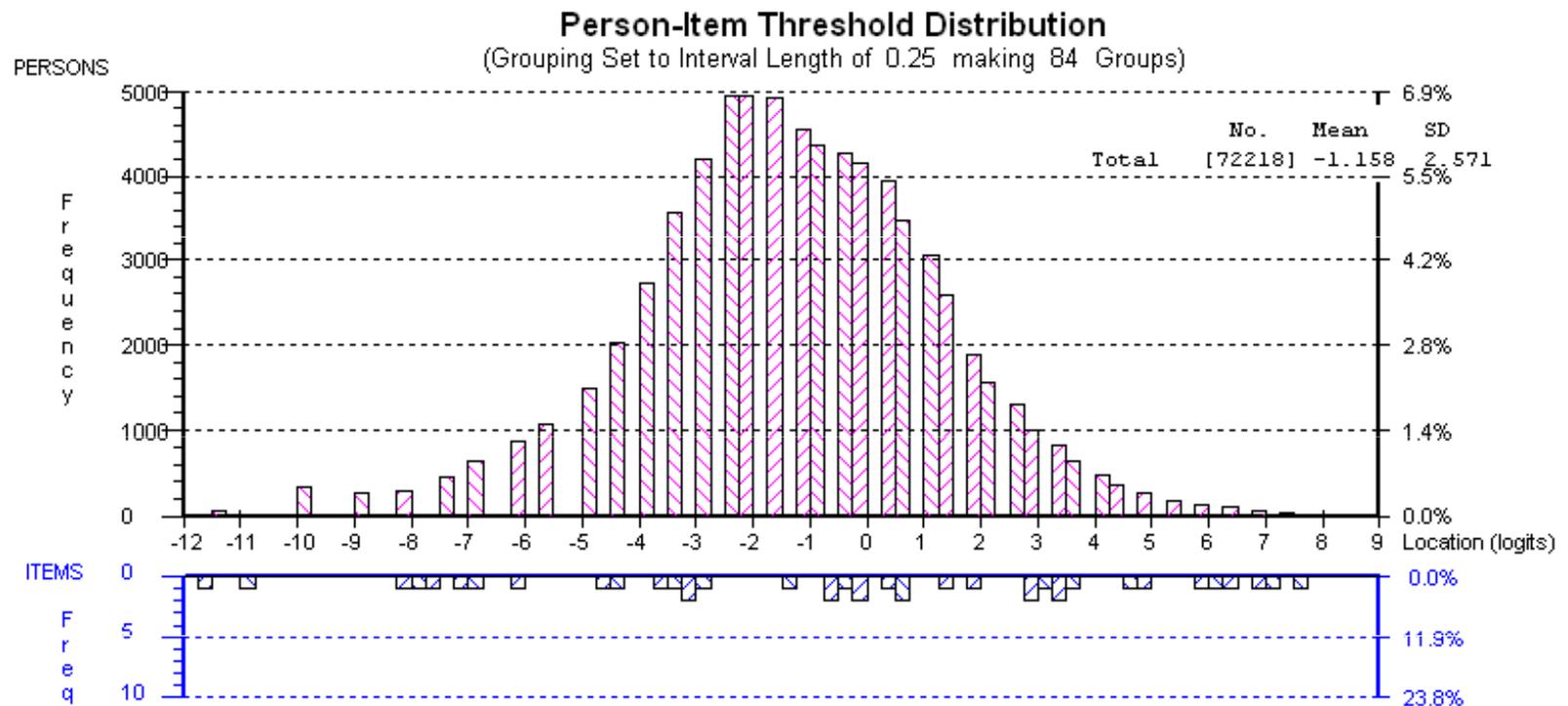


A key feature of the approach has been to let conceptual and qualitative analysis determine the categories, rather than **prescribing alignment** between categories.





Student distribution with the new guide





DISCUSSION

Narrative Form (old guide)

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
emonstrates beginning use of narrative.	Writes a story with a beginning and a complication. Provides two or more events in sequence and may attempt an ending.	Writes a story with a distinguishable storyline in which events are related to the resolution of the problem. There is not much development in their stories.	Writes a narrative in which ideas, details and events are developed and at least loosely connected to the storyline.	Writes a story where setting, problem, events and consistent narrative point of view are developed and relevant to the storyline and resolution. The narrative is sustained and unified and attempts to present more than action and events.	Writes a detailed and unified narrative. They may adopt a persona different from themselves. The setting, problem, events and consistent narrative point of view are evident and relevant to storyline and resolution.	Writes a sustained and unified narrative that reflects on attitudes and values or that may experiment with different perspectives through, for example, narrative point of view, time sequencing, ironic twists.



Text Organisation (old guide)

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
Attempts sequencing though inconsistencies are apparent.	Writes a text with two or more connected ideas. In longer texts, overall coherence is not observable.	Writes text with several ideas are sequenced. They often use time order or sequence their stories. If they use paragraphs, the paragraphs may contain unrelated ideas.	Texts show some evidence of overall order. Their texts are organised logically and the students recognize the need to paragraph although some ideas contain unrelated ideas.	Writes a text that is coherent and includes selective detail. They may use separate lines for speech.	Writes a text with a clearly observable coherence. The text is organised into paragraphs that are focused on one idea or like ideas.	Orders paragraphs cumulatively to a convincing conclusion.



Paragraphing (new guide)

Category 0

There is no use of paragraphs OR a beginning sense of paragraphs

Category 1

Text is organised into paragraphs that are mainly focused on one idea or like ideas.

Category 2

All paragraphs re focused on one idea or like ideas and paragraph order enhances the narrative.



Sentence Control (old guide)

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7
beginning sense sentence is emerging.	Predominantly simple sentences, some of which are incomplete. Sentences may not be demarcated and their writing is dependent on simple conjunctions such as 'and', 'then', 'but' and 'because'.	Controls the basic sentence structure and attempts to vary sentence beginnings and clause structure. They usually demarcate sentences.	Varies sentence structure and consistently demarcates sentences. They may use a variety of conjunctions and usually sustain or change tenses appropriately. May occasionally attempt to vary their sentence structure to enhance meaning, but in most instances there is little or very little enhancement of meaning.	Varies sentences structure to create effect. They use a range of vocabulary to indicate relationships between ideas.	Demonstrates control over word order, tense and phrasing. They use organizational markers to establish time, place qualification and evaluation, for example, 'however', 'finally' and 'in conclusion'	Uses complex sentences without major syntactic error. They vary syntax to achieve shades of meaning.



Sentence Structure (new guide)

Category 0	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6
<p>A beginning sense of sentence is emerging.</p> <p>Most sentences cannot be distinguished.</p>	<p>Writes predominantly simple sentences, some of which may be incomplete</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Sentences are distinguishable but with numerous errors throughout the text.</p>	<p>Experiments with compound and complex sentences. May over use simple conjunctions such as 'and', 'but', 'then', 'so'.</p> <p>Experimentation leads to errors such as: incorrect pronoun referencing, incorrect subject/verb agreement, missing words, incorrect shifts from third to first person, or sentences are not demarcated.</p>	<p>Controls basic sentence structure (simple, compound and complex sentences). Some variation in sentence beginnings and may vary clause structures.</p> <p>Some errors are evident. For example, referencing between ideas is either missing or labored.</p>	<p>Beginning to use knowledge of sentence structure to enhance story-telling (e.g. varies sentences to indicate pace).</p> <p>Due to experimentation some errors may be evident.</p>	<p>Uses more sophisticated phrasing and sentence structures which enhance story telling. Varies sentence beginnings and structures to create effect.</p> <p>Due to experimentation, some errors may be evident. For example some sentences become unwieldy.</p>	<p>Uses a wide variety of sentences that enhance the story telling, for example by creating appropriate rhythm and pace.</p> <p>Although there may be minor errors the sentences are effective and fluency is maintained.</p>



Relationship between assessment and teaching

- The intention of rubrics is to capture the essence of student performance or development at various levels.
- Can descriptions of the essence of performance provide detailed enough information to inform and direct teaching practice?