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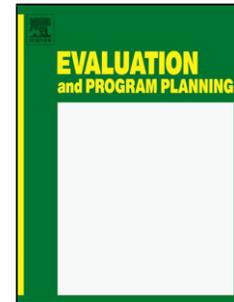
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## HOW PROGRAM EVALUATORS USE AND LEARN TO USE RUBRICS TO MAKE EVALUATIVE REASONING EXPLICIT

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### Highlights

- Rubrics are used to draw evaluative conclusions and as evaluation frameworks.
- Rubrics are used to develop and negotiate shared understandings among stakeholders.
- Interviewees characterize rubrics as critical to their evaluation practice.
- Few formal paths exist to learn about rubrics, so informal avenues are undertaken.
- Future directions include expanding formal rubric guidance, training and resources.

### Abstract

The process of combining evidence *with values* to determine merit, worth, or significance is truly unique to evaluation. A rubric is a tool that can support evaluators in this core function of their practice, but unfortunately, little guidance is provided in evaluation educational materials or literature about how evaluators should undertake this task in general, let alone specific to rubrics. This study examined, through semi-structured interviews, how nine seasoned evaluators use and learned to use rubrics in their program evaluation practice. Findings support the notion that there is a paucity of formal channels for learning about rubrics and indicate these early adopters, who believe rubric use is a critical component of their practice, are instead, honing their skills through

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