

Ecosystem Scoring Tips

- The causal rubrics are designed to be diagnostic and to help you assess what model a student holds. If you find yourself thinking, “I know it matches this level, but I really should bump this student’s score up a little because he tried so hard” (or “did a good job explaining it”), then you are thinking of the assessment more as a reward (or in the case of a student who didn’t try, as a punishment) than a diagnostic. Try to think of it as a way to assess what ideas the unit has effectively communicated so far.
- Each question is designed to assess one dimension of causal reasoning. Don’t expect students to tell everything that they know in every answer. For instance, you might find yourself thinking, “The response matches level 4 and shows that the student is reasoning about populations and not individuals, but how can I give this student a level 4 when he doesn’t show that he understands passive transfer of energy?” If so, remind yourself that you are scoring components of ideas to find out where the difficulties are. The diagnostic is designed to assess understanding of the key idea and other parts of the test will assess other dimensions (like passive transfer of energy.)
- Often higher-level ideas are hard to conceive of at lower-levels of understanding. If a student articulates a higher-level idea and also gives a lower level idea, probably he or she understands the higher level idea to some extent.
- Some teachers have tried having students score their own responses. This works well with rubrics that rank how complete an explanation is or the quality depending upon easily understandable standards. It is harder to do with the causal rubrics because higher level explanations are unlikely to make sense (beyond just memorizing it as a correct answer) to students working at lower levels.