

Fixing Rubrics: How Simplifying Success Criteria Can Increase Achievement

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Many teachers incorporate the use of analytic scoring guides, or rubrics. They typically consist of a table with four columns—one for each level of proficiency—and five rows that break down the areas that will be assessed. As teachers prepare to fill in all twenty cells, they realize that this densely packed analytic rubric has now become a nightmare. The teacher must now try to imagine every possible scenario that will result in an assignment being labeled as 1, 2, 3, or 4. This technique can be both soul crushing and time consuming. There is a better way.

Sample of Analytic Scoring Guide

In Analytic Scoring, the teacher scores separate, individual parts of the product or performance, then sums the individual scores to obtain a total score (Moskal, 2000; Nitko, 2001).

	Beginning 1	Progressing 2	Achieving 3	Exceeding 4	Score
Criteria #1	Description reflecting beginning level of performance	Description reflecting movement toward mastery level of performance	Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	Description reflecting highest level of performance	
Criteria #2	Description reflecting beginning level of performance	Description reflecting movement toward mastery level of performance	Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	Description reflecting highest level of performance	
Criteria #3	Description reflecting beginning level of performance	Description reflecting movement toward mastery level of performance	Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	Description reflecting highest level of performance	
Criteria #4	Description reflecting beginning level of performance	Description reflecting movement toward mastery level of performance	Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	Description reflecting highest level of performance	

When it comes time to assess student work, you're likely to find many assignments that don't fit neatly into any one column. What's worse, others demonstrate qualities you didn't even anticipate, like the student who spelled everything perfectly but was lax on punctuation. Your "mechanics" section doesn't have a place for that.

And do students even read these rubrics? Can they understand what they need to do to obtain "Achieving"? Students cannot self-assess themselves until they are taught and understand success criteria. When they can, we have helped them become assessment capable learners.

Might there be a better way? The answer is yes, and its name is the single-point rubric. Instead of detailing all the different ways an assignment deviates from the target, the single-point rubric simply describes the target, using a single column of traits.

Sample of Single Point Rubric

On either side of the middle column (the goal), there is space for teachers to write feedback about areas needing to improve and areas that exceed "Achieving".

Concerns <i>Areas that need work</i>	Achieving <i>Standards for this performance</i>	Exceeding <i>Evidence of exceeding performance</i>
	Criteria 1: Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	
	Criteria 2: Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	
	Criteria 3: Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	
	Criteria 4: Description reflecting achievement of master level of performance	

According to Professor John Hattie, feedback to students is “just in time” and “just for me” (Hattie, 2008). With a single-point rubric, the difficulty of searching for the right pre-scripted language is over, leaving teachers free to describe exactly what **this** student needs to work on.

Single point rubrics are also great for those schools who have already adopted standards-based criteria and grading. The open columns on either side leave plenty of room to comment on exactly what this student needs to do to improve their work, or to pinpoint the ways they have gone above and beyond.

Is there ever a need to use analytic scoring guides? Of course, especially when feedback is not part of the plan. When writing is scored on state assessments, there is probably a need to identify every level of performance. However, the goal of state assessment scoring guides are never really used to provide feedback that can actually help students increase their cognition. Rather, their main purpose is to only score the work.

I2J - News/Media Literacy Project

The news/media literacy unit will address the growing need to be critically thinking consumers of news content. With increased political division among people across the nation and the ease with which people can post/publish to social media, there is as much if not more non- or partial truth to be consumed as truth. After viewing a slide show (available on Google Classroom) that presents examples of bias and what to look for, you will select a recent controversial news topic to analyze. Using the media chart available on a slide, read the reporting of your topic from conservative and liberal sources, from non-biased sources, from sensationalizing and from more analytical sources. Determine the non- or partial truths provided by any of the sources. Look for tactics used to persuade, which shouldn't happen in legitimate news reporting. Identify inflammatory language or statistics that seem to stand for something but are actually misrepresented (jobless vs. unemployment rate). Finally, try to get down to the actual truth of the event.

Create an artifact (Google Doc, Google Slides, Prezi). Explain your findings in an organized manner, using images you can find through Google or Wikimedia or other sources or use screenshots of headlines, stories and images. Include liberal, conservative, misleading information and the summarized truth as you found it to be.

LEARNING TARGETS FOR RESEARCH, OUTLINE

1 Concerns 2 <i>Areas that need work</i>	Criteria <i>Targets for this assignment</i>	3 Advanced 4 <i>Evidence of exceeding target</i>
	Content covers many angles of topic, providing details from those viewpoints that make it understandable why consumers are misinformed. Information is arranged for consumption in a logical way for good story telling.	
	A minimum of four sources are used and identified by name and any other info available (ownership?) and where they lie on the scale of bias and standards.	
	Std American English grammar, mechanics & usage should be applied. Besides avoiding mistakes of punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, writer should phrase well and use complete sentences.	
	Artifact should be visually pleasing and easy to read and interpret. Some relevant images will add to aesthetic appeal.	
	Student should empower him/herself to utilize the feedback and technology available to seek assistance for improving work, as well as his/her own proofreading skills. Student should manage tasks and time to complete work by deadline.	

ISTE Standards	ELA Standards	Scoring	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 Empowered Learner <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Digital Citizen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Knowledge Constructor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 Innovative Designer <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Computational Thinker <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Creative Communicator <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Global Collaborator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 Speaking & Listening <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Reading & Writing Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Critical Reading & Critical Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 Vocabulary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 Language <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 Research <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Independent Reading & Writing	Out of 20 (5 Categories) 20-18 = A 17-15 = A- 14-12 = B 11-10 = C 9-7 = D 6-0 = F	Out of 16 (4 Categories) 16-14 = A 13-12 = A- 11-10 = B 9-8 = C 7-6 = D 5-0 = F

The Single-Point Rubric

Concerns Areas that need work	Criteria Standards for The Performance	Advanced Evidence of Exceeding Standards
	Food: All food is at the correct temperature, adequately seasoned, and cooked to the eater's preference.	
	Presentation: Food is served on a clean tray, with napkin and silverware. Some decorative additional may be present.	
	Comfort Recipient is woken gently, assisted in seat adjustment, and given reasonable time and space to eat.	

Notes on what needs improvement

Criteria for proficient performance

Notes on how the work exceeds expectations