The more complicated a grading rubric is, the less likely students are to read it and the more work it will be for you to use. In the spirit of Transparent Assignments (see The Practical Professor No. 17) and Zero-Based Evaluation (see The Practical Professor No. 18), this teaching tip is a way to focus your grading (and thus your students’ attention) clearly and specifically on the learning outcomes of your course or assignment. It’s called the Single-Point Rubric.

Here’s what it would look like if we were grading a breakfast in bed project:

### Breakfast in Bed: Single-Point Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns: Areas that Need Work</th>
<th>Criteria: Standards for This Performance</th>
<th>Advanced: Evidence of Exceeding Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food:</td>
<td>All food is at the correct temperature, adequately seasoned, and cooked to the eater’s preference.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation:</td>
<td>Food is served on a clean tray, with napkin and silverware. Some decorative additions may be present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort:</td>
<td>Recipient is woken gently, assisted in seat adjustment, and given reasonable time and space to eat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**A Single-Point Rubric…**

- Only lists the criteria for proficiency. Either students meet that proficiency, or they do not. This is clear, direct feedback about progress toward outcomes.
- Columns for “Needs Work” and “Excellence” are left blank so that the instructor can tailor this feedback specifically to the ways in which an individual student is struggling or excelling. This is specific, directed feedback about ways to improve.

In the next The Practical Professor: Reflective Practice Series #6
Also available!

Teaching

A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty

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No. 24 – Components of a Complete Learning Experience
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No. 30 – Paths to Mindfulness

Back issues of The Teaching Top 10 and The Practical Professor can be found here:

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