SECONDARY CONNECTION Middle School / High School Curriculum Newsletter

Oral of the second seco

67 68 MADE IN 69 U.S.A. 70 71

83 184 185 186 187 188 189**190** 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199

RCSD Secondary Curriculum Department

Erin Barrios & Stephanie Cotnam Middle / High Instructional Technologists

Catherine Beasley Middle / High School Social Studies Curriculum Specialist

Sheri Blankenship Director of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development

Heather Bryan Middle / High School English Language Arts & Literacy Curriculum Specialist

Jana Comer Middle / High School English Language Arts Curriculum Specialist

> Angy Graham Executive Director of Academics

Montgomery Hinton College and Career Ready Preparation Specialist

> Meghan Hutchins Administrative Assistant

Dr. Rhonda Kilgo Middle / High School Mathematics Curriculum & Literacy Specialist

Jasmine Rosemon Middle / High School Mathematics Curriculum Specialist

Cassondra Vanderford Director of Career Technical Education and Acceleration

Dr. LaVonda White Insturctional Data Specialist

Lorie Yates Middle / High School Science Curriculum Specialist

Guest Contributors

Raquel Hollingsworth, Puckett High School Elizabeth Knight, Richland High School Phoebe Quinn, Florence High School Neely Tindall, Northwest Rankin Middle School

C O N N E C T





10

4 | STANDARDS-BASED **GRADING BOOK REVIEWS** WITH RHONDA KILGO

Rhonda looks at Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-Based Learning by Cathy Vatterott, Standards-Based Learning in Action: Moving From Theory to Practice by Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, Mandy Stalets, and Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters by Tim R. Westerberg by Rhonda Kilgo

7 | COUNTERPRODUCTIVE **GRADING MEASURES TO AVOID**

Standards-based grading undeniably asks teachers and students to modify their ways of thinking about educational evaluation, and such a paradigm shift can be daunting. This article provides insight into potential pitfalls to avoid. by Raquel Hollingsworth

10 DIVING INTO STANDARDS-BASED **GRADING ONE STEP AT** A TIME: ONE TEAM'S **EXPERIENCE**

Several teachers throughout the district have tried implementing some form of standards-based grading. In this interview, Laurel Reeves shares how a team of math teachers at Northwest Rankin High School began to use several of the suggestions to change the mindset in their classrooms from thinking about a grade to thinking about learning. by Rhonda Kilgo



12 | TRADITIONAL GRADING: WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

What, exactly, does a grade represent? What does a final grade in a course truly mean? Does an 'A' in one class equate to an 'A' in another class? How do good grades relate to student success? by Elizabeth Knight & Neely Tindall



14 HOW TO INCORPORATE

by Phoebe Quinn

16

16 | STANDARDS-BASED **GRADING IN A SNAP**

Ask yourself what grades really mean in most classes today... | Often, there is little to no consistency between different teachers' grade book practices. Furthermore, there is a large range of subjectivity in how teachers assign points to a student/s grade. | If parents truly pressed the issue, they could back most teachers and administrators into a position of acknowledging the varying degrees of unfair grading practices that are deeply rooted in the years of use. | Too often students receive grades that would seem to indicate great success in a class but have not truly learned the content. SBG intentionally works to correct all of these shortcomings of traditional grading cycles. by Jana Comer & Rhonda Kilgo

ELEMENTS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

If you're thinking about incorporating some elements of standards-based grading into your own classroom, but you don't know where to start, Tim R. Westerberg's Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading outlines some steps you can take to move in that direction.

$\star\star$ STANDARDS-BASED GRADING BOOK REVIEWS WITH RHONDA KILGO $\star\star$

Sta



ALGEBRA 2

ENGLISH 1

JAZZ SHOV

SPANISH :

US HISTO

BIOLOGY

DRIVER E

A = S

Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-Based Learning

by Cathy Vatterott

Using standards-based grading instead of the traditional grading system is a culture shift. This book provides ideas on how to change this culture and create buy-in from all constituents. It also provides eye-opening examples of why this change needs to be made by comparing the traditional grading system to real-life

examples where assessment looks more like a standards-based model. Several example rubrics for various content areas as well as tools for communication are provided, and the strengths and shortcomings are examined. The concluding chapter offers a very convincing argument about why changes need to be made sooner rather than later in order to provide a more accurate depiction of student learning over compliance or "playing school."

Grading



Cathy Vatterott





by Tom Schimmer, Garnet Hillman, Mandy Stalets

The authors of Standards-Based Learning in Action: Moving From Theory to Practice guide readers through action-based steps to implement standards-based learning. This book focuses on how assignments, assessments, and grading focused on mastery of standards changes the mindset from a focus on grades to a focus on learning. Each chapter provides insight on how to move from rationale to action of implementation. In each step, readers are given tandards-Based Learning a plan for talking with learners and parents about the positive impact of standards-based learning. Samples and templates are also included which can be used by learning teams as they discuss getting started with each of the actions. Each chapter ends with a set of questions for teams to answer in order to self-reflect on the implementation of the action discussed.







om Schimmer



Standards-Based Learning in Action: Moving From Theory to Practice

olution Tree ssment Center

Garnet Hillman Mandy Stalets

Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters

by Tim R. Westerberg

Those interested in beginning standards-based grading practices in their classrooms would find this book both useful and eye-opening. Written as though standards-based grading is a trip with various destinations, readers are taken from beginning practices that can be used individually to ideas and suggestions that

changes in grading practices on a much larger scale. In Destination 1, Westerberg discusses counterproductive grading practices that are regularly used in classrooms from giving zeros and extra credit to guidelines about late work. Destination 2 provides the reader with some

can be used to make

steps to help plan a standards-based unit of instruction and how to best assess these units. Finally, Destination 3 helps those who are wanting to implement standards-based grading at a school or district level consider timelines and steps that should be taken prior to this widespread change.



Westerberg provides suggestions on how to communicate these changes and how to engage the community. There are samples of standards-based units of instruction and a list of some school districts, along with the address to the websites of these districts, who are implementing standards-based grading.

tart.



Standards-based grading undeniably asks teachers and students to modify their ways of thinking about educational evaluation, and such a paradigm shift can be daunting. Understandably, a complete overhaul of a grading system can be overwhelming, especially when teachers tackle such transitions

However, teachers need not make the change to standards-based grading (SBG) all at once in order to be effective. In fact, teachers can make small but significant adjustments to their daily classroom practices to more closely reflect the purpose and essence of standards-based grading.

Before teachers begin taking steps to bring standards-based grading *into* the classroom, it is important to take a very honest look at our practices and think first about detrimental policies to *take out* of our repertoire.

1: Assigning non-standard aligned assignments

One cornerstone of SBG is that grades should reflect a student's mastery of specific standards; therefore, if assignments are not created to assess those specific standards, the results of those assignments lack validity.





Though most teachers effortlessly follow this logic, it may be less obvious that some common practices often found in current classrooms work in direct opposition to this idea.

The "Igloo" assignment: In my very first professional development as a teacher, the presenters discouraged new teachers from assigning "Igloo" projects. Since I was an English teacher and clearly had no plans to teach geometry courses in my future, I thought the advice was a bit obvious, but then she told us the story of an elementary class who built toy igloos in school, and when the principal came to admire their work and asked what they learned about igloos, the students simply responded that they weren't studying igloos; they'd just made them for fun.

Admittedly, fun should remain in the classroom, but the truth of the matter is that gradebooks still contain notebook checks, extra credit for bringing supplies, completion grades, and Globe Theatre diorama projects, even though these do not reflect current learning standards. With only 180 days in a school year, time is a valuable commodity - we must use it intentionally to yield results that reflect the value of the curriculum and our learners.

Extra credit : More times than not, extra credit projects are assigned to help a student achieve a certain grade; however, if that assignment does not reflect a curriculum standard, the grade itself doesn't match the student's mastery of the curriculum, and if the project does match the standard, then the assignment would likely already be a vital piece to the course curriculum and therefore shouldn't be considered extra. Naysayers may argue that students sometimes need more than one chance to show mastery of a subject and therefore need more than one assessment, and we agree with that line of thinking; re-assessing students on a standard is encouraged to show the most accurate reflection of a student's knowledge, but re-assessing isn't extra; it's necessary.

Make or break projects: We all remember the project we had in high school that threatened to ruin our lives if we scored poorly - the assignment that counted for 70% of the course grade and had to be 25 pages long, hand-written, and professionally bound.

Though these assignments may look different today, the underlying disparity present in these tasks remains. We still see research papers or projects that count for two and three summative grades in a grading period to disproportionately inflate their weight in a course so much that students who perform poorly on one assignment find their grade poorly reflects their total knowledge of the standards in the course.

This issue often brings to light questions of course grading plans. Are some standards more important than others? Should some assignments carry more weight than others?

Mississippi English curriculum standards are not currently written in a way that prioritizes one over another. However, this becomes a topic for necessary conversation with district and school administrators. Some districts identify important standards in pacing guides and even SBG encourages teachers to identify "high-priority" standards (Westburg) for the sake of teaching standards deeply, but this should not encourage teachers to assign projects that disproportionately and subjectively favor some standards above others in a manner that devalues a students' learning of other standards in a course.

2: Combining Academic Performance with Ethics/ Citizenship

Grading Undesired Behaviors: An academic grade should reflect a student's mastery of an academic standard - nothing more and nothing less; therefore, grades that assess more than the standard lack validity. Teachers may be tempted to award points for effort or leadership in a group project, but those behaviors are not reflected in the curriculum standard, and therefore, should be left out of grading calculations.

Schimmer, Hillman, and Stalets note that the common practice of taking points away from a grade for behaviors like late work lowers the "validity of academic reporting" and "penalizes students instead of teaching them the desired skill" (18).

Abandoning this practice does not mean that teachers should ignore the need to teach soft skills; however, undesired behaviors (like cheating, lack of participation, and late work) should be addressed as a discipline issue and not be made to reflect punitively in a student's grades which should solely reflect mastery of course standards.

The Zero: Using the (permanent) zero as marker for incomplete or missing assignments fails to communicate mastery of a standard. Often, it seems incomplete or missing work is a bigger problem than it has ever been; however, not completing work is a disciplinary issue and should be dealt with as such. Zeros should never be used punitively and arbitrary deadlines should never be a gate-keeper of knowledge. Student learning is much more important than the time in which the learning occurs. In addition, the mathematical disparity of a zero on a 100-point scale in which a 60% is passing, disproportionately regards missing work more heavily than other congruent assignments that show learning.

3: Grading during Practice

When faced with unending stacks of papers to be graded, some teachers cry, "If I don't grade all the assignments, students won't complete them." This reflects a system that values compliance - not learning. In the shift to standards based grading, we must also shift our values of *what is* graded. When we cut out unnecessary assignments and focus our time on teaching to the depth of the standard, we show a changing value of learning. Similarly, our grading should reflect that value.

In order to effectively master complex standards, students need practice and feedback. In fact, Dylan Wiliam, author of *Feedback and Instructional Correctives*, says that "the unpredictability of learning makes feedback essential to effective learning and improvement" (qtd in Schimmer 69). However, because feedback is so essential in the learning process, it does not *always*, and sometimes should not, be accompanied by a grade.

When teachers grade practice assignments like homework, students are essentially penalized for making mistakes while learning; even completion grades for such assignments value effort over learning; rather, students benefit more from the specific (and ungraded) feedback on these assignments, which aids in mastery of the standards.

Perhaps an even more concerning effect of grading practice is the death of student creativity and risk taking. "When all grades are permanent, students have one chance to get it right. That system creates a perception that learning is supposed to be errorfree" (Vatterot 30). When students are not given the opportunity to experiment without the threat of a grade, teachers often cheat students of the chance to imaginatively problem solve and creatively develop solutions. More often, students become concerned with producing cookie-cutter products proven to earn proficient marks rather than taking risks that potentially reflect a deeper level of understanding of the standard.

4: Not allowing students to re-do work

Policies Impeding Growth: As noted earlier, reassessment of standards is encouraged to accurately reflect student learning and growth; however, some teachers still adamantly refuse to allow reassessment in the classroom, noting that extra chances are somehow less than fair to those students who performed well the first time. However, when we consider the ideas of equity and mastery, and leave undesired behaviors (like a failure to study) out of the graded equation, we must come to the conclusion

that students should be allowed the opportunity to show growth in their understanding of a standard. After all, the inevitable growth is more important than the number of attempts the student makes to achieve mastery.

Argument Against Averaging Assessments:

Policies for grading reassessments vary infinitely - from points added, averages, to total grade replacement. One popular policy allows students to earn points back to an original grade with revisions. Another common practice averages the two (or more) grades when students reassess. These practices are often heralded as the best way to allow students to grow while still keeping them accountable, but we must ask ourselves, what is gained by ensuring the student keeps the original grade that reflects a lack of learning even after he or she has mastered the objective? Schimmer notes that "averaging scores, especially over time, undermines accuracy. Even teachers who embrace the practice of reassessment can inadvertently distort achievement levels by averaging old and new demonstrations of learning" (150).

A standards based approach to reassessment suggests that students be awarded full credit for mastered skill or objectives on reassessments since the new evidence is the most accurate reflection of current mastery.

The idea of a full implementation of a new grading system can seem overwhelming and even impossible, but teachers can gradually enter the realm of standards-based-grading with these small but not insignificant changes that more accurately reflect our primary goal of student learning.

Works Consulted

Schimmer, Tom, Garnet Hillman, and Mandy Stalets. Standards-Based Learning in Action: Moving From Theory to Practice. Solution Tree Press, 2018.

Vatterott, Cathy. *Rethinking Grading: Meaningful* Assessment for Standards-Based Learning. ASCD, 2015.

Westerberg, Tim R. Charting a Course to Standards - Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters. ASCD, 2016.



by Rhonda Kilgo

Diving Into Standards-Based Grading One Step at a Time: One Team's Experience

Several teachers throughout the district have tried implementing some form of standards-based grading. In this interview, Laurel Reeves shares how a team of math teachers at Northwest Rankin High School began to use several of the suggestions to change the mindset in their classrooms from thinking about a grade to thinking about learning.

Rhonda: What led your team to decide to try standards-based grading?

Laurel: I did the modified version during my student teaching. I really liked it for Algebra I because it is state tested. Using this model makes it easier for teachers and students to identify areas of struggle. We did it at Northwest Rankin High School when I taught Algebra I, and we tried it with Geometry but it never really took off. We think that part of the reason for the lack of success was because of changes that were necessary over the last few school years.

Rhonda: Briefly describe what you all did to plan and prepare.

Laurel: We planned like we normally planned. The only thing that changed was how the grades looked. For example, instead of a 100 point assessment on Unit 2, 50 points might be on solving equations, 20 points might be on simplifying expressions, and 30 points might be on writing equations from real-world problems. The "total" possible points are still 100. Since these were separated into standards, students could see what they actually struggled with - probably not the entire unit.

We taught and did everything in the class the same, but we just took a closer look at our assessments. We were able to identify if we were asking too many or too few questions around a particular standard.

Rhonda: How did you communicate what you were doing?

Laurel: Because the grading was all that looked different, we didn't really use the term "standards-based" grading. We weren't implementing true "standards-based grading" so we were hoping to avoid confusion. We told students that the grades would be given by topic, but they still struggled to understand how we were calculating their grades. Students were confused because it looked like they had so many grades. We tried to explain the difference, but some students never really understood.

Rhonda: Are you still doing this? If not, why?

Laurel: We are not currently using this because there have been so many changes during the past two years



- both COVID and non-COVID related. Several of us are teaching different classes, we have some new teachers, and we are really spending time on planning using what we learned about instruction and assessment during the pandemic.

Rhonda: If you were/are doing it, what would you do differently? The same?

Laurel: I do want to try to do this again, but there are some things that I would definitely do differently. I would create clearer learning goals that would be shared and discussed with students. I would want them to understand everything, both skill and concept, that are needed for mastery of a standard. I would also spend more time being sure that lessons are closely aligned with the topics and the way these would be assessed. I would also want to spend more time being sure that the topics align with the standards and not just teaching it because it is a part of a topic in a resource.

There are some things that I would want to do the same. By breaking assessments down by standards and the skills and concepts within the standard, students only had to retest on the portion of the assessment where they were not successful. If they were successful on a portion, they didn't have to spend time relearning or reviewing this before their retest or redo.

Rhonda: What were some challenges?

Laurel: Getting buy-in was a challenge. It was hard to get students to understand that it looked different but it was really the same. It was also a challenge to help parents understand. As for teachers, grading does take longer when you start grading like this because you have to look at each part instead of just giving one grade for the entire assessment. However, organization is a key component when it comes to grading. Once you have a system that helps you organize the grades, the grading time is not significantly longer.

Rhonda: What advice would you give to someone or a team on getting started?

Laurel: I would say start with one specific assessment, and try it. Don't try to do the entire course at first.

Laurel Reeves is a math teacher at Northwest Rankin High School. She has been with their team for four years and has taught several classes during her time there.

Paul Dressel, an educational psychologist, defines a grade in the following way: "A grade can be regarded only as an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite amount of material." This definition often seems to be a pretty accurate of student grades, which leads us to ask what, exactly, does a grade represent? What does a final grade in a course truly mean? Does an 'A' in one class equate to an 'A' in another class? How do good grades relate to student success?

The questions above have been the source of many debates in education for years and, consequently, have led educators to question if the traditional system of grading provides the best source of valid and accurate data needed to move our students to a mastery

level. A perfect example of this dilemma is revealed in the following data gathered from the ACT exam: "Between 1991 and 2003, the mathematics grades of high school students taking the ACT exam rose from a grade point average of 2.80 to 3.04, whereas their average score on the math portion of the ACT rose only slightly from 20.04 to 20.55 on a 36 point scale" (Goodwin, 2011, p.80). Clearly, the rise in mathematics grade point averages of high school students is not consistent with the rise of the average score on the math portion of the ACT.

Grades should indicate mastery level of the subject matter attained by the student. But, is this the case? If educators want grades to truly be reflective of the students' level of mastery, we must begin by evaluating the current grading system. Consider the following information.

TRADITIONAL GRADING

BY ELIZABETH KNIGHT & NEELY TINDALL

What does the average really mean?

In traditional grading, each assignment grade is averaged to get the quarter grades, which are then averaged for the semester and yearly grades. Let's look at Rose's grade as an example. What can be determined by Rose's final grade of 90? Does the final



grade truly indicate that Rose mastered 90% of the course objectives? Does the final grade indicate that Rose completed 90% of the assigned work? Does the final grade indicate that Rose turned in assignments by the due dates 90% of the time? It is very unclear what the 90 really means.

Issues with Traditional Grading

Traditional Grading Scale saing percentage correct Letter Draile

.

6

D.

Assessments in Order

Assessment P1

Assessment #5

Total

Mean

wax 2009. Thou

EN Inex

Nant B4

nant #6

30.100%

80-14%

10-79-5

100-08-5

3-33%

٥ 63

• 63

۰ 63

90 63

90 63

90 63

90 63

190 63

90 63

90 63

630 630

625 625

100

100

100

100

630

63%

90

90

100

100

630

63%

What do zeros show about progress toward meeting content standards?

The grading scale typically used in traditional grading allots 10 points for an A, B, C, and D, but 60 points for an F. This scale suggests that missing assignments are worth much more than completed assignments, since a O is usually put in the grade book for an

assignment that has not been turned in. Karen Alex Jennifer Stephen In other words, work ethic is weighted 0 much heavier than mastery of standards. â 10 a When students receive a single zero, they 10 62 must make multiple 100s to bring their 10 62 average up to a low D. Trying to 63 900 100 63

overcome a single zero, much less multiple zeros, can be disheartening to students and give them a feeling of hopelessness. This could, in turn, increase behavior problems in the classroom, increase apathy in student attitude, and increase student absenteeism.

ning, K. 13 (s. 198), by Kan sand Daka, GA; Corwin. Copyright 2019 by When zeros are given for missing

assignments, this greatly invalidates data because the zero suggests that the student's proficiency is too insignificant to measure, meaning that the student knows absolutely nothing about that particular standard. Most teachers would agree that even if a student is absent for part of a unit, that student is still highly likely to have learned something pertaining to the standards in that unit.

		Detrainty	. And good
Does a grade in one class m	hean the	Partalitie .	O Real for Name 1
Does a grade in one class i		Formation	 Head Red Respect()
same in another class	s?	Formation	O Street Red Winger Mil
	Report Automation	Pumples	Occur bel Porger im
Grades are not consistent	Participant B (1997) Tana Lab	Parenders	Bour Take Concept Homese
	Participant and a statistic statistical data	Participat	O Bust Sarthal tasert tot
from school to school or		Participa -	O Host Lat
even class to class within	Services and the local functions	Sectors	O these has
	Printing Only 11 June Wild	Familie	· martington
the same school. In fact,	Putrative Oracle 1 time to Based Paragement	Paradite -	Connector Trave Growing
practices tend to vary	Putryline 0 10/18112 Band Gull		Contract Contract Contract of
areatly among teachers	Survivable 0 1047310 Doot het	Transfer 1	· International Concession
greacy among ceachers	Putrative @ HAP's 2 Blood Typing Lat	Participation of the local division of the l	O Statute Income Second
within the same department	Antipative 🖉 104/13.2 Blood December Research /	Paradia .	O Taxa Bal Rear II
according to Doug Reeves.	an education and	Puttaline	O Trana Bal Property
		Ponister	O Taxan Sail Harger Kl.
leadership consultant. The	two examples shown are	Familie	O Taxa but thege in
grades for the same nine-w	eek period posted by	Farializa	· Taxa Set Regist #
two different teachars whe	teach the same grade	Votation	· Time includes
two different leachers whi	ceach the sume grade	Puttolica	O Trave Motor
and subject. Assignments a	nd assignment categories	Parisaing	O Tenár Sait
are weighted differently be	tween the two teachers,	henete	· free feet
so which grade is a more a	ccurate representation o	f mastery?	lf two
students earn a 90 for the	final nine-week grade, do	oes it mean	the same in
ooth classes?			

Websites:

https://theeducatorsroom. com/7-goals-education/

https://prezi.com/p/ uoqdktglsgpd/ traditional-grading-vs-standards-based-grading/

https://corwin-connect.com/2019/01/ four-critical-standards-basedgrading-challenges-and-theirsolutions/

Vatterott, Cathy. Rethinking Grading: Meaningful Assessment for Standards-Based Learning. ASCD, 2015.

Westerberg, Tim R. Charting a Course to Standards - Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters. ASCD, 2016.

HOW TO INCORPORATE ELEMENTS OF STANDARDS-BASED GRADING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

> HOEBE QUINN

BY

If you're thinking about incorporating some elements of standards-based grading into your own classroom, but you don't know where to start, Tim R. Westerberg's *Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading* outlines some steps you can take to move in that direction. Although our district is not currently implementing the standards-based system of grading, a lot of the methods and guiding principles of this grading system would be beneficial to incorporate in any classroom. I've summarized Westerberg's suggested steps in this article and included what he calls the five "guiding principles" for a standards-based classroom.

Step #1: Unpack State Standards to Identify Essential Elements

In this step, Westerberg suggests that teachers look through their state standards for the course and determine which ones are essential, which ones could be combined, and which ones need to be eliminated. Westerberg suggests giving priority to standards that give knowledge and skills that will last beyond your course and will cross over into other domains of learning.

Step #2: Examine Existing Units to Identify Relevant Standards or Essential Elements

In this step, teachers should simply go through any units of instruction they have already developed in their career and identify which standards are addressed in that unit. They should then modify the units to include any standards that were left out.

Step #3: Organize Essential Elements into Measurement Topics

According to Westerberg, a measurement topic "should consist of standards or elements of standards that are related." These standards are covariant to each other, which means one cannot be learned fully without the other. Westerberg states these standards should be taught and assessed together. For example, in Biology, meiosis cannot be fully understood without also learning mitosis. Together, these would be a measurement topic about cell division; these standards would be taught during the same unit and test items pertaining to them would appear on the same summative assessment.

Step #4: Design Scoring Scales

Westerberg suggests starting the design of a scoring scale for each measurement topic by "identifying what students are expected to demonstrate that they know and can do at Level 3 of the template." Level 3 is the proficient score; this demonstrates that the student is hitting expectations for their grade-level. Level 2 is a basic understanding, Level 1 is a partial understanding that exceeds grade-level expectations of a given concept. These scores can be used instead of the traditional percentage grade – you can assign a score from 0 - 4 on each standard you assess throughout the year.

Step #5: Use Scoring Scales to Design Valid and Reliable Assessments

The final step is to develop assessment tasks, both formative and summative, that evaluate achievement from level 2 to 4. Westerberg's book gives a detailed example of a scoring scale for an Ecology measurement topic in a biology class. He also includes examples of assessment tasks at levels 2, 3, and 4 for a variety of high school courses. Westerberg states that for every single standard, assessment tasks must be developed for each level of each topic. Although this seems time-consuming, having tasks at each level would give an instructor the clearest picture of student achievement on every standard.

Westerberg points out that in this assessment model feedback to both teachers and students during the learning process is essential to growth and allows teachers to address any deficiencies students are experiencing for a given standard before progressing to the next. He includes in his book five "guiding principles" that will lead to the most effective feedback possible.

The five "guiding principles" are as follows:

- 1. Feedback is targeted at key "subskills" and building blocks during in the learning progression. Teachers should not move on to the next subskill before formative assessment feedback proves the mastery the current one.
- 2. Feedback targets the skills that students find the most difficult or have the most misconceptions about.
- 3. Feedback from formative assessments is aligned with the content in the related summative assessment.
- 4. Feedback from formative assessments reflect the same level of cognitive rigor in the related summative assessment.
- 5. Feedback from formative assessment mirrors the format of the test items on the related summative assessment.

By following the five steps above, you can begin to incorporate many of the elements of standards-based grading in your own classroom. You do not have to include all five elements listed – you could simply start by making sure every unit you teach is matched to state standards and all your assessment items accurately demonstrate mastery of those standards. If nothing else, I encourage you to develop your feedback processes to include the five guiding principles that will allow your assessments to give you the clearest picture of how your students are mastering each standard for your course.

STANDARDS-BASED GRADING IN A

Adapted from Natalie Crowder, Zach Roberts, & Keeley Tatum (2019-2020)

BY JANA COMER & RHONDA KILGO

WHAT IS STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Above all else, SBG is a system of assessment in which students are ONLY assessed on their performance toward mastery of a set of national or state standards.

This requires a massive paradigm shift in most teachers' established beliefs and practices for grading. It first requires overcoming the deeply entrenched belief that grades should reflect a student's effort. In SBG, grades are strictly about measuring a student's mastery of the skills and content taught.

Ask yourself what grades really mean in most classes today...

There is little to no consistency between different teachers' grade book practices. Furthermore, there is a large range of subjectivity in how teachers assign points to a student/s grade. If parents truly pressed the issue, they could back most teachers and administrators into a position of

SO I'VE BOUGHT IN...NOW WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?



WHY IS IT NEEDED?

acknowledging the varying degrees of unfair grading practices that are deeply rooted in the years of use.

Too often students are ending up with grades that would seem to indicate great success in a class, but have not truly learned the content. SBG intentionally works to correct all of these shortcomings of traditional grading cycles.

PROFICIENCY SCALE

4 (advanced)	Complete mastery of with possible sophisticated application of skill.
3 (proficient)	Firm understanding of skill at a level that generally meets all aspects of the standard.
2 (basic)	Approaching understanding of skill independently, and can achieve it with teacher support.
1 (minimal)	Lacks indication of mastery. Requires extensive support and guidance to complete work.

MISSING AND LATE WORK

DO NOT ENTER ZEROS AND ALLOW (within reason) **LATE WORK!** If that sentence didn't cause you to lose your lunch, you are probably more open-minded than the average teacher. If a grade shows what a student has mastered, zeros give a false indicator of their mastery. Zeros also destroy student motivation. Yes, some do panic and get the work complete; however, too many others either get so far behind they see no hope, or they view it as final which frees them from ever doing the work.

Instead, get innovative with establishing classroom procedures & expectations that put the burden on the students to be mindful of due dates. Not turning in work is a behavior, so why not counter it with behavioral consequences? Below is a possible missing work policy to use as a model for developing your own:

- Mark missing work in the grade book.
- Allow three school days for students to come to zero block to submit the work in person.
- After three days without the work, assign a detention. During the parent phone call to schedule it, explain the reason and how the student had three days.
- Limit students to no more than three late assignments per grading period to avoid developing bad habits or gaming the system for more time on work.
- Students cannot take summative assessments until ALL formative work to prepare for it has been completed. Have them complete the formative work while the class completes the summative.

REDO/REASSESSMENT

If the goal is mastery, then redo/reassessment is essential! However, if assessments are designed with standards in mind, and instruction is aligned to scaffold students up to mastery of the standard while also being driven by formative assessment data, then the majority of students should attain proficient or advanced. This should minimize the need for students to retake assessments.

Possible guidelines for reassessment:

- Students must seek reteaching/tutorial help from a teacher
- Work through mistakes on assessments referencing notes or other instructional resources
- Complete the formative practice and review with the teacher

The most recent grade for each standard is recorded in the grade book. It is not a false indicator of student performance or grade inflation if the student has truly mastered the standard on an appropriately rigorous and valid assessment.

Consider recording starting grade and final grade to show growth/progress over the course of the year.

HOW DO I ENTER A PROFICIENCY/SCALE IN THE GRADE BOOK? **FINAL / SIMPLE CONVERSION**

Average score of all standards

3.0-4.0 (with no scores of 2 or below)

2.5-2.99 (with no scores of 1 or below)

2.0-2.49 (with no scores of 1 or below)

1.5-1.99

1.49 and below

Average Proficiency	Grade	Score
3.26-4	А	95-100
3.00-3.25	A-	90-94
2.84-2.99	B+	87-89
2.67-2.83	В	84-86
2.50-2.66	В-	80-83
2.34-2.49	C+	77-79
2.17-2.33	С	74-76
2.00-2.16	C-	70-73
1.76-1.99	D+	67-69
1.26-1.75	D	64-66
1.00-1.25	D-	60-63
Below 1.00	F	50

Letter Grade Conversion

А
В
С
D
F

DETAILED CONVERSIONS



Brandon Florence McLaurin Northwest Pelahatchie Pisgah Puckett Richland

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE