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Standards-based Grading

School Advisory Council Presentation

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Standards-based Grading

Defined

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In a standards-based system, teachers report what students know and are able to do in relation to course standards. The system includes:

- The improvement of student achievement of required learning outcomes
- The mastery of defined learning outcomes instead of the accumulation of points
- The reporting of student achievement toward meeting learning outcomes at a given time by analyzing recent trend information based on various forms of evidence
- A record keeping system that provides teachers with information that allows them to adjust learning practices to meet the needs of students
- A system that encourages student reflection and responsibility



Starting the Conversation....

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DESIRE

- **TEACHERS will know** what students know and are able to do and **STUDENTS will also know** what they **know and are able to do**
- **honor student** effort but accurately report proficiency related to standards
- **motivate students** and foster engagement with learning tasks

CONCERN

- student academic motivation connected to current grading system
- belief that grades should reflect effort and academic behaviors
- belief in the need to rank students within a school or system
- change



A Difficult Shift

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- Grades as currency
- Grades as a tool for behavior modification
- Grades as a reflection of ethics and habits of work
- Grades as a mechanism to rank students
- **Almost no current infrastructure that supports something other than averaging percentile grades**



An Equity Issue

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Standards-based grading seeks to **abandon** criteria that breed **inequality**.

Rewards for speed, parental assistance, and personal organization are replaced with a focus on well-established learning outcomes (Reeves, 2007).



Motivation

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Teachers report students become **more engaged in learning** and less concerned with points and opportunities for credit when **criteria are clearly established** and opportunities exist for **practice and feedback** before being asked to **demonstrate their learning for a grade** (O'Conner, 2007).



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Knowledge and Skill v. Learner Attributes

SBG advocates reporting evidence of attributes such as organization, following directions, timeliness, and effort **APART** from grades in order to provide a clear picture of what the student knows and can do related to established learning goals.



The Beginning of an Inquiry

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Engage faculty in a practical exploration of the way in which grades currently work in secondary courses.



P.K. Yonge SBG Inquiry

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“The goal of the project is to support P.K. Yonge teachers in establishing a standards-based grading, collaborative inquiry team. The inquiry is designed to increase the number of teachers transitioning current grading practices to authentic standards-based assessment, grading, and reporting.”



A Practical Approach

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A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades second edition by Ken O'Conner



SBG Cycle One

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Practices That Impact the Communication of Achievement

don't reduce marks on work submitted late or for behavior, don't give points for extra credit, don't punish academic dishonesty with grade reduction, don't include group scores in grades, don't include attendance in grades



SBG Cycle Two

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Eliminate Inappropriate Grade Calculations

don't average grades, don't include zeroes



SBG Cycle Three

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Fixes for Low-Quality or Poorly Organized Evidence

organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals, clear descriptions of achievement expectations, compare each student's performance to pre-set standards, rely only on quality assessment, align assessment with standards



SBG Cycle Four

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Fixes that Support Learning

*only use summative evidence in grading,
emphasize more recent achievement, involve
students in assessment and grading that promote
achievement*



Year One-Inquiry Results

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11 classrooms/11 teachers/9 grading systems

5 inquiry questions

Optimistic about changing classroom grading policies and procedures to improve learning

Inquiry questions developed specific to context



Inquiry Question #1

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“In what ways does the elimination of a participation category impact student achievement related to content knowledge?”



Findings

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participation was masking mastery of learning goals and need for challenge

participation was masking potential struggle and the need for support

elimination provided more accurate data to communicate to students and parents



Inquiry Question #2

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“Once we codify retake and revision procedures, which students will take advantage of the procedures, and what progress will they make?”



Findings

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- students are not participating in retake and revision in “core” numbers
- students traditionally in need of opportunity for revision are not participating
- improvements are not significant in one revision and one-on-one teaching needed isn't accomplished



Inquiry Question #3

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“What structures, other than grades, ensure our students are motivated to complete assignments in a timely manner to help them master learning targets and perform well on assessments?”

Sub Question

“In what ways can we convince students that completing voluntary homework is essential to their academic success?”



Findings

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“This wondering led me to the conclusion that conversations with students about their work are more valuable and personal, resulting in more academic engagement, than giving a grade.”

“I found that students are more creative with assignments knowing that they will not be punished with a bad grade if they try something new.”



Inquiry Question #4

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“In what ways can reassessment practices be structured to support student learning in a standards-based classroom?”

Sub Question

“How does a teacher, within the day to day context of teaching, develop reassessment pieces and interventions for students who need additional engagement with content to achieve mastery?”



Findings

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“Based on the results on the reassessment data and the student interviews, the most important learning that has resulted from this teacher inquiry is that relearning and reassessment opportunities must become part of the in class tier II instructional practice. When examining assessment results, students should only have to reassess learning targets in which they did not meet proficiency. Organizing a system to track which learning targets students have mastered and which targets need to still be mastered is the next step in our journey into standards based grading.”



Inquiry Question #5

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“How does a more accurate representation of student’s skill and strategy development impact grades in the skills assessment category?”

Sub question

“Will a more accurate representation of student’s skill and strategy development impact student effort on a daily basis?”



Findings

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- achievement increased
- motivation increased
- consistency in performance increased
- daily engagement increased



SBG Take-Aways 2015

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- Reassessment opportunities improve student learning significantly for all types of learners.
- To be most successful, support for reassessment should be provided in the regular instructional period.
- Constant communication between teachers and students is **ESSENTIAL** for student success.



SBG Take-Aways 2015

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- Exposing students to the relationship between assessment scores and assignment completion shows students the relevance of completing assigned work.
- SBG is an effective tool to identify students in need of support.
- A non-grade based structure to address poor academic behaviors must be established to make SBG effective.



Looking to the Future

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2016–2017 school-wide professional
learning and stakeholder communication
leading to

**K-12 shift to standards-based principles of
grading and reporting in 2017–2018**