



Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*



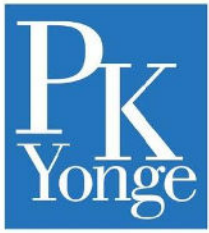
Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# Standards-based Grading

School Advisory Council Presentation

Christy Gabbard, Program Development and Outreach

Mickey MacDonald, Associate Professor, Biology



# Standards-based Grading

## *Defined*

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

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....

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## 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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

- 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**

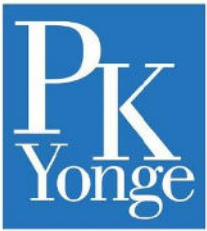


# An Equity Issue

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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).





Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

# 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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

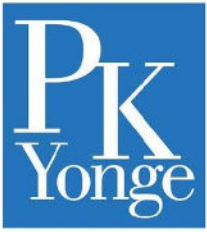
Engage faculty in a practical exploration of the way in which grades currently work in secondary courses.



Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# P.K. Yonge SBG Inquiry

“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.”



Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# A Practical Approach

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



# SBG Cycle One

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## 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

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## Eliminate Inappropriate Grade Calculations

*don't average grades, don't include zeroes*

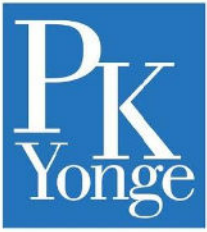


# SBG Cycle Three

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## 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

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## 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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

11 classrooms/11 teachers/9 grading systems

5 inquiry questions

Optimistic about changing classroom grading policies and procedures to improve learning

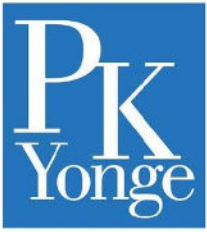
Inquiry questions developed specific to context



# Inquiry Question #1

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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



# Findings

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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



# Findings

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

- 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



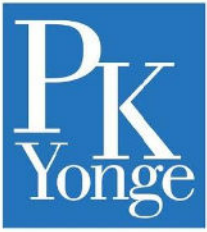
Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# Inquiry Question #3

“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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

“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.”





Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# Inquiry Question #4

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

## **Sub Question**

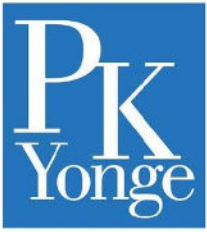
“How does a teacher, within the day to day context of teaching, develop reassessment pieces and interventions for students who need additional engagement with content to achieve mastery?”



# Findings

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

“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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

“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

Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

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



Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# SBG Take-Aways 2015

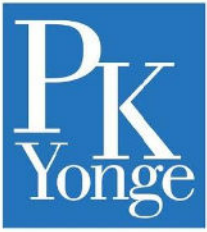
- Reassessment opportunities improve student learning significantly for all types of learners.
- To be most successful, support for reassessment should be provided in the regular instructional period.
- Constant communication between teachers and students is ESSENTIAL for student success.



Developmental Research School  
*at the University of Florida*

# SBG Take-Aways 2015

- 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

Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

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**