



Traditional Grading vs Standards Based Grading

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NOTE TO TEACHERS:

In some instances there are features outlined that your district may not adopt. For any questions or clarification on what your district is currently using please speak with your district Aeries administrator.

AERIES GRADING

Aeries has been at the forefront of grading policy changes and new grading theories for many years. With our gradebook calculations, algorithms and full - featured grading possibilities, Aeries is a leader in the process of changing from traditional grading to standards based grading. Using our Gradebook, clients have been able to seamlessly implement standards based grading. With that in mind, we would like to offer some insight into the theory behind traditional grading vs. standards based grading.

What is Standards Based Grading?

Standards-based grading evolved because traditional grading missed the mark on evaluating whether students have truly acquired the knowledge and skill sets they need to master the content being taught. Moreover, with traditional grading, teachers have continuously struggled to ensure students were prepared for the next grade level. Through the use of proficiency grading, teachers have found a better indicator to assess a student's grasp of the material. The idea is to create standards, targets and assignments aligned to the content standards to determine whether the student is trending towards or meeting those particular standards.

Traditional Grading

Typically, course grades are calculated by averaging assignment scores over the semester/term and school year. We utilized a chart below from Ken O'Connors book, *How to Grade for Learning* (p. 155) to illustrate how this can be a false representation of the data with varying grades in 10 assignments for 4 students.

	Student #1	Student #2	Student #3	Student #4
Assignment #1	0	63	0	0
Assignment #2	0	63	10	0
Assignment #3	0	63	10	62
Assignment #4	90	63	10	62
Assignment #5	90	63	100	63
Assignment #6	90	63	100	63
Assignment #7	90	63	100	90
Assignment #8	90	63	100	90
Assignment #9	90	63	100	100
Assignment #10	90	63	100	100
Sum Total	630	630	630	630
Average	63	63	63	63
Grade	F	F	F	F

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Traditional grading Continued

As you can see from the table above, student #2 failed every assignment and test. Student #4 made progress over the course of the semester - yet they both received a failing grade. The other students received higher scores on the assignments but didn't turn in assignments earlier in the semester. All of the students ended up with failing grades using the traditional methods of averaging grades. This is a fundamental reason why standards based grading was introduced.

Standards Based Grading

When evaluating students using standards based grading, the accuracy of understanding the learning or mastery of skill set is more apparent by the progress a student makes as the semester goes on or later in the school year. Hard work and home work are understandably taken into account with the possibility of failing or low test scores however; that does not necessarily determine the total over all grade for that student. Below is an example from "Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading" by Patricia L. Scriffiny (Educational Leadership, October 2008), which shows the advantages of standards based grading. The objective in the grading is to compare traditional grading with standards based grading while understanding that every assignment completed can represent a wide variety of proficiencies, knowledge and skill set, not simply a number correct.

Traditional Grades *"Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading" by Patricia L. Scriffiny (Educational Leadership, October 2008)*

	Homework Average	Quiz #1	Test #1
John	90	65	70
Bill	50	75	78
Susan	110	50	62
Felicia	10	90	85

Standards Based Grading *"Seven Reasons for Standards-Based Grading" by Patricia L. Scriffiny (Educational Leadership, October 2008)*

	Objective 1: Write an alternate ending for a story	Objective 2: Identify the elements of a story	Objective 3: Compare and contrast two stories
John	Partially proficient	Proficient	Partially proficient
Bill	Proficient	Proficient	Partially proficient
Susan	Partially proficient	Partially proficient	Partially proficient
Felicia	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient

In standards- based systems students typically receive grades on specific learning standards. Brief, written descriptions of what they are expected to know and be able to do. Standards-based grades are connected to specific learning expectations so that educators and parents know, with far more accuracy, what a student has actually learned or failed to learn.
