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The Implementation of Standards-based Grading

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Abstract

As the demands for a higher accountability in our current education system continue to grow, more attention is being given to Standards-based Grading. Based on an abundance of research correlating the positive effects of certain types of feedback and achievement, SBG is a tool that can provide effective feedback and will eventually allow teachers, parents, administrators and government officials to quickly gain quantitative insight concerning student progress in the attainment of specific skills areas. Although not formally recognized as Standards-based Grading, a criterion, skills-based form of grading and assessment has existed for years at the primary level of education. It has only been in the last 15 years that secondary schools have begun to adopt SBG. Considering the future exigencies in education and in hopes of successfully paving the way for my fellow colleagues and other future educators, the purpose of this project was to research, create and implement a standards-based grading system that is both effective and functional at the secondary level. To better illustrate the intricacies of SBG, I have included a 50 minute instructional video, in addition to this paper, that I hope to share with aspiring teachers and fellow colleagues in the future. The video carries the viewer through the processes I executed in rendering an effective standards-based grading system. It also includes live footage of my 2012 French Level V class with whom I implemented SBG, grading explanations and student interviews.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Having taught in a high school in Wisconsin Public Schools as a French teacher for more than a decade now, I have observed education undergo many transformations. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as well as our state and national governments are always seeking ways to make changes and improvements to our current education system so that we can continue to compete academically as a nation on a global scale. Included within the latest changes in education is the addition of the implementation of the Common Core Standards, adopted by Wisconsin in 2010. This is a set of standards that every teacher must fully implement in his or her curriculum to ensure that each student in the state graduates with the same set of skills (see Appendix I). It will also be the foundation for future evaluation. Eventually, in order for the local school administration and the state of Wisconsin to track student progress and better evaluate teacher effectiveness based on the standards, the current traditional norm-referenced grading system will most likely be replaced with a criterion referenced standards-based grading system (see Appendix I) . The purpose of this project was to research, create and implement a standards-based grading system that is both effective and functional at the secondary level. To better illustrate the intricacies of SBG, I have included a 50-minute instructional video, in addition to this paper, that I hope to share with aspiring teachers and fellow colleagues in the future.

Currently, the Common Core State Standards of Wisconsin have been formally adopted for English Language Arts, Mathematics and Literacy in All Content Areas. In order to keep up with this trend and future permanent change in education, I renamed the standards that I

currently use, laid out in a document called *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages* (see Appendices K and L), using the new language and numbering system mapped out by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in their newly posted April of 2012 document called, *Aligning the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core Standards* (see Appendices H and M). To further explain, this new ACTFL document is based on the National Standards for Foreign Language in existence since 1997. The committee has reorganized the current foreign language standards into 11 content standards each containing a performance standard serving as an evaluative component of the content standard. The new document is merely a reorganization of the former 1997 NSFL document and serves as a way of validating the direct connection between the original foreign language standards and the Wisconsin Common Core Standards for language arts and literacy. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to this change as ANSLL, which stands for *Aligning the National Standards for Learning Languages*. Along with these changes, I have also chosen to adopt the criterion referenced standards-based form of grading in order to more accurately measure my students' progress towards the attainment of the new ANSLL standards.

To begin, I would like to discuss what standards-based grading is and how it differs from the norm-referenced, letter grading scale the United States has used since 1897. In his book Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading, Robert Marzano (2010, p. 17) defines standard-based grading as "grading that references student achievement to specific topics within each subject area." In addition, Karen Bostic (2006) noted, "standards-based grading involves measuring students' proficiency on well-defined course objectives" (as cited in Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). The system is not new, as schools in Australia have been consistently using it for the past 15 years, but it has been slow to catch on in the United States. Ideas relating to this

system in the U.S. were made popular in a 1993 report commonly referred to as the Malcom Report which defined a performance standard as "how good is good enough" (Marzano, 2006; National Education Goals Panel, 1993, pp. ii-iii). Now, a common practice when using the standards-based system is to define student performance in terms of four categories (Marzano, 2010). As Popham (2003, p. 39) noted:

> Increasingly, U.S educators are building performance standards along the lines of the descriptive categories used in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a test administered periodically under the auspices of the federal government. NAEP results permit student's performances in participating states to be compared…Since 1990, NAEP results have been described in four performance categories: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Most of the 50 states now use those four categories or labels quite similar to them.

In this criterion referenced standard system, one can compare each student's performance to clearly stated performance descriptors that differentiate levels of quality. In addition, teachers evaluate student performance based on what each student accomplishes as an individual, regardless as to how their classmates performed (Bostic, 2012).

In contrast to standards-based grading, norm-referenced grading has consistently been used for the past century in this country and reports how students are performing in relation to one another (Marzano, 2010). Within the norm-referenced grading system, teachers will employ class rankings and curves to determine where a student stands in relation to others in his class. With this type of grading, learning becomes highly competitive; as students must compete against one another for the top grades given (Bostic, 2012). Also, grading can tend to become

very subjective using this system. Since there tends to be a large variability in scorers, what proficiency means in one teacher's class could be quite different in meaning from a different teacher in the same building. In a norm-referenced grading system, since there is no formal breakdown of standards, the grade reflects a student's overall understanding of the material or relative levels of student performance, which is only very loosely defined by the curriculum (Cox, 2011).

After repeated mention of this new standards-based grading system by district administrators in our building, I decided to investigate the intricacies of this topic using suggested materials written by Robert Marzano, Ken O'Connor, Susan Brookhart, Douglas Fischer, Nancy Frey as well as other scholarly articles written on the topic. While researching this area, I began to feel excited to hear that other types of grading were finally being investigated and implemented in school districts throughout the country. My connection to the norm-referenced grading system was never great and I've always felt that students in my classes needed better feedback to help them gain more insight on what skills they currently excel at in French and what skills are still lacking. Before exploring SBG, a student capable of proficiently demonstrating a concept in my class could potentially receive a failing grade if he did not turn in his homework assignments. Because my grades were not only based on proficiency but on responsibility and maturity as well, there was a great deal of variability in what a failing grade truly meant in my class. Additionally, overall grades were not broken down into standards and therefore, made it very difficult when conferencing with parents and students to specifically cite areas of weakness and achievement. Ultimately, I found the subject of standards-based grading quite fascinating because it encompasses many things that were lacking, as mentioned above, in the way I was grading and communicating feedback. Therefore, with the full approval of my

district administration, my world language colleagues and parents of my French students, I decided to dive head first into shifting my grading system from a norm-referenced grading system to a criterion-referenced standards-based grading system. The purpose of this project was to open up my classroom to demonstrate how I've implemented standards-based grading with my students using the new language of the ANSLL mapped out by ACTFL. In the next section, I will investigate how using standards-based grading as a functional tool for feedback may be beneficial in improving overall student achievement.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

An interesting area to discuss concerning standards-based grading is the reason districts have chosen to adopt the new system and the research that backs the necessity for this reform. Since grading is in essence a feedback tool, the principle area in which one can quantitatively gain insight on the value of this new system lies in comparing the effects of different types of feedback with student achievement. For decades, research concerning the relationship between feedback and achievement is abundant (Marzano, 2010; Brookhart, 2008; O'Connor, 2009; Fischer & Frey, 2007; Turnstall & Gipps, 1996; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Goodman, 1998). As shown in the book Formative Assessment & Standards-based Grading by Robert Marzano (2010, p. 4) he includes a table, which presents the results from a variety of studies on feedback that have been conducted since 1976. In the 14 synthesis studies mentioned, which include a total of 6807 Effect Sizes combined, the average ES ranges from .26 to 1.47 and a percentile gain, which ranges from 10 percent to 43 percent. Marzano (2010, p. 3) defines ES as:

> how many standard deviations larger (or smaller) the average score for a group of students who were exposed to a given strategy (in this case, feedback) is than the average score for a group of students who were not exposed to a given strategy (in this case, no feedback).

Therefore, the studies conducted on this chart would then suggest that evidence for the effectiveness of feedback to be strong. Other research reviewed in this section includes evidence suggesting that there are specific types of feedback that can positively correlate to achievement

and learning outcome in children. In addition, articles researched, including brain development exploration, indicate that school-age children and adolescents (those under the age of 25) and adults react differently to certain types of feedback.

Although there is an abundance of evidence that suggests that feedback has a positive effect on performance, some research also concludes that certain types of feedback are more effective than others, which will be discussed further in this paper. Additionally, there is empirical evidence proving that in certain cases, feedback can negatively affect performance. In fact, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) found that out of the 131 papers they reviewed in their meta-analysis of feedback, which included 607 effect sizes, 12,652 participants and 23,663 observations, 38% of the effects on student achievement were negative.

To better understand these characteristics of feedback that produce positive effects on performance and the characteristics of feedback that produce negative effects, let's first look at a few definitions and what studies show in relation to these definitions. Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 81) define feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding…a "consequence" of performance." Negative feedback is "that which does not let students know how they can get better" (Marzano, 2010). Positive feedback is then that which provides students with information to guide them on how they can improve. In a summary of meta-analysis reported by Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 83), which included 196 studies and 6,972 effect sizes, the numbers showed considerable variability, suggesting that certain types of feedback are more effective than others. Among these studies, they found that "the highest effect sizes involved students receiving information feedback about a task and how to do it more

effectively" (positive feedback). Lower effect sizes were related to praise, rewards, and punishment (negative feedback). Therefore, it could be concluded that the high ES corresponds to the standards-based characteristics defined earlier in this paper.

In looking for evidence to support using standards-based grading as a useful feedback tool to improve student performance at any level of schooling (primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels) it is first necessary to explore how different types of feedback effect performance and motivation among individuals at different cognitive stages of development. In a recent report published on the Dream Online website for the Children's Hospital of Boston (www.childrenshospital.org), two recent discoveries concerning brain development were noted. First, the adolescent brain is really only 80% developed and second, brain development isn't fully complete until approximately age 25 or even into the thirties (Graham, 2008). As we will further explore, this is very critical information for educators to acknowledge when deciding on how to approach teaching and assessment at different cognitive levels. Therefore, as we take a closer look into this subject, it is necessary for me to define adults as those individuals whose brains have reach full maturation (approximately age 25) and school-age students as those whose brains are still in the developmental stages (ages 0-24).

After examining a video on Ted.com by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore called *The Mysterious Workings of the Adolescent Brain*, one will realize that the effects of feedback and motivation on performance in school-age children are probably very different from the effects that they have on adults. Similarly, the approach that a teacher must take when giving feedback and helping to motivate his school-age students must also be different. In her video, Blakemore (2012) stated that in the past ten years, through Magnetic Resonance Imagining (MRI) scans, scientists have

determined that grey matter in the brain changes with age. Additionally, the medial prefrontal cortex activity (which is responsible for decision making, planning and understanding other people's perspectives) in social cognition tasks decreases during adolescence, which has been proven through 9 developmental MRI studies (Blakemore, 2012). Therefore, based on brain research, what teachers expect from school-age students as well as the way they interact with them and provide feedback should be different from the way they interact with adults. Teachers in my own high school argue all the time that we should be preparing students for the "real world" and that they should be treated like adults in the sense that there are very few "redo's" or second chances in the workforce of today. They claim that we need to teach these students "responsibility" by never allowing them to hand things in late or redo an assignment. Unfortunately, this line of thinking contradicts much of the existing research that has been conducted on young learners, many of whom are far too young based on brain research, to fully grasp the concept of adult responsibility. A multitude of students in school today fail not because of lack of knowledge or ability but simply because they are not motivated (Anderson, Hamilton & Hattie, 2004).

Effective Feedback for Adults

In four very different studies conducted on adults concerning feedback and performance, results of the experiments were surprising similar. One experiment conducted by Jarzebowski, Palermo and Van de Berg (2012) involved 29 coaches undertaking a five-session coaching program, another by Van-Dijk and Kluger (2004) included 88 working MBA students (mostly police and military career officers ranging in age from early 30s to late 40s) and 43 undergraduate students, the third study by Goodman (1998) was undergraduate classes at a mid-

sized southeastern university and the last one conducted by Anseel, Van Yperen, Janssen and Duyck (2011) consisted of 939 employees from different organizations (58% male, 42% female) with their ages ranging from 16 to 60 years. The underlying connection among these four studies was that motivation and performance increased by strongly considering the needs and goals of the individual and then properly framing the situation (in the form of feedback) to fit his needs. Similar to the system of SBG, these studies support the idea that in education, it is imperative to fully grasp the individual needs of each student in a classroom in order to increase motivation and performance through effective feedback.

When exploring the effectiveness of feedback, another common theme that many of these studies explored was the concept of *regulatory fit* which Jarzebowski, Palermo & Van de Berg (2012) defined as an individual's preference to either "support gains" or "prevent losses". The term used by these authors to describe supporting gains is called *promotion focus*, which is where individuals wish to "decrease the distance between their current state and desired state (success)". The other term used to describe *preventing losses* is called *prevention focus*, which they defined as an individual's desire "to increase the distance between current and undesired states (failures)." (Jarzebowski, Palermo & Van de Berg, 2012, p. 15). Many of the findings indicate that respecting individuals' regulatory fit increases the value of the feedback (Jarzebowski, Palermo & van de Berg, 2012; Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). In addition, in these studies it was found that individuals exhibiting promotion focus factors responded better to positive, constructive remarks when receiving feedback whereas individuals exhibiting prevention focus factors responded better to harsh, "tell it like it is" criticism (Van-Dijk and Kluger, 2004). When considering standards-based assessment as a tool to providing meaningful feedback, there is evidence that this system could provide a positive response in students

exhibiting both promotion and prevention focus. In SBG, individuals have a choice to perceive the feedback in a way that could fit their own regulatory fit. In promotion focus, students would look at areas in which they are excelling on the SBG chart to help guide them through their challenges and student exhibiting prevention focus would immediately look at areas that need improvement in order to increase their own proficiency.

Another noteworthy area of interest among the previous studies mentioned was the effects of task, comparative and external feedback on performance and learning in adults. To understand what this means, one should first understand the how each is defined. Goodman (1998) stated that, "task feedback is defined as response-produced feedback which is a direct result or natural consequence of task execution" (as cited by Adams, 1971; Annette, 1969; Freller & Harold, 1977; Herold & Greller, 1975; Schmidt, 1991). Additionally, comparative feedback is defined as feedback that "provides individual with information on their performance level in comparison to others" (Anseel, Van Yperen, Jassen, and Duyck, 2010, p. 706). Finally, Goldman (1998) defines external feedback as feedback "which is provided by another person or a computer and feedback that is added to the task environment (e.g., meters, dials) rather than resulting directly from task execution (as cited by Adams, 1971; Annette, 1969; Greller & Herold, 1977; Herold & Greller, 1975; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Salmoni et al., 1984). In Goldman's study (1998), task feedback was found to be more beneficial in learning and external feedback was found to be more beneficial to practice performance and less beneficial to learning. In a study by Anseel et al. (2011, p. 716), they found that performance-approach goals led "to favorable feedback reactions when task-referenced feedback rather than comparative feedback is provided." In addition, they concluded, "performance-approach goals responded more negatively to comparative feedback but not to task-referenced feedback."(Anseel, Van Yperen,

Janssen & Duyck (2011, p. 703). This evidence would then suggest that in education, it would be more effective for teachers to use a criterion referenced system of grading which focuses on individual proficiency rather than a norm-referenced grading system which determines where students stand in relation to others.

Based on this research, one can therefore generalize that when giving feedback to adults, particular attention needs to be paid to their own regulatory fit to determine the type of feedback (negative or positive) they will best respond to. Also, it can be concluded that external feedback can be beneficial for one to achieve an immediate goal but that task feedback is actually better in the long run for learning. Finally, since comparative feedback provided little motivation or any significant positive learning outcomes for adults, it is suggested that one should probably avoid using this type of feedback in gaining maximum performance and results for any given task.

Effective Feedback for School-age Children

Having examined effective feedback in adults, I would like to investigate some of the most effective ways to motivate school-age students to achieve at their maximum capacity. Researchers have found several methods including remediation, which allows students opportunities to reprocess and practice difficult material until they level up with other students (James & Folorunso, 2012; Ezewu, 1988; Ames & Ames, 1984). In a study conducted by James & Folorunso (2012) on junior secondary school mathematics students, they found that students who were "provided with feedback and remediation performed better than those provided with feedback without remediation." According to their study, the students who performed the worse were the ones who were provided with no feedback or remediation (James & Folorunso, 2012). They attribute the success of the students who were given feedback and remediation in their

study to previous studies that have been done on the connection between intrinsic motivation and students having a clear sense of the learning task at hand (Afemikhe, 1985, Erinosho, 1988, Ughamadu, 1990 and Ajogbeje, 2012).

Finally, through the use of formative assessment, which provides students with continual, immediate feedback to improve performance and help achieve mastery, researchers have found an increase in student motivation and overall performance (Turnstall & Gipps, 1996, Marzano, 2010; Brookhart, 2008; O'Connor, 2009; Fischer & Frey, 2007). Gipps and Turnstall (1996) define formative assessment as the "process of appraising, judging or evaluation students' work on performance and using this to shape and improve their competence." In a study carried out in London, where a total of 49 children were selected from 8 classes of year 1 and year 2 children, Gipps and Turnstall wanted to find out individual children's perceptions of feedback and to observe, during classroom activities, what types of feedback were most effective for student learning. Classroom recordings and observations were carried out as well as interviews with teachers and students. They found what other researchers have found, which is that there are two types of motivation goals which can lead to achievement or failure (Turnstall & Gipps, 1996, Johnson et al., 1992, Ames & Ames, 1984; Blumenfeld (1992); Pintrich et al. (1993). The first type is called a *learning* or *mastery goal* in which one has the idea that personal effort can lead to success and the other is called the *performance goal* in which one links his own sense of self-value with perceptions of one's competence (Turnstall & Gipps, 1996). This research has found that the first *mastery goal* is more beneficial to overall student achievement than the *performance goal,* which focuses on competition where students try to surpass others or standard-based norms. Ultimately, *mastery goal* can be viewed as formative assessment because it focuses on individual improvement, provides opportunities for improvement and views

mistakes as part of the learning process. Again, this research supports a criterion, referenced standards-based grading system, which allows students to improve without feeling like they are competing with their fellow classmates.

To conclude, after reviewing these pieces of literature, it appears that feedback can have an effect on achievement no matter the age or profession. It is important however, to be sensitive to the varying stages of cognitive development when determining the appropriate types of feedback and motivational strategies to reach an individual. With adults, one must consider their regulatory fit to determine whether they will best respond to positive or negative feedback. To motive adolescents and younger children, whose brains are constantly changing and growing, it seems that it would be more important to provide feedback by remediation, creating a positive, safe social environment and creating opportunities for students to experience learning through ongoing formative assessment in order to ensure maximum performance. As we will explore further in chapter 3, formative assessment plays a key role in providing continual, non-threatening feedback necessary for ongoing improvement. The next section will explain how I used this research related to feedback and achievement to create and implement a standards-based grading system for my own World Language classroom. In doing so, I hope to address how Standards-based Grading can be used as a functional tool to provide constructive student feedback.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Creating a SBG system

Step 1- Curricular planning. Before beginning the process of creating an effective Standards-based grading system, a great deal of research and curricular planning was involved. The first step executed was to consult the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages website (www.actfl.org) where a document called *Aligning the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core Standards* is posted. Following this, I considered the French curriculum I currently have in place, which was previously aligned to the *Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for World Languages*, and mapped out a new curricular chart to include an additional column which incorporates ACTFL's National Standards for Learning Languages. The chart in Appendix A is a sampling of this new curricular mapping for my Level III French class. The column headings include *Topics to Master, Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for World Languages, Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards, Activities to Demonstrate Mastery, Final Grade in the Topic Area and Final Overall Grade.*

Step 2 – Research. Researching the intricacies of Standards-based Grading was the second step involved in determining how to incorporate this form of grading into my World Language classroom. I found information from the following books to be very helpful*:* *Formative Assessment and Standards-based grading* by Robert J. Marzano, *Formative Assessment Strategies for Every Classroom* by Susan M. Brookhart, *How to Give Effective Feedback to your Students* by Susan M. Brookhart, *Checking for Understanding* by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, and *How to Grade For Learning K-12* by Ken O'Connor as well as all

the articles cited in the literature review. In addition to these sources, through personal inquiry and the Internet, I researched other schools districts in Wisconsin that were currently using Standards-based Grading and investigated their interpretation and implementation of this system. These districts include the Madison Metropolitan School District, the Adams-Friendship School District and the Winneconne School District. Additionally, the math department in my own district in Lake Geneva was starting to use a version of Standards-based Grading and I took the time to discuss SBG implementation strategies with their department members as well.

Step 3 – Designing a new syllabus. After collecting data, I appropriated bits and pieces of information from all of the above-mentioned sources and composed a new syllabus. This document was designed to communicate the intricacies of my new standards-based classroom and evaluative measures to be implemented throughout the next school year.

In the first paragraph of the syllabus, I decipher why I chose to adopt the new Standards-based Grading system (see Appendix B). Then, I define what Standards-based Grading is. Marzano and other experts recommend the following guidelines for grading:

A. Grades are based on the results of multiple experiences over time.
B. Grades are NOT based on averages. Good scores can't make up for bad scores.
C. Standards-based Grading (SBG) indicates if the student has mastered the standard
D. SBG clearly communicates expectations ahead of time.
E. SBG is ongoing and allows students "second chances" to demonstrate mastery
F. SBG encourages long-term retention of the material.

(Marzano, 2006/2010; O'Connor, 2009; Brookhart, 2008/2010)

In normal Standards-based Grading, students would be evaluated using a 0-4 scale rather than an A-F scale. Since teachers at my high school must report their scores using percentages in a program called Power School, the grades must be translated from the Standards-based Grading codes (see Appendix C) to a percentage grade.

Step 4 – Drafting a Standards-based Grading chart. Before a unit, copies of the grading chart I created using information on SBG from Marzano, O'Connor and other experts as shown in Appendix D, are distributed to students,. The grading chart presents the topics students must master by the completion of the unit (which are aligned to the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core Standards) and the specific assessments they must execute within those topic areas to demonstrate mastery. Each student is awarded a separate grade for each topic. For most topics, students are allowed to dismiss one grade (which will be specified before the onset of a unit). After waiving one grade, the lowest score the student receives for that topic becomes his final grade. If a student does not achieve a desired outcome on a specific task within a topic, he is allowed to retake most assessments, unless previously stated, to achieve a higher mastery level.

In Appendix E, you will see a simplified version of this same grading chart, which I included as part of my syllabus for parents and students to see in an effort to explain how SBG works. As you view the chart, you will clearly be able to visualize what the grading outcome looks like.

To explain this more in depth, in the SBG sample chart in Appendix E, I named this student Pierre. In the first column, Pierre received a 4 *for in-class speaking,* which on the more detailed standards chart that I use, corresponds to National Standards 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1, 5.2.

Then, in the next column under *Unit 1 Oral Mastery of Interrogatives* (National Standards 1,1, 2.1, 4.1, 1.3, and 3.2.) Pierre received a 3 for his *question-response evaluation*, 4 on his *question for the teacher*, a 3 on his *question for a student* and a 4 on the *role play activity*. Pierre is allowed to dismiss one assignment for each topic, which would naturally be one of the 3s. Then, he must count the next lowest grade, which is also a 3. If Pierre was not satisfied with his 3, he could then go to the teacher for additional assistance and redo one of the 3 scored assignments to try for a 4 to equal his other grades. If Pierre earned a 4 on one of those assignments, his grade would then be replaced with a 4 for that category.

So what happens if one must still enter grades using a program such as Power School that only accepts and formulates percentages and letter grades? A solution to this problem is pictured in Appendix E. In this example, you will see a chart transforming the same standards-based grades from the previously mentioned scenario into percentages on Power School. At the beginning of each unit, the main topic areas that students need to master are listed on the top of the Standards-based assessment chart. Then, throughout each grading period, if a school district still adheres to the norm-referenced averaging system, a teacher must enter and change the grades within these categories converting the numbers to percentages based. At the end of the quarter, all percentages from each topic are averaged to give the student his/her overall grade.

Step 5 – Monitoring grades. After creating a SBG chart prior to the beginning of each grading period, I recommend that the teacher keep one copy for each class he is teaching in order to record each student's progress himself. The instructor should also distribute a heavy cardstock copy of the SBG chart to each of his students so that they may also continuously monitor their own grades throughout the term as well.

A procedure that I use, to ensure that students don't lose their cards throughout the grading term and to make sure that they consistently record their own daily progress, is to require students to collect their SBG cards before class and hand them back in before leaving the room. Each day, before handing an assessment back to the students, I make sure to record their scores on my SBG card for that class. After recording their scores, completed assessments are handed back to the students who must then record their own grades in the appropriate category standard on their personal SBG cards before they are allowed to move on to the next lesson.

Step 6 – Personalizing the SBG chart. As a French teacher, there two columns of particular interest to me in my world language classroom. The first one is called *In-class Speaking French,* which helps to ensure that, no matter the level of French, students remain in the target language. Every unit, this column is included as part of their final grade on the SBG chart. To earn a proficiency rating in this category, students are evaluated on their ability to stay in the target language during class but are never penalized for incorrect grammar usage or pronunciation. Each week on Friday, a grade is entered (per the SBG rubric) 0 – 4 or in PowerSchool 50-100 %. Students start out the week with a 4 or 100% on Monday and it is up them to maintain their Advanced Proficient title for this goal.

During a lesson, I use the 3 strikes and you're out method. This means that students are given 2 warnings during class and lose 1 Standards-based grade point upon the third strike. Upon 3 strikes, a student's score would then jump from a 4 (100 %) to a 3 (90%). On the following day, if the student has not struck out by the end of class, he earns one of his points back driving his score back to a 4 (100%). If by the end of the week, the student has a 3 (90%), a 90% will be then entered into the grade book in Power School. Students cannot earn anything

higher than 90% for the unit in this category unless they choose to make up the point during an after school World Language lab by executing a 30 second announcement in French on a topic of their choice. Students are never graded on grammar but their ability to continue speaking in the language without significant pauses for 30 seconds. Students will record their announcements (if I'm not running the lab) using an appropriate hand-held device and the lab teacher will hand it back to me for review. Upon successful completion of a 30 second announcement, I will add a point back to the students' scores.

The other column that is of interest is called *Formative In-class Activities*. Every unit, the chart that you can see in Appendix F is printed on the backs of their SBG cards. Each day, students write the number of the day that we are on in the unit in the left column. Then as class continues on, we execute a series of formative activities for which they are awarded points to check for understanding.

There are two Formative in-class activity examples that I will share. The first one is a game called "Bop" or the "Noodle Game" to practice vocabulary and grammar. During the game, one student starts in the middle with a Styrofoam swim noodle that he will eventually use to strike the other students' desks once the game begins. The other students have pictured vocabulary cards. The instructor then starts the game by calling out a vocabulary word pictured on a card in French. The student holding that card must yell out another student's word before his desk is struck by the person holding the noodle. If the student fails, he or she must go to the center and take the noodle. After a minute, the student who ends up in the center strikes out and the teacher writes his/her name on the board. Any students whose names are not on the board during the entirety of the game earn 10 points. The second formative activity is a game called 1,2,3, which I use as a formative warm-up activity. Students are divided into 3 sections based on

where they're seated. Similar to the game of Scattergories, when the number of a team is called out, they have two seconds to shout out the vocabulary item that I'm gesturing to. The team that scores the most points receives 10 pts, 2nd place 5 pts and 3rd place 3 points.

Tallying the final score for the term in this Formative in-class activity column is very simple. Students who have accumulated ten points or more during one single class period receive1 big point, which they write under the column called *Les Grands Points* (see Table 5). If they earn 1-9 points they receive a half of a point. Then, at the end of the grading period, I ask students to count up all of their big, circled points and write them at the bottom of the page. If they earn 98-100% of the possible points awarded for the grading period they receive a 4. If they earn 95-97% of the points they receive a 3.5, and so on. This grade is then entered into the final column of their grading charts.

The Making of the SBG Instructional Video

During the 2012-2013 school year, after spending a summer researching and designing a workable Standards-based Grading model that I could implement with my upper level French students, I decided to produce a Standards-based Grading instructional video with the help and permission of my French V students and parents. The purpose of the video was to help illustrate to my fellow colleagues and any undergraduate education majors how Standards-based grading works in an active classroom.

Video Participants. Twenty-two French V students from a rural public school in Wisconsin participated in my SGB video. Among the participants were 3 males and 19 females ranging from 16-18 years of age. There were five Latino students in the class, one Asian student,

and sixteen Caucasian students. At the time the video was made, 41% of the student population was receiving free or reduced lunch.

Video contents. Starting at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, I presented the new syllabus and grading system to all of my French classes. Even though I've been using this new SBG system with each one of my levels this year, I chose to videotape only my French V class because I was very confident, after having taught these same students for the past two years, that the families would be open and supportive of the task at hand.

Immediately at the beginning of the month of September, the Director of Technology from our school district came into my classroom each week to videotape various lessons centered on each of the specific standards I was trying to illustrate. After all the lessons were filmed, and with the help of one of my tech-savvy colleagues in the World Language Department, I cut and edited the film and also added narration and music to it. The Standards-based Grading instructional video includes the following:

-Useful websites, books and resources to gain a better understanding of SBG

-How to create and set-up a practical SBG system for the classroom

-How to transform SBG into percentages

-Materials that I use in my classroom to carry out standards-based instruction

-Live classroom activity samples to illustrate each SBG category on my grading chart

-Rubrics and grading explanations for each live activity sample

-Student interviews

CHAPTER 4

Results

Although my focus was on assessment, the choice of a Standards-based system had an inevitable influence on methodology as well. Because system and method were so closely related in this project, the following results outlining the successes and pitfalls of the implementation of SBG include both aspects.

Successes

After executing this system with all of my classes this past school year, I experienced many successes. First, the visual layout of my syllabus proved to be very effective as parents and students had few questions regarding the new system. In addition, SBG forced me to be extremely organized. In order to create the SBG chart where students would input their grades throughout the quarter, I was obliged to engage in backwards planning. In other words, at the beginning of each quarter, I had to decide what standards and skills students were to master by the end of the grading term and then decide what activities and assessments they would execute to demonstrate mastery. Giving the students this opportunity to process in advance what specific skills and activities they would be expected to master by the end of the grading term made them more feel more at ease and less daunted by the overwhelming challenges of a world language class. . Also, I felt that the visual aspect of the SBG chart and the idea behind the system helped to independently motivate the students to improve their own grades Every day as they collected their grading sheets upon entering the classroom, they could visually see their successes and shortcomings. Because the system is manufactured in such a way that allows students second chances for reassessment to improve their grade, it caters to an environment where students feel as if they have more control over their learning and grade outcome.

Concerning the successes of SBG, the most valuable thing that I observed were more struggling students achieving at a higher level than in the past. SBG seemed to enable me to successfully steer a larger population of the students through a greater amount of rigorous material. With my Level V class for example, which was 7 students larger than last school year, I was able cover an extra unit by the end of Semester I at a much deeper level both orally and written. Unfortunately, it is impossible for me to provide any sort of valid, quantified data at this point to truly back up the effectiveness SBG. The only thing that can really be done is to compare the norm-referenced grades from the past to the standards-based grades of 2012-13. The issue here is that the new SBG grades have all been automatically converted to percentages and averaged out through a grading system called Power School and therefore, are not true to a criterion-referenced SBG system. To give one a little sampling of the data I retrieved from Power School, during the 2011-12 school year, 32% of my students in French Level V earned Cs, Ds or Fs for Semester I when I did not use Standards-based Grading. During the 2012-13 school year, only 15% of students in French Level V (who are featured in the video) earned C, Ds or Fs for Semester I after SBG was fully implemented. Looking at this information, one could hypothesize that SBG may be a beneficial system for struggling L2 learners and would be an interesting topic to investigate further in the future.

Pitfalls

After researching Standards-based Grading and interviewing teachers that already have implemented a form of this system into their classroom, I realized that idea of reassessment could be a potentially daunting feat. Having an average of 20 students per class this year and six classes, I was truly worried about the number of kids wanting to execute retakes and the amount

of time it would take to grade these extra assessments. To avoid much of the organizational stress, I came up with a system where the retakes would be in folders classified by class level. When students found a moment of free time in their schedules, they could come in and find the appropriate retake assessment in the folder and then return it to another folder labeled retake corrections. The main difficulty that I encountered was the procrastination that some students adopted during a nine-week quarter. It seemed that the first five or six weeks of a grading term were always relatively manageable. However, in the seventh through ninth weeks, students all of a sudden started flocking in to reassess in hopes of raising their quarter grades. It became particularly distressing when the reassessments pertained to oral or listening assessments that had to be individually proctored by the teacher not to mention all of the time it took to grade all of the retakes.

In addition, being that this was the first year of implementation, I was a little more flexible than normal. Within this flexibility, I decided to drop one assessment item from each category skill on the SBG grading chart in order to accommodate students who were absent or to cure the *I'm having a bad day* grade excuse. The issue with this was that we didn't always have time to execute all of the assessment items in a specific category. In fact, sometimes there would only be two grades demonstrating mastery in a skill area. Throwing out one of those grades would only leave one assessment to prove mastery in that category. This is not respecting the pure nature of a true standards-based grading system where several assessment items are used to determine one's mastery level in a specific skill area. Next year, to avoid this issue, students will only be allowed to eliminate one assessment item in categories that contain three or more grades.

The last area of difficulty in using this system was the time-consuming effort of updating individual SBG cards, especially for absent students. Even though students are responsible for

making sure that they update their own cards as assessments are handed back each day, there are always those students who forget or they record an assessment in the wrong category. Additionally, extra time must be taken to record scores for students who are absent. This year, I went through each individual student grading card twice per quarter to make sure that all the information was accurately recorded to avoid any miscommunication in grades. Unfortunately, this was an extremely tedious process.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

As the demands for a higher accountability in our current education system continue to grow, more attention is being given to Standards-based Grading. It is a system that will eventually allow teachers, parents, administrators and government officials to quickly gain quantitative insight concerning student progress in the attainment of specific skills areas. Although not formally recognized as Standards-based Grading, a skills-based form of grading and assessment has existed for years at the primary level of education. It has only been in the last 15 years that secondary schools have begun to consider and adopt SBG. Considering the future exigencies in education and in hopes of successfully paving the way for my fellow colleagues and other future educators, the purpose of this project was to research, create and implement a standards-based grading system that is both effective and functional at the secondary level.

Considering all of the successes and pitfalls that I have encountered while researching, creating and implementing the Standards-based Grading system in my classroom this past year, I feel that in general, SBG provides students, teachers and administrators with a plethora of pertinent information and plays a key role in increasing student motivation and success. It will be interesting to see how the changes I plan on implementing next year to this system will affect learning and achievement in the future. After executing this project, I feel confident that I have begun to prepare my students and myself for the intense demands that will be required of everyone in the future of education.

Professional Dissemination

Before beginning the videotaping process, I distributed a video release form (see Appendix G) to all of my students enrolled in my Level 5 French class. By signing this form, parents of these students granted their permission for the University of Whitewater and me to use the video for educational purposes only. This includes conference presentations, educational presentations, instructor multi-media portfolios and supported educational websites. Therefore, the material presented in the video can and will never be used for commercial gains. I do plan on using this footage to conduct a session concerning Standards-based Grading at our annual Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers (WAFLT) conference in the future. Additionally, I have already shared this material with my own staff and administrators at my current high school, which they plan on using in some way next school year. Finally, I hope that the undergraduate education majors enrolled at the University of Whitewater will be able to view the SBG video and take advantage of the material offered within it.

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Appendix A
Sample of curricular mapping for French Level III – Unit 1

TOPICS TO MASTER During this unit, the student should be able to…	Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for World Languages	Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards	Activities to Demonstrate Topic Mastery	Final Grade in Topic Area	FINAL OVERALL GRADE
Speak French during all daily classroom activities. Power School: Speaking French in Class	**Interpersonal: Conversation** Beginning (Receptive-Imitative) and Developing (Imitative-Reflective) Standards A.1-A.5	**Interpersonal (Speaking and Listening)** Interpersonal Communication (Standard 1.1) Cultures: Practices and Perspectives (Standard 2.1) Connections: Acquiring New Information (Standard 3.2) Comparisons: Language (Standard 4.1) Communities: Lifelong Learning (Standard 5.2)	Students must speak French AT ALL TIMES during class unless special permission has been granted. The three strikes and you're out methodology will be implemented. On the third strike, a student will lose his 1 language point for the day and can only be earned back during the next class period.		
Comprehend and use newly presented vocabulary in French to communicate ideas about the culture, traveling, food, vacation, ordering at a restaurant and summer activities. WRITING/READING Power School: Vocabulary Unit 1– Writing and reading	**Interpretive: Listening and Reading** Beginning and Developing Standards B.3, B.4, B.5 **Presentational: Speaking and Writing** Beginning and Developing Standard C.5 **Culture: Practices** Beginning and Developing Standards D.3 and D.4 **Culture: Products** Beginning and Developing Standards E.1, E.2, E.3, E.4 **Connections – Across Disciplines** Standard F.1 **Comparisons** Standards H.1, H.3, H.4 **Culture** Standards I.1, I.2 I.3	**Interpretive (Reading)** Comparisons: cultures (Standard 4.2) Interpretive Communication (Standard 1.2) **Presentational (Writing)** Presentational Communication (Standard 1.3) Cultures: Practices and Perspectives (Standard 2.1) Cultures: Products and Perspectives (Standard 2.2)	A. Read the story *Les Aventures de Pierre le Petit et Guy le Grand* to extract information in order to accurately fill out a travel journal. (Journals will be collected) B. For each of the menu items listed below, tell whether each is an appetizer, main dish, dessert a cheese or a drink. C. Choose the appropriate vocabulary word from the list below and write its letter underneath each picture or French description. D. Match each dish or description with the region it's associated with. E. Accurately fill an application to receive a passport in French.		

Appendix B

Introduction - 2012-2013 Syllabus for French Levels III, IV and V

FRANÇAIS III, IV, V **FALL 2012**

Madame Larson-Reyes

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Bienvenue à la classe de français! As many of you already may know, Wisconsin has formally adopted the Common Core Academic State Standards as Wisconsin's standards in 2010. Currently, the Common Core Standards have been formally written up for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Literacy in All Content Areas. In order to keep up with this trend and future permanent change in education, I have realigned my entire French III, IV, and V curriculum to meet the rigorous challenges mapped out by the Common Core State Standards for Learning Languages. Along with these changes, I have also chosen to adopt the Standards-based Assessment form of grading in order to better measure my students' progress toward the attainment of the standards. In this syllabus, I will lay out the key points that you will need in order to better understand what is expected of your child and how he/she will be assessed.

What is Standards-based Assessment (SBA)?

A. Grades are based on the results of multiple experiences over time.
B. Grades are NOT based on averages. Good scores can't make up for bad scores.
C. SBA indicates if the student has mastered the standard (and topic)
D. SBA clearly communicates expectations ahead of time.
E. Is ongoing and allows students "second chances" to demonstrate mastery
F. Encourages long-term retention of the material.

In normal Standards-based Assessment, students would be graded on a 0-4 scale rather than A-F scale. Since Badger High School must still base their scores on percentages in Power School, the grades must be translated from the Standards-based Assessment codes that you see below on the left-hand column to the percentage grade on the right-hand column.

Students will be evaluated on each standards-based skill using a rubric similar to this one.

Students will see one of these bold printed codes marked on their papers when handed back	**Parents and students will see these percentages in Power School.**
Advanced Proficient (AP) =4.0 I know (can do) it well enough to make connections that weren't taught.	100% (PowerSchool)
3.5	95%
Proficient (P) = 3.0 I know (can do) everything that was taught without making mistakes.	90 % (PowerSchool)
2.5	80%
Basic (B) = 2.0 I know (can do) all the easy parts, but I don't know (can't do) the harder parts.	70 % (PowerSchool)
1.5	65%

Appendix C

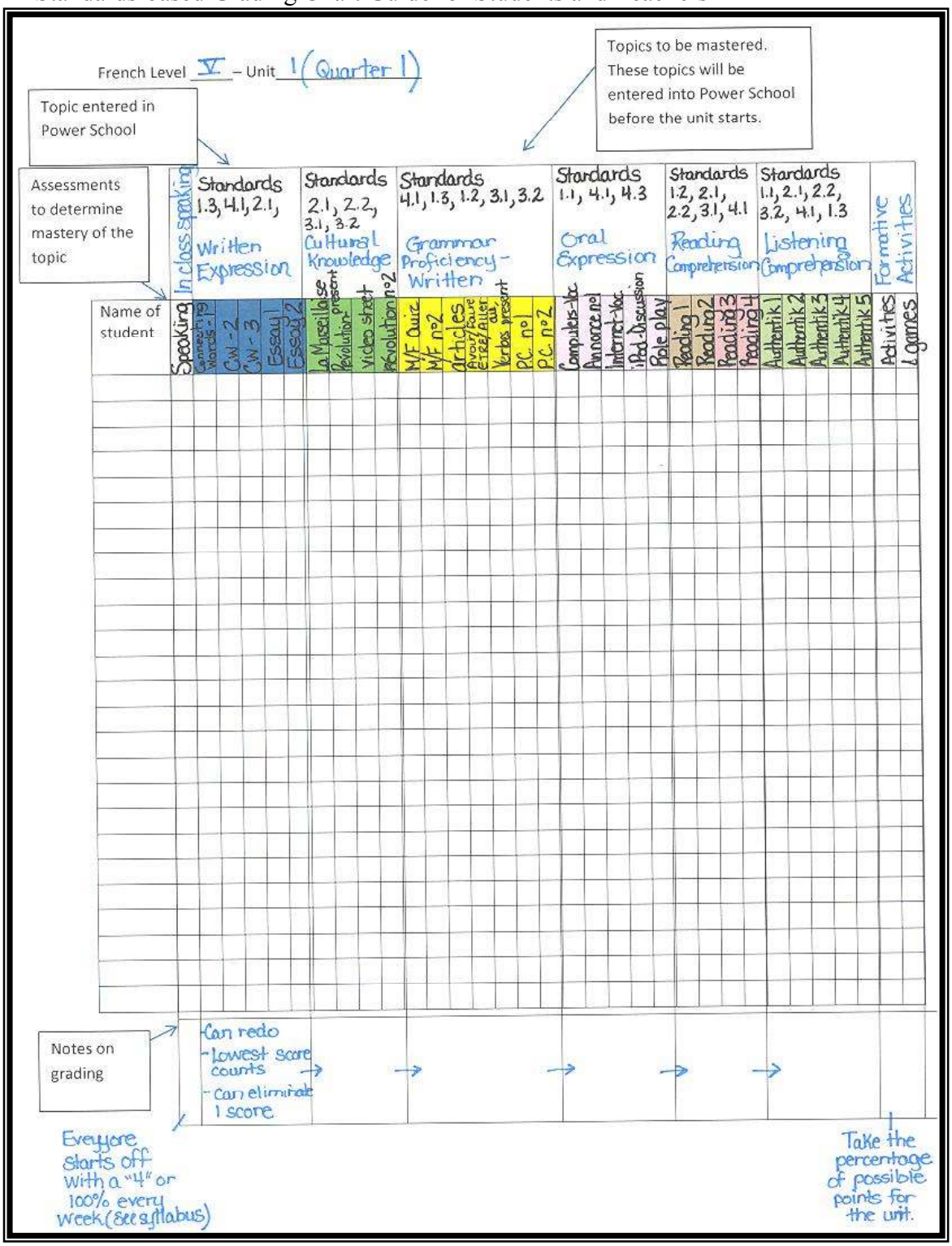
Standards-based Grading Chart and Power School Grade Translation

Students will see one of these bold printed codes marked on their papers when handed back	**Parents and students will see these percentages in Power School.**
Advanced Proficient (AP) =4.0 I know (can do) it well enough to make connections that weren't taught.	100% (Power School)
3.5	95%
Proficient (P) = 3.0 I know (can do) everything that was taught without making mistakes.	90 % (Power School) 80%
2.5	
Basic (B) = 2.0 I know (can do) all the easy parts, but I don't know (can't do) the harder parts.	70 % (Power School)
1.5	65%
Below Basic (BB) = 1.0 With help, I know (can do) some of what was taught.	60% (Power School)
Unsatisfactory (U) = Below 1.0 I don't know (can't do) any of it.	50% (Power School)

Marzano, 2006

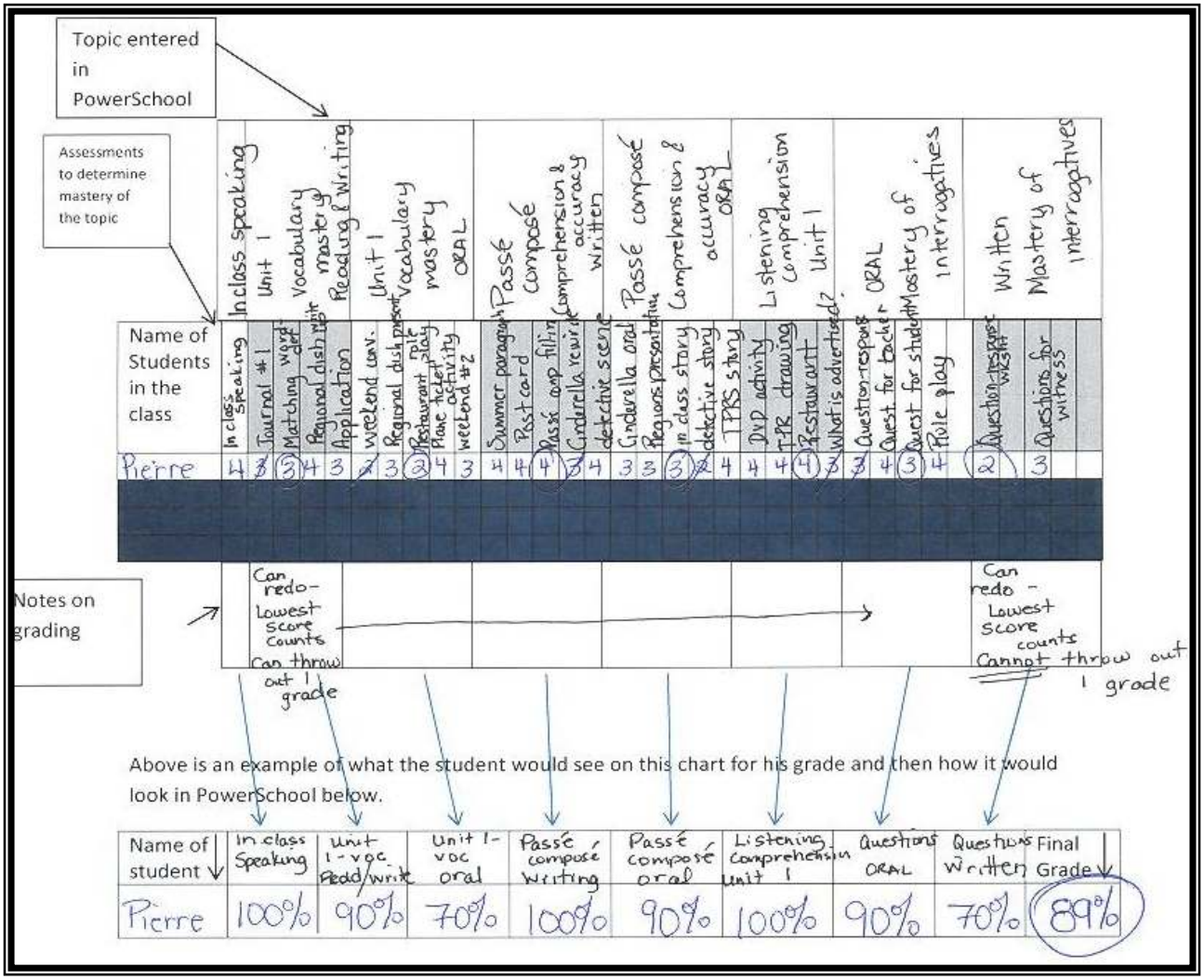
Appendix D

Standards-based Grading Chart Guide for Students and Teachers



Appendix E

Sample Grading Chart in SBG Form and Power School Form



Appendix F

Sample Student Chart used to record Formative Activity Points

POINTS DE PARTICIPATION POUR LES ACTIVITÉS ET LES JEUX

Jour	Petits Points	= Grands Points (1 pt ou ½ pt)
Jour n°1	𝍸 𝍸 II	= (+1)
Jour n°2	𝍸 I	= (+½)

Appendix G

Video Release Form

The final media project and/or interview may be used for the following purposes:

- Conference presentations
- Educational presentations
- Instructor Multi-Media Portfolio
- Informational presentations
- Posted on a supported educational website for the promotion of assigning student media projects.

The University will use my work in read-only form.

The University will credit any use of my work in the presentations listed above.

The University will provide that my work, in whole or in part, will not be used in a way which will change the original meaning of my work.

I will be consulted and have prior right of approval about the use of media project and/or interview for any purpose other than those listed above.

I agree that there is no geographic specification of where these materials may be presented.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As many of you already may know, Wisconsin has formally adopted the Common Core Academic State Standards as Wisconsin's standards in 2010. Currently, the Common Core Standards have been formally written up for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Literacy in All Content Areas. In order to keep up with this trend and future permanent change, I have realigned my entire French III, IV and V curriculum to meet the rigorous challenges mapped out by the Common Core State Standards for Learning Languages. Additionally, to complete my master's program at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater this semester, I must videotape a series of my own classroom activities that effectively demonstrate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the usage of Standards-based Grading. Upon approval, my advisor would like to use this video to help future undergraduate education majors at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater better comprehend this new state initiative. To complete this project, I would like to use video footage and interviews from your son/daughter's French V class with your permission. Please read the information on the other side of this page and sign the video release form if you agree to the terms and conditions of this project. Your support and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.
Merci beaucoup.

Rebecca Larson-Reyes

Your signature below indicates that you grant permission for Rebecca Larson-Reyes and the University of Whitewater to use footage/interviews of your son/daughter for educational purposes only.

Parent/Guardian signature:_____
Date: _____

Appendix H

Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards Performance Expectations

http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning_CCSS_Language_Standards_v6.pdf

The *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* contains four strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. These four strands are represented in the National Standards for Learning Languages by the Communication standards (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and the level of proficiency demonstrated. In addition, the standards of the other four goals areas for learning languages – Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities – also support and are aligned with the Common Core. These standards describe the expectations to ensure all students are college-, career-, and world-ready.

The Common Core strands of **Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening** are captured in the standards for learning languages' goal area of **Communication**, by emphasizing the purpose behind the communication:
- Interpersonal (speaking + listening or writing + reading)
- Interpretive (reading, listening, viewing)
- Presentational (writing, speaking, visually representing)

In the description of reading in the Common Core document, the use of both literary and informational texts is suggested. This same balance is identified in the *Standards for Learning Languages*.

In the description of writing in the Common Core document, a balance of writing to explain, to persuade, and to convey experience is suggested. These same purposes for writing are identified in the *Standards for Learning Languages*.

The Common Core strand of **Language** is described for language learners through **proficiency levels** that outline three key benchmarks achieved in world language programs given sufficient instruction over time:
-Novice (the beginning level, regardless of age or grade)
-Intermediate
-Advanced
Many factors influence the rate of progress through these three proficiency levels and the level learners acquire by the end of high school. Chief among those factors are time and the degree of immersion in the second language. Students who begin study of a language in middle school or high school generally acquire an intermediate level of proficiency.

Appendix I

http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_ccss

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards Implementation (CCSSI) team creates and organizes the educator resources to ensure world class, innovative, digitally rich, standards-based teaching and learning. **We communicate, create, and curate CCSS resources**.

Wisconsin adopted the Common Core State Standards as Wisconsin's mathematics and English language arts standards in 2010. Teachers, content experts, parents, and community leaders all weighed in to help create the Common Core State Standards for **English Language Arts**, **Mathematics**, and **Literacy in All Subjects**, and these standards have been **adopted by over 45 states**.

Wisconsin is also participating in a multi-state project to develop new common standards for **science**. Led by the **National Research Council**, a framework was developed to guide the writing of science standards. Achieve, Inc., is leading the development of **Next Generation Science Standards** based on this framework. Expect a final draft version in Spring of 2013.

Wisconsin Assessment System

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, Wisconsin's state assessment will be based on the CCSS. Wisconsin is a governing state within the multi-state consortium called the **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium** (SMARTER). Through **SMARTER**, a common state summative assessment will be created and will replace the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam. Wisconsin is also interested in **adopting a college entrance exam** as part of a balanced assessment system.

In addition to SMARTER, Wisconsin is involved in developing both new alternate achievement standards and a new alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Dynamic Learning Maps is charged with developing new alternate achievement standards, called **Common Core Essential Elements (CCEEs)**, which are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. A new assessment will be developed to align with these standards.

Implications for State Assessment:

• State assessments are based on state standards. As we transition to the Next Generation Assessment System announced last fall, DPI will develop an assessment system built around the Common Core so that standards and assessment are wholly aligned to one another.

• Wisconsin is a governing state within the 31-state consortium called the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The SBAC was formed in response to the Race to the Top assessment grant application, which called for the development of a next generation assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The guiding principles of SBAC mirror the recommendations of Wisconsin's Next Generation Assessment Task Force report (www.dpi.wi.gov/oea/ngatf.html).

Appendix J

HTTP://GET2CORE.ORG

WE LIVE IN A **DIFFERENT WORLD...**

Globally connected, technologically driven, fast paced-- and yet as a country, we haven't changed what our kids are studying or how they think in over thirty years, while other countries around the world have modernized their approach to education. It's time to ensure our kids have the skills they need to compete and thrive after graduating.

The Common Core State Standards are designed to ensure **real understanding**. The materials are designed to go deeper into fewer topics, so kids master the material instead of memorizing. At the same time, the learning is more hands-on with a focus on what students will use in life.

Chances are that your child hasn't been given a fair shot at success with your state's current standards. In fact, the data shows that only 25% of students leave high school ready for college-level work. Common Core ensures that no matter where they are in the country, your child will have access to high-quality standards that set them up to succeed beyond high school.

Appendix K

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages

http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/standards/pdf/fl.pdf

Foreword

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Foreign Languages were first published in 1997. They have changed local curriculum design and classroom instruction. Our work with the foreign language community has led to this first revision. The content standards remain unchanged, but we move from the original description of performance standards for elementary, middle, and high school students to a "four-step-model": beginning, developing, transitioning, and refining. These standards still describe what is possible to achieve in a K-12 program of foreign language instruction. Only when students begin to learn a foreign language in elementary grades will they be able to achieve the "refining" level of these standards. However, because at the beginning of the 21st century very few students in Wisconsin study foreign languages at the elementary level, describing four levels of performance will help districts set their own appropriate targets for a sequential program, whether it begins in elementary grades, middle school, or senior high. The most critical factor in developing higher levels of proficiency in a second language is time. These four levels describe what students can do in a second language when they begin in elementary school.

Effective schools research tells us that one of the most important elements in improving the results of education is being clear about standards. Having clear standards for students and teachers makes it possible to develop rigorous local curricula and valid and reliable assessments. The data from such assessments tells us where we need to place our emphasis as we improve teaching and learning. Being sure the entire community has input into academic standards is essential if everyone is to have ownership in the education of our students. We are proud that we have developed challenging academic standards not only in areas traditionally associated with large-scale state and district assessment, but also in subjects where assessment takes place primarily in the classroom.
We believe that these standards will continue to assist parents and educators in preparing students for the challenges of modern society. Although Wisconsin has traditionally led the nation in educational excellence, clear statements about what students should know and be able to do are necessary to maintain this strong tradition. My thanks to those of you in all walks of life who have contributed to this important effort and who are now implementing these standards in Wisconsin's schools.

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

Appendix L

Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Foreign Language

http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/standards/pdf/fl.pdf

Appendix M

ALIGNMENT OF THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES WITH THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

http://www.actfl.org/news/reports/alignment-the-national-standards-learning-languages-the-common-core-state-standards