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#### The Transition to Standards-Based Grading

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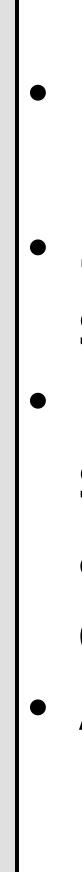
# THE TRANSITION TO STANDARDS-BASED GRADING **John Blumenreich and Leah Nillas\*** Educational Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

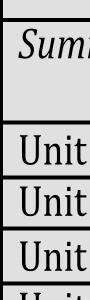
#### **Research Questions**

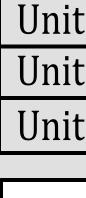
- What are the benefits of using standards-based grading? How do I integrate standards-based grading into a mathematics classroom?
- Standards-Based Grading is a method of assessing students by determining different levels of achievement (Marzano, 2010).

#### Literature Review

- Standards-based grading allows teachers to focus on what learning objectives students are struggling with (Iamarino, 2014).
- Giving students second chances to demonstrate their understanding of particular concepts can help them achieve subject mastery (Deddeh, Main, & Fulkerson, 2010).
- Using proficiency scales provides students with immediate feedback on what standards they are and are not meeting (Marzano & Heflebower, 2011).
- Assessing students using standards-based grading can help teachers develop and use new and innovative assessment strategies (Scriffiny, 2008).













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## Methodology

Participants were 46 honors precalculus and 38 relearn geometry students in a high school. Standards-based grading was used to assess students throughout the semester.

Data sources collected include students' graded summative assessments, a general grading rubric, and students' survey results on standards-based grading.

• A theoretical framework was used to examine standards-based grading, a new method of assessment.

Table 1: Average Scores on Honors Precalculus Summative Assessments				
nmative Assessment	2 <sup>nd</sup> Period	5 <sup>th</sup> Period	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Periods	
	(21 students)	(25 students)	(46 students)	
it 1 (Matrices)	13.10/15.00	12.60/15.00	12.85/15.00	
it 2 (Vectors)	12.79/15.00	12.29/15.00	12.54/15.00	
it 3 (Sequences and Series)	12.12/15.00	12.06/15.00	12.09/15.00	
it 4 (Ellipses and Circles)	12.01/15.00	12.00/15.00	12.01/15.00	
it 5 (Hyperbolas and Parabolas)	12.46/15.00	11.92/15.00	12.19/15.00	

**Table 1**: Students' average summative assessment scores demonstrate high levels of understanding.

Fable 2: Initial and Post-Reactions on Standards-Based Grading   Precalculus Students   Initial Reaction   Post-Reaction	g fron
Initial Reaction Post-Reaction	
ent 1	ds-ba
me receive partial credit." because it tells me w	vhat I
what I need to retak	e!"
ent 2 "I think it's alright." "I am getting more u	sed to
ent 3 "I really don't know if I'll like it or "It was nice to see w	hat th
not." and what I didn't kn	ow."
ent 4 "I don't have an opinion on it." "I like it because I kr	low I
study until the retak	es."
ent 5 "I think I'll like this grading "It helped me know	what
system." retake to get a bette	r grad

**Table 2**: Students' responses to standards-based grading became more positive by the end of the semester.

m 5 Honors

ased grading know and

to it." hings I knew

don't need to

I needed to de."

**Results and Data Analysis** Quantitative data listed in Table 1 is consistent with Clymer and Wiliam's (2006) research which suggests that students being assessed under a standards-based grading system demonstrate deeper understanding of different learning objectives. The data from Table 2 suggests that students became comfortable with

and favored standards-based grading after one semester.

 Triangulation of content-analyzed data demonstrates the usefulness of standards-based grading in classroom assessment.

• Iamarino (2014) argues that standards-based grading focuses on comprehension and quality of work versus points-based grading.

## Conclusion

- Findings suggest several benefits to standards-based grading and different ways to go about implementing this grading system into the classroom.
- Standards-based grading positively impacts the way students demonstrate their levels of understanding.
- Future research is needed in other classes of all disciplines to further support the findings of this study.

