

Taking Back the Story of Our Students: Alternative Assessment In the Age of the Common Core

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**What aspect of our student's stories do we author and communicate?
How do we choose to tell these stories? How can we empower students to own and communicate their own stories?**

- What is the difference between evaluating a skill and evaluating knowledge?
- What is the purpose of assessment? For students? For teachers? For parents?

Grounding Philosophies of Mastery Based Grading:

- Instead of receiving only one grade for an entire class, each student is given a rating for each skill in that class.
- Work habits are actually skills that can be assessed and revisited time and again. (Semester, year-long, or beyond the school year)
- Having the same "outcomes" and shared outcomes across multiple assignments, over time, allows for revisiting. This is, at least, closer to real learning. You sometimes need more time, or another opportunity before you "get it".
- Students and parents can see exactly what it is they need to work on.
- Grades are no longer a mystery. We no longer have to ask ourselves "why is it an 'A'? Because she is good at division? Because she turns her work in on time?

Good To Know:

- **Mastery** is often called **Standards Based or Competency Based**...they're all the same thing!

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- For our presentation and related materials visit Christy's website.

www.christykingham.com/outcomes--mastery-based-grading.html

Excerpt From Our First Inspiration:

“Removing Structural Barriers to Academic Achievement in High Schools: An Innovative Model.”

Abstract:

A significant number of students in urban high schools demonstrate chronic patterns of academic underperformance, leading to dropout rates of 30% and higher. Attempts to increase graduation rates and improve high school outcomes through changes in curriculum, instruction, and support programs have had limited impact. This paper addresses dropout as a structural problem, rooted in the traditional mechanisms for determining final grades and awarding course credit, and argues that these structural mechanisms virtually assure some percentage of student failure and impede the ability of struggling students to get back on track toward graduation. An alternative model of school-wide student evaluation is presented that successfully addresses the issue of differential learning rates within the regular structure of high school marking periods.

-From “Removing Structural Barriers to Academic Achievement in High Schools: An Innovative Model.” Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting by Camille A. Farrington and Margaret H. Small. (Linked on www.christykingham.com/teachers)

Helpful and Interesting Links:

- **Presentation:** For our presentation and related materials visit Christy’s website. We have links to the common core alignment, philosophy and more: www.christykingham.com/outcomes--mastery-based-grading.html
- **Jumprope Grading System:** www.jumpro.pe
- **Competency Works:** Draws on lessons from early adopters and experts in the field of mastery based education: www.competencyworks.org
- Edutopia Article on standards based grading: <http://www.edutopia.org/stw-college-career-stem-assessment>
- **NY Times Article:**
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/weekinreview/28tyre.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- **ASCD Article:**
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Seven_Reasons_for_Standards-Based_Grading.aspx

Mastery Based Grading: An Overview of Outcomes
The Young Women's Leadership School, Astoria

Instead of receiving only one grade for an entire class, each student is given a rating for each **skill** in that class. Outcomes are *year or semester long*.

Outcome is another word for skills that are worked on in each class. (See examples below)

Within an outcome, students either Meet Standards (MS), Exceed Standards (ES) or are “Not Yet” Meeting Standards (NY)

- **MS** means a student is performing this skill at grade level.
- **ES** means this student's work is consistently above grade level.
- **NY** means students haven't shown they can perform this task consistently, YET. They will have opportunities to work on these skills in the future.

Why Use Outcomes?

1. Teachers, students and parents can see exactly what it is they do well and what they need to work on.
2. Grades are no longer a mystery. We no longer have to ask ourselves "why is it an 'A?' Because she's good at division? Because she turns her work in on time?"

Our most recent iteration of Outcomes: We use Shared Outcomes that integrate “21st century skills”. In the next few years, we are looking forward to unifying our outcomes across the school. Last year, all Humanities 6-12 teachers used the same outcomes and all other teachers infused the language of the shared outcomes into their outcomes at the very least.

Shared Outcomes, 2013-2015
**Common Core Aligned*

Discern

- View, read, and listen with focused attention to what matters.

Conclude

- Infer meanings, analyze information and develop valid ideas based on evidence and analysis.

Communicate

- Make ideas and information understood, mindful of audience, purpose, and setting.

Argue

- Build a case for and defend conclusions reached, based in sound logic and valid evidence.

Be precise

- Accurately represent solutions, ideas, and language.

Collaborate

- Work effectively with others to achieve common goals.

Plan

- Make deliberate plans, reflect, and persevere in order to achieve goals.

Create

- Produce or develop a product for expression.

Innovate

- Develop new and helpful ways of looking at opportunities, challenges, and problems.

Investigate

- Ask and refine a researchable question, design a valid experiment or inquiry and gather appropriate info to complete the inquiry.

What's My Lens? This I Believe

Due By Friday, October 17th

This fall, you have been investigating your lens- now it's time to consider your beliefs. What do you believe? Why? What experiences and understandings have led you to those beliefs? We are all going to begin the unit together and then you will be working asynchronously (not all at the same place at the same time). In the end, each of you will submit our essays to NPR.org! MOST of the work will be done in school. Your homework is to continue reading and tracking your pages on goodreads.com. I'll let you know when it's time for another commentary!

To be successful, you will need to complete the following tasks...this is a suggested order. Your process is YOUR process!

- ✓ TASK 1: Visit my website This I Believe page for materials (in the 11th grade ELA section)
- ✓ TASK 2: Read This I Believe essays (many!) to get a feel for the possibilities
- ✓ TASK 3: Review The format of This I Believe
- ✓ TASK 4: Complete at least ONE brainstorm from my website
- ✓ TASK 5: Write at least ONE draft
- ✓ TASK 6: Participate in a peer review session (how to on the website!)
- ✓ TASK 7: Practice other revision and editing techniques on my website

TO PUBLISH: : Complete your final *This I Believe* by October 15th and do these tasks:

- ✓ TASK 8: Share it with me on google docs: ckingham@Me.com
- ✓ TASK 9: Staple all brainstorms, drafts, peer revisions and any evidence of your process to a final draft and rubric and hand to me on October 15th
- ✓ TASK 10: Put a link to your work on your PORTFOLIO and write a reflection
- ✓ TASK 11: Submit your edited draft to NPR.org

HINTS:

1. **It's all about you** - Write about you and your thoughts. Tell us your story in the first person, and try to avoid sentences like "We feel this way."
2. **Keep it personal** - Don't try to use words or phrases you wouldn't normally say. Remember, if you wouldn't be comfortable saying the words out loud, it is too formal.
3. **Timing is everything** - Make sure that you read your finished essay out loud. It shouldn't be more than three minutes long (500 words!) when read at a normal speaking rate.
4. **Say what you do believe**, not what you don't - Write about what you think, but not at the expense of others. Keep the focus on you, and what you believe, not what you disagree with.
5. **Have fun!** How many times are you allowed to be 100% free with your choice of topic, and what you want to say about it? This is your chance to write about your personal philosophy of life, so don't be shy—let it out!

The rubric is on the next page!

This I Believe Rubric

Name: _____

Rubric:	NY	MS	ES
Create: Produce or develop a product for expression.		<p>Your work follows the structure and qualities of the genre</p> <p>___ You clearly state a personal philosophy and support this belief using your personal story.</p>	<p>Your work utilizes qualities of the genre to emotionally impact your audience</p> <p>___ You express a philosophy statement that leaves the reader thinking in a new way.</p>
Be Precise: Accurately represents solutions, ideas, and language.		<p>Any errors you make in grammar and mechanics do not take away from the reading of your essay.</p> <p>___ You may attempt to use sophisticated vocabulary to express yourself.</p> <p>___ You attempt to vary your sentence length and structure.</p>	<p>You have no noticeable errors in grammar and mechanics and appropriately use sophisticated vocabulary to express yourself.</p> <p>___ You successfully vary your sentence length and structure.</p>
Plan: Make deliberate plans, reflect, and persevere in order to achieve goals.		<p>Completes all elements of assignment on time. Observed work sessions and planning materials demonstrate an attempt to engage all elements of the assignment process.</p> <p>___ You provide evidence that you have used the writing process</p> <p>___ You used work period time effectively</p>	<p>Thoroughly completes all elements of assignment on time. Observed work sessions and planning materials demonstrate a thorough attempt to engage all elements of the assignment process.</p> <p>___ You used the writing process to develop and improve writing, which is clear in your evidence.</p> <p>-----Your revision phase includes mindful revisions based on feedback and self-reflection</p>

Sample Student Grade Book: Jumpro.pe

