

# Grading and Report Cards for Standards-Based Physical Education

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*Methods of grading have become more complicated—and more appropriate!*

Physical education teachers are confronted with a high-stakes, standards-based environment that has produced a grading and report card crisis. The development of content standards, greater access to information about student achievement, and an emphasis on self-directed learning styles have led to changes in the way students are taught and assessed. The shift towards authentic learning (i.e., learning that is relevant to students and the real world) and authentic assessment (i.e., an accurate determination of what students really know, can do, and value) raises questions about traditional grading practices. Traditional letter grading systems fail to provide specific information about learning targets, which is why authentic learning and assessment have begun to influence grading and reporting practices. We need to move away from traditional letter grading and begin to use a grading system that informs and truly assesses learning (O'Connor, 2002).

The purpose of this article is to explore the reality of grading and report cards within the context of standards-based physical education (SBPE). The article's specific objectives are to (1) identify standards for conducting quality assessments, (2) examine grading issues and concerns, (3) present guidelines for grading in SBPE programs, and (4) show examples of grading and reporting schemes that emphasize clear reference points (content standards and learning targets).

## Standards for Quality Assessments

In order to achieve excellence in education, school accountability models have been designed to transform high standards and expectations into rigorous assessments, such as on-demand, standardized achievement tests. The United States—particularly legislators, parents, and many educators—strongly believes that increased student learning, and therefore, school improvement, comes from frequent, intense, high-stakes testing. Although such tests provide important information for program and policy decision-making, they are limited in meeting the information needs of teachers and students at the classroom level (in this article, the term *classroom level* refers to the physical education setting).

Grades, progress reports, and report cards are related to assessment because each is usually derived from a variety of assessment scores. If teachers are responsive to the meaning of SBPE, quality assessments are a must. Teachers need to assess accurately and use assessment to benefit students, not merely to sort and grade students. Quality assessment practices are built on five dimensions (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2004):

1. *Clear Purpose.* Assessments should arise from, and be designed to serve, the specific information needs of intended users. Quality assessments serve appropriate, clearly articulated purposes. Why is the assessment being conducted? Is there a clear picture of who will use the results and how the results will be used? How do

the purposes of the assessment fit into the bigger plan for assessment over time?

**2. Clear Targets.** Assessments should arise from appropriate, clearly articulated achievement targets. Quality assessments are directed toward achievement expectations that are completely defined. Is there a clear picture of what is being measured? Are the learning targets stated and easy to find? Would teachers agree on what they mean? Are they appropriate? Do they represent the discipline and are they worth the instructional and assessment time devoted to them? Are they clearly connected to standards? Do they reflect a bigger plan across grade levels in a vertical curriculum?

**3. Sound Design.** Assessments should accurately reflect student achievement. Quality assessments are designed with purposes and learning targets in mind. The assessment should use an appropriate method, should sample student achievement to make appropriate inferences, and should avoid potential sources of bias that could distort results. Are the assessment methods best for the learning targets being assessed (balance between most accurate and practical)? Is the scoring guide (e.g., rubric, rating checklist) clear and does it cover the most important aspects of quality? Does the assessment gather enough information to generalize about the student's achievement of the target? Is there anything about the assessment or the way it is carried out that would not allow students to really demonstrate what they know and can do?

**4. Effective Communication.** The assessment results should be effectively communicated to their intended users. Quality assessments are planned to serve the needs of users. Can information from the assessment be managed and reported in ways that will satisfy users? Has communication been planned as part of the assessment? Is assessment information accurately recorded over time and appropriately combined for reporting? Will users understand the results and find them useful?

**5. Student Involvement.** Assessments should involve students in classroom-level self-assessment, record keeping, and communication. Does the assessment incorporate elements of student involvement? This could include how learning targets were explained to students; how descriptive feedback was provided to students; how students engaged in self-assessment, tracked their progress, and set goals; and how students communicated about their own learning.

These standards mean that the assessment contexts—intended users and uses (#1) and learning targets (#2)—are combined to help determine a proper assessment design (#3), from which the best mode of communication is derived (#4). It is expected that students are involved during all phases (#5). High-quality classroom assessment means that accurate information (i.e., clear purposes, clear targets, appropriate design) is effectively used to help students learn. To apply these standards, teachers must develop assessment literacy—the ability to determine what to assess (learning targets) and how to assess (methods)—and learn to match the proper method of assessment with the intended target.

## Grading Issues and Concerns

The nature of physical education creates a unique set of grading issues that must be resolved. The decisions are not easy and should not be taken lightly. Physical education teachers need to decide the basis for grading: which ingredients to use, how factors will be weighted, the degree of professional judgment, and the relative emphasis on mastery and progress. The relevance of these issues needs to be carefully examined when deriving grades in SBPE.

The criteria established within a system of assessment should communicate the following to students: (1) what the teacher values and believes is important for them to learn, (2) how students should focus their effort and attention, and (3) how the criteria will be combined and weighted to determine grades. Consider what is communicated to students and parents by the factors traditionally used to grade in physical education, which include some or all of the following:

- Attendance and punctuality
- Preparation for class (dressed out)
- Attitude
- Effort
- Participation
- Knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving
- Performance (skill)

What do factors like attendance and punctuality, being prepared for class, attitude, effort, and participation mean to students and parents? Although important for learning to occur, they are prerequisites, not learning targets. It is the student's responsibility to come to class, to be dressed appropriately, and to be ready to learn. If they can earn a passing or acceptable grade simply by showing up and not misbehaving, then that is what they are going to do. But if the only way they can earn a passing grade is by demonstrating certain knowledge and performance of the learning targets defined in the curriculum, then that is where they will more likely focus their efforts. Teachers should make sure that assessment criteria match what they want students to focus on. Note that attitude and effort, as used here, refer to professional judgments made by the teacher. These should not be misinterpreted as being the same as learning targets related to attitude, responsibility, and social behaviors that are explicitly defined in the curriculum (Kelly & Melograno, 2004).

Most grading systems have two components: (1) behaviors that will be evaluated (e.g., knowledge, performance, and attitudes or values) and (2) how each evaluated behavior will be weighted in calculating the final grade. In most physical education settings, the way in which skill, knowledge, and attitude are combined typically involves a differentiation of importance (i.e., weighting). Some skills or understanding may require more time to learn than others. These proportions of time should also be reflected in how each learning target is weighted when calculating the final grade. If a database is used to manage assessment data, it is relatively easy to include intended weights. The impact of weighting

Table 1. Effect of Weighting in Calculating Grades

|                   | Performance<br>(motor skills,<br>sports skills) | Knowledge<br>(rules, strategies,<br>concepts, principles) | Participation<br>(attendance, dressed<br>out, attitude, effort) | Grade    |
|-------------------|---|---|---|----------|
| <b>Scenario A</b> | <b>60%</b>                                      | <b>30%</b>  | <b>10%</b>  |          |
| Student 1         | 0/60  | 30/30   | 10/10   | 40% (F)  |
| Student 2         | 60/60   | 20/30   | 0/10  | 80% (B-) |
| <b>Scenario B</b> | <b>10%</b>                                      | <b>30%</b>  | <b>60%</b>  |          |
| Student 1         | 0/10  | 30/30   | 60/60   | 90% (A-) |
| Student 2         | 10/10   | 20/30   | 0/60  | 30% (F)  |
| <b>Scenario C</b> | <b>30%</b>                                      | <b>60%</b>  | <b>10%</b>  |          |
| Student 1         | 0/30  | 60/60   | 10/10   | 70% (C-) |
| Student 2         | 30/30   | 40/60   | 0/10  | 70% (C-) |
| <b>Scenario D</b> | <b>30%</b>                                      | <b>10%</b>  | <b>60%</b>  |          |
| Student 1         | 0/30  | 10/10   | 60/60   | 70% (C-) |
| Student 2         | 30/30   | 7/10  | 0/60  | 37% (F)  |
| <b>Scenario E</b> | <b>10%</b>                                      | <b>60%</b>  | <b>30%</b>  |          |
| Student 1         | 0/10  | 60/60   | 30/30   | 90% (A-) |
| Student 2         | 10/10   | 40/60   | 0/30  | 50% (F)  |

is illustrated in table 1. Although it may look like an extreme example, a comparison of two students across five weighting scenarios shows how grades can vary significantly depending on the weighting of performance, knowledge, and participation. It also reveals the critical connection that exists between the teacher's intent and how grades are actually calculated. A single letter grade does little to reflect or communicate this connection.

Another issue is how to decide how progress (relative measure; how much gain) and mastery (absolute measure; degree of final performance level defined by the curriculum) should be weighted in determining grades. In general, an emphasis on mastery favors higher-performing students, whereas an emphasis on progress favors lower-performing students. A focus on mastery tends to demotivate low-performing students because they do not believe they can reach the criteria. High-performing students may also lose motivation because they start with high grades, which might make them believe it is unnecessary to put forth any effort. Grading on progress is often based on the teacher's judgments about individual students and on how learning targets are set to match each student's needs and entry abilities.

The data in table 2 illustrate the progress-versus-mastery dilemma. Progress is the net change between entry and exit relative to the target. For example, for teamwork, George improved by 15 from entry (60) to exit (75). This represented 75 percent progress toward to target (80). For the volleyball set, George entered the unit having mastered one of five mastery components, and he was targeted to learn two additional components. He met this expectation for a total of

three components. George made 100 percent progress (two targeted, two learned), but finished at 60 percent mastery. Considering the other learning objectives (volleyball rules and teamwork), if George's grade were based on progress only, he would earn an A- If he were graded just on mastery, he would earn a B-.

The data for Jack, who has high entry scores, reveal the opposite profile. Note that mastery is defined as the level that all students are expected to achieve as prescribed in the curriculum. For high-performing students like Jack, an individual target or exit score may actually exceed mastery. For example, for volleyball rules, because Jack achieved mastery (80) at entry (80), a more challenging target was set. He would earn an F if graded only on progress and an A- if graded only on mastery. The final column illustrates the result of equally weighting progress and mastery.

The grading issues discussed—ingredients, weighting, teacher judgment, progress, and mastery—can greatly influence the grade obtained. A grade is a summative value that indicates how students did relative to an established set of criteria. Although a grade of A communicates that a student did well, and a grade of F indicates that a student did poorly, the actual grade does not communicate what was learned, how much progress was made, or what aspects need more work. The continued use of single letter or numerical grading systems makes it nearly impossible to know what is represented by the grade. Unfortunately, many schools continue to use grading schemes that fail to provide specific information about learning targets, while claiming a standards-based program of instruction and assessment. It should be clear

Table 2. Effect of Progress and Mastery in Calculating Grades

Student: George

| Objective        | Entry | Target | Exit | Mastery Criteria | % Progress | % Mastery | Average |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|------------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Volleyball set   | 1     | 2      | 3    | 5                | 100        | 60        | 80      |
| Volleyball rules | 50    | 80     | 85   | 80               | 100        | 100       | 100     |
| Teamwork         | 60    | 80     | 75   | 90               | 75         | 83        | 79      |
| Average          |       |        |      |                  | 92         | 81        | 86      |
| Letter grade     |       |        |      |                  | A-         | B-        | B       |

Student: Jack

| Objective        | Entry | Target | Exit | Mastery Criteria | % Progress | % Mastery | Average |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|------------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| Volleyball set   | 4     | 1      | 4    | 5                | 0          | 80        | 40      |
| Volleyball rules | 80    | 90     | 90   | 80               | 100        | 100       | 100     |
| Teamwork         | 75    | 95     | 90   | 90               | 75         | 100       | 88      |
| Average          |       |        |      |                  | 58         | 93        | 76      |
| Letter grade     |       |        |      |                  | F          | A-        | C       |

that single-letter grading is incompatible with the meaning of standards-based education.

### Guidelines for Grading in SBPE

In response to the standards-based education movement, instruction and assessment practices have undergone significant change in a relatively short period of time. Corresponding grading practices, however, have evolved more slowly. To avoid misuse and misinterpretation, grading and reporting systems should align with the standards that underlie the instruction and assessment philosophy and practices. The goal is to provide information that communicates the current status of achievement. The following practical guidelines for grading in SBPE, which support learning and encourage student success (O'Connor, 2002), can address this challenge:

1. *Relate grading procedures to standards.* Grading and standards must be directly aligned, and the contribution of each standard to the final grade must be direct. Standards, or some clustering or breakdown of standards—such as strands, benchmarks, performance indicators, or learning targets—should serve as the basis for grade determination. Methods of assessment (e.g., skill tests 50%, quizzes 20%, project 30%) should not be the basis for grading. It is difficult to directly emphasize each standard because the focus is normally on the method of assessment. Rather, the collective results of these methods should be used as achievement evidence for each standard or some clustering or breakdown of standards.

2. *Use criterion-referenced performance standards to determine grades.* The meaning of grades (letters or numbers) should come from clear descriptions of performance standards. Grades should be based on each student's achievement,

rather than on his or her achievement in comparison to other students. If students hit the target, they get the grade (i.e., no bell curve). Relative standards (i.e., norm-referencing) should not be used to distribute grades.

3. *Limit the factors included in grades to achievement.* Grades should be based on the achievement of the learning targets (i.e., demonstration of the knowledge and skill components of the standards). Attendance, dressing for class, effort, participation, attitude, and other learning and social behaviors should be reported separately, not included in the grade. This guideline is critical to physical education because traditional grading practices have typically included these behaviors. Thus, a distinction is made between *grading* variables (i.e., standards, performance indicators, and learning targets) and *reporting* variables (desirable learning and social behaviors). Learning behaviors might include listening attentively, following directions, dressing out, staying on task, and displaying effort. Social behaviors might include working cooperatively, demonstrating respect, accepting others' differences, and giving or receiving feedback appropriately.

4. *Sample student performance; do not include all scores in grades.* Teachers must understand that a variety of assessment strategies is needed, depending on whether their purpose is formative or summative. Formative assessments offer direction for improvement and adjustment during the instruction and learning process. Summative assessments provide information to make judgments about a student's achievement at the end of a period of instruction and learning. Feedback on a student's formative performance (e.g., initial attempts, drills, practice) and summative performance (e.g., final attempts, game play, projects) can be provided through the use

Figure 1. Progress Report for an Eighth-Grade Physical Education Student

| Student Name                  | Teacher     |             | Students in Class |            |            |                  |            | Report Date   |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| John Smith                    | Ed Physical |             | 24                |            |            |                  |            | 4/10/07       |                                     |
| Learning Targets              | Entry Level | Target Exit | Actual Exit       | Net Change | Target Met | Mastery Criteria | % Mastered | Class Average | Teacher Comments                    |
| Abdominal Strength            | 25          | 35          | 37                | 12         | Yes        | 40               | 93         | 31.25         | Good progress – maintain program    |
| Leg Strength                  | 23          | 30          | 32                | 9          | Yes        | 30               | 100        | 25.50         | Excellent                           |
| Cardio-Respiratory Endurance* | 629         | 607         | 548               | 81         | Yes        | 600              | 100        | 713.45        | Excellent                           |
| Forehand Stroke               | 8           | 13          | 16                | 8          | Yes        | 15               | 100        | 14.66         | Excellent                           |
| Backhand Stroke               | 6           | 12          | 12                | 6          | Yes        | 15               | 80         | 14.41         | Focus on racket preparation         |
| Tennis Serve                  | 4           | 10          | 9                 | 5          | No         | 15               | 60         | 13.12         | Focus on ball toss and slowing down |
| Knowledge/Rules Test          | 61          | 85          | 100               | 39         | Yes        | 85               | 100        | 87.04         | Excellent                           |
| Cooperative Behavior          | 12          | 16          | 16                | 4          | Yes        | 20               | 80         | 16.53         | Good improvement                    |
| Tennis Etiquette              | 8           | 18          | 20                | 12         | Yes        | 20               | 100        | 17.65         | Excellent                           |

\*Achievement based on lower score (seconds)

Adapted from Kelly & Melograno (2004)

of appropriate rubrics, rating scales, and checklists. Although sustained, student-involved, formative assessment is essential for learning, information only from varied summative assessments should be used to determine grades.

5. *Keep records so they can be changed and updated easily.* Learning is an ongoing process. What matters is how much learning occurs, not when it occurs. Students learn at different rates and may not perform at their real level in a set time, or on one method of assessment. The most consistent level of achievement should be used, with special consideration for more recent evidence. Provide several assessment opportunities by varying the method and number.

6. *Crunch numbers carefully—if at all.* Grading should be an exercise in professional judgment, not the widely accepted practice of simply averaging a set of scores. Physical educators should analyze the “body of evidence” and determine, not just calculate, grades. Avoid using the mean; consider using the median or mode. Extreme scores, particularly a zero, have a profound effect on averaging. The mean may not provide an accurate description of what the student *really* knows and can do. Teachers should also consider weighting components carefully to achieve the intent of final grades.

The way in which achievement results are combined generally involves weighting of the different learning targets (see table 1) in order to reflect this intent.

7. *Use quality assessments and properly record evidence of achievement.* The standards for quality assessment presented before should be met. Evidence of achievement and behaviors should be accurately recorded and maintained (e.g., portfolios, database, tracking sheets, journals). Fortunately, technology offers practical solutions to the challenge of producing and managing student performance data.

8. *Discuss and involve students in assessment and grading.* Ensure that students understand how their grades will be determined. Involve students in the assessment process, in record keeping, and in communication about their achievement and progress. Student involvement in formative assessment increases the likelihood of student success.

These guidelines show that to be *truly* standards-based, teachers’ grading practices should (1) separate achievement from behavior, (2) exclude formative assessments, (3) emphasize more recent achievement, and (4) avoid the mean and the effect of zeros. Clearly, some radical changes in grading practices are needed if grading is to be aligned with standards.

Figure 2. Standards-based Report Card for Physical Education

**Physical Education Report Card—8th Grade**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating Scale for Achievement Standards**

4 EXCEEDS expectation of grade-level indicator    2 PROGRESSING toward expectation of grade-level indicator  
 3 MEETS expectation of grade-level indicator      1 LIMITED PROGRESS toward expectation of grade-level indicator  
 – Not assessed as this time

| Standard  | Performance Indicators  | Quarter |     |     |     |
|---|---|---------|-----|-----|-----|
|   |   | 1st     | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
| 1. Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities   | 1-1 Can participate with skill in a variety of activities.  |         |     |     |     |
|   | 1-2 Achieves mature forms in basic skills of specialized sports, dance, and gymnastics activities.  |         |     |     |     |
|   | 1-3 Demonstrates use of tactics within sport activities.  |         |     |     |     |
| 2. Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities. | 2-1 Identifies principles of practice and conditioning that enhance movement performance.   |         |     |     |     |
|   | 2-2 Understands and applies movement concepts/principles and game strategies, elements of movement skills, and characteristics of highly skilled performance. |         |     |     |     |
|   | 2-3 Knows when, why, and how to use strategies and tactics within a game.   |         |     |     |     |
|   | 2-4 Uses information from a variety of sources to guide and improve performance.  |         |     |     |     |
| 3. Participates regularly in physical activity.   | 3-1 Independently sets physical activity goals; participates in activities based on personal goals, interests, and results of fitness assessments.            |         |     |     |     |
|   | 3-2 Selects and uses practice procedures and training principles appropriate for the activity goals.  |         |     |     |     |
|   | 3-3 Participates regularly in moderate-to-vigorous physical activities in school and nonschool settings.  |         |     |     |     |

A major paradigm shift in the way teachers think about, plan for, and carry out grading procedures is overdue. Because of negative community reactions, attempts to remove grades from report cards have generally been unsuccessful, even though traditional, single-letter grades may be of questionable worth in standards-based education.

**Grading and Reporting Schemes**

Grading and reporting systems are needed that emphasize clear reference points, such as standards and learning targets. Student evaluation reports should directly communicate learning progress and status, recognizing that grades can be one value included in the report, if necessary. This would

|   |   |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| 4. Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.   | 4-1 Participates in moderate to vigorous physical activity on a regular basis without undue fatigue.                                      |  |  |  |  |
|   | 4-2 Engages in physical activities that address each component of health-related fitness.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | 4-3 Knows the components of fitness and how these relate to overall fitness status.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | 4-4 Monitors own heart rate, breathing rate, perceived exertion, and recovery rate during and following strenuous physical activity.      |  |  |  |  |
|   | 4-5 Assesses personal fitness status for each component; uses information to develop fitness goals.                                       |  |  |  |  |
|   | 4-6 Shows progress towards knowing various principles of training and how principles can be used.   |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings. | 5-1 Understands concept of physical activity as a microcosm of modern culture and society.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-2 Recognizes the role of physical activity in understanding diversity; includes and supports others, respecting group members.          |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-3 Moves from following rules, procedures, and positive forms of social interaction to reflecting on role in physical activity settings. |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-4 Has well-developed cooperation skills; can accomplish group/team goals in cooperative and competitive activities.                     |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-5 Seeks greater independence from adults.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-6 Makes appropriate decisions to resolve conflicts arising from powerful influence of peers.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | 5-7 Practices appropriate problem-solving techniques to resolve conflicts when necessary in competitive activities.                       |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.         | 6-1 Seeks physical activity experiences for group membership and positive social interaction.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | 6-2 Uses physical activities as a positive outlet for competition.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | 6-3 Increases self-confidence and self-esteem through enjoyment in physical activity participation.                                       |  |  |  |  |
|   | 6-4 Develops confidence toward independence through physical activities.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | 6-5 Is challenged by experiencing high levels of competition and in learning new or different activities.                                 |  |  |  |  |
|   | 6-6 Experiences greater awareness of feelings through self-expression provided by physical activities.                                    |  |  |  |  |

*Continues on page 52*

avoid the likely battle of eliminating the symbol of grades. A recommended practice is to supplement traditional grades with diagnostic reviews or progress reports such as the example in figure 1. The report should briefly reveal what content was taught (learning targets), though a more detailed description of the learning targets may be provided with the

report along with instructions for interpreting the report. The report should show the student's status before instruction (entry level), what the student was expected to learn (target exit), the student's performance after instruction (actual exit), how much progress was made (net change), whether expectations were met (target met), expected class-level per-

Figure 2. Standards-based Report Card for Physical Education (continued)

**Rating Scale for Learning and Social Behaviors**

+ Exemplary demonstration of behaviors

O Needs improvement/below expectation

P Demonstrate behaviors consistently

- Not assessed at this time

| Learning Behaviors                  | Quarter |     |     |     |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
|                                     | 1st     | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
| Works independently                 |         |     |     |     |
| Listens attentively                 |         |     |     |     |
| Follows directions                  |         |     |     |     |
| Stays on task                       |         |     |     |     |
| Is prepared (dressed)               |         |     |     |     |
| Completes tasks/assignments on time |         |     |     |     |
| Produces quality work               |         |     |     |     |
| Displays effort to learn            |         |     |     |     |
| Accepts responsibility for actions  |         |     |     |     |
| Follows class rules                 |         |     |     |     |
| Manages feelings                    |         |     |     |     |

| Grade for Achievement Standards |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| A                               | Outstanding; well exceeds achievement standards  |
| B                               | Good; above achievement standards                |
| C                               | Satisfactory; meets achievement standards        |
| D                               | Improving; below achievement standards           |
| F                               | Unsatisfactory; well below achievement standards |

| Social Behaviors                      | Quarter |     |     |     |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
|                                       | 1st     | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
| Works, plays, shares cooperatively    |         |     |     |     |
| Demonstrates self-control             |         |     |     |     |
| Demonstrates respectful behavior      |         |     |     |     |
| Accepts others' differences           |         |     |     |     |
| Gives/receives feedback appropriately |         |     |     |     |

| Subject            | Quarter |     |     |     |
|--------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
|                    | 1st     | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
| Physical Education |         |     |     |     |

| Comments     |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1st Quarter: | 3rd Quarter: |
| 2nd Quarter: | 4th Quarter: |

*Adapted from Melograno (2006); source for standards: National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2004)*

formance defined in the curriculum (mastery criteria), and how much was mastered (% mastered). On an individual student basis, target or exit scores for a particular learning outcome may actually exceed the mastery level expected across all students, as explained before in reference to table 2. If desirable, the student's progress could be compared to the class average or that of other state or national levels. The amount of data and the number of students in physical education should not limit the use of progress reports. The most practical way of producing such reports is to harness

technology for organizing and manipulating data. Most schools have database management programs available. Data could be recorded on a personal digital assistant (PDA) and periodically uploaded to the database. Students could also assume some responsibility for data entry and management (Kelly & Melograno, 2004).

In addition to progress reports, a more comprehensive approach is recommended that reflects standards-based education and the guidelines already identified. The sample report card in figure 2 is based on physical education content



**Table 3. Examples of Performance Outcomes Specific to the National Standards**

**Standard 1 (competency in motor skills and movement patterns)**

- Serves a volleyball overhand using mature form.
- Places the ball cross-court during a tennis rally (forehand and backhand).
- Designs and performs a dance routine.

**Standard 2 (understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics)**

- Designs a personal fitness program that reflects training principles.
- Corrects errors in golf swing based on performance results.
- Explains at least three offensive game strategies in soccer.

**Standard 3 (regular participation in physical activity)**

- Sets health-related physical activity goals through selected activities outside of school.
- Maintains a weekly physical activity log including progress toward goals.
- Accumulates number of target miles for a month as part of a personal running program.

**Standard 4 (health-enhancing level of physical fitness)**

- Participates in activities that apply principles of threshold, overload, and specificity.
- Meets age and gender standards for health-related fitness program.
- Achieves muscular endurance goals following a six-month weight-training program.

**Standard 5 (responsible personal and social behavior)**

- Accepts opponent's line calls during a competitive game of tennis.
- Spots others equally in gymnastics regardless of gender, race, ethnic, or ability differences.
- Contributes and remains on-task during an outdoor camping activity.

**Standard 6 (values physical activity)**

- Accepts new skills and activities as challenging.
- Encourages peers to participate in unfamiliar activities, regardless of ability.
- Seeks to improve skills through voluntary activities outside of class.

standards and eighth-grade performance indicators (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2004). Different scales are indicated for rating the achievement standards and for rating the learning and social behaviors. The report card could be customized by including a selected number of standards, indicators, and learning and social behaviors. Also, these elements may not be rated for each marking period, thus further reducing the magnitude of such reporting. If necessary, note that the report card can accommodate the need for a letter grade, but only for the achievement standards. The performance indicators should be rewritten in student-friendly language. They could also be substituted with learning targets or grade-level performance outcomes that are specific to the actual physical education content, such as the examples in table 3 (Melograno, 2006).

**Conclusion**

The development of standards-based physical education (SBPE) programs has followed the national trend. In response, instruction and assessment philosophy and practices have been aligned with content standards and learning targets. However, grading and reporting practices have not evolved accordingly. The standards for quality assessment identified earlier are the foundation for any grading and reporting system. The grading issues examined—ingredients, weighting, teacher judgment, progress, and mastery—must be resolved by teachers because they dramatically influence students' grades. The guidelines for grading in SBPE that were presented suggest a major departure from traditional, single-letter grading systems that fail to provide specific information about learning targets. Authentic instruction and assessment should have a direct effect on grading and reporting practices, resulting in a distinction between grading variables (achievement standards) and reporting variables (learning and social behaviors). It should be clear that a paradigm shift is needed for SBPE grading and reporting to become a reality.

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