



STANDARDS-BASED LEARNING STUDENT INTERVIEW

Sara Mathey



'What I like about proficiency scales is that they focus on how well you did and what you need to do to improve. They assess students where they are.' Sara Mathey, a freshman at CAA, describes standards-based learning as "not as blunt as the traditional method." If it takes her longer to catch a concept, she has the opportunity to try it again until she reaches proficiency or higher.

Reassessing is a huge part of what Sara appreciates about standards-based learning, and while she hasn't done it often, maybe once or twice, it reassures her and calms her down. When she takes assessments now, she doesn't have "that feeling in the pit of my stomach." Reassessing can be as simple as going "to the teacher and explaining why you did something wrong and why what you are doing now is right," to tackling an extra problem on a test from the previous proficiency scale to show that you know how to do it now. "Assessments just aren't as stressful." And she has noticed that she does better on assessments.

Sara is aware of how the language of the classroom is changing. Her teachers are saying assessments instead of tests, and they are talking about proficiency instead of grades. She likes proficiency scales, but "it took a while to figure it out. A two on the proficiency scale is almost there. You have everything you need to work toward a three, and if you want a four, the teachers help you get there." Sara described one of her teachers taking the class through the two section of the proficiency scale. When they came across a two that the bulk of the class was unsure of, the teacher took them through it. She finds that her fellow students are more open about what they don't know and actively work to learn it. "Before proficiency scales it was hard to read what you were doing wrong." Now she finds reassurance in the focus of the scales.