Assigning Accurate and Meaningful Grades for Students with Disabilities

Lorna Salgado, Region 10 ESC
Making the Grade
How to Assign Accurate and Meaningful Grades

Presented by
Lorna Salgado

Let’s Talk About Grades

What is the purpose of grading?
Grading

Communicating Grades

Words: relevant, honest, valid, GRADING, legitimate, appropriate, equitable, fair
What Does the Law Say?

- IDEA 2004 – does not address grading
- Section 504- prohibits discrimination in grading practices

TEC §28.0216

A school district shall adopt a grading policy, including provisions for the assignment of grades on class assignments and examinations, before each school year. A district grading policy:

1. Must require a classroom teacher to assign a grade that reflect the student’s relative mastery of an assignment;
2. May not require a classroom teacher to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student’s quality of work ; and
3. May allow a student a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

Grading Myths

1. I can’t fail a special education student (or the opposite- can’t give the student an “A” because it’s not “fair” that he had accommodations.)

Before failing a student with a disability, ask 2 questions:
- Was an appropriate IEP developed?
- Was everything in the IEP implemented?
Grading Myths

2. I can only give grades for things on the IEP.

Grades are for all TEKS/skills, not just for goals.

3. I don’t do the grades for my inclusion students, the Special Ed teacher does the grading.

General Ed teachers are still responsible for knowing and implementing the IEP, and should be involved in the grading process, even if grades are ultimately assigned by the Special Ed Teacher.

4. The grade on the report card can’t be less than the be less than the mastery level (on goals).

IEP Progress Report ≠ Report Card Grade
IEP Progress Reports vs. Report Card Grades

IEP progress report = lettuce

report card = whole taco

Improving Grading Practices

1. Define the purpose of the grading.
2. Implement standards-based grading (base grades on criteria derived from the TEKS, and NOT on behavior, participation, etc).
3. Set clear standards for performance and have a process for grading.
4. Make the meaning of the grades clear (parents/students know how you arrive at grade). Grade reflects student learning, not just number of points earned.
### Teacher Action Result on Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Result on Student Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just telling students # correct and incorrect</td>
<td>Negative influence on achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying the scoring criteria</td>
<td>Increase of 16 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing explanations as to why their responses are correct or incorrect</td>
<td>Increase of 20 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking students to continue responding to an assessment until they correctly answer the items</td>
<td>Increase of 20 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphically portraying student achievement</td>
<td>Increase of 26 percentile points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-- Marzano, CAGTW, pgs 5-6

### Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making inferences from text</td>
<td>The student made proper use of background knowledge and elements from the story to make inferences about a character.</td>
<td>The student used either background knowledge or elements from the story to make inferences about a character, but did not use both.</td>
<td>The student guessed about a character from the story and did not make use of background knowledge or elements from the story.</td>
<td>The student only provided information given in the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing Rubrics

- Define the assignment (what is the learner objective?)
- List what you expect to see
- Keep the list manageable
- Establish clear standards for performance (avoid words that aren’t clear, such as coherent or vague, and use action verbs instead)

What’s The Grade?

- 100
- 97
- Missing assignment
- 90
- 100
- 92
- 95

Thinking about Zeros

- 86, 86, 0, 86, 86 = 68.8
- 86, 86, 50, 86, 86 = 78.8
Grading Options

- District policies (most students)
- District policies with grading accommodations (a few students)
- Modified grading system (very few students)

Grading Accommodations

- Grading accommodations are NOT instructional accommodations!
- Grading accommodations must adhere to requirements in district policies and administrative regulations.
- Grading accommodations do NOT change the performance criteria of the course.
- Decisions for grading accommodations are made by the ARD committee
### Grading Accommodation Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale (from FIE)</th>
<th>Area of Accommodation</th>
<th>ARD Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in long term retrieval</td>
<td>• Quizzes</td>
<td>• Final exam will count ___% of final average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in attention and concentration</td>
<td>• Tests</td>
<td>• Final exams will be weighted ___% of final average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in academic skills (e.g., LD in reading comp)</td>
<td>• Assignments</td>
<td>• Project in lieu of major test (same weight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in Processing Speed</td>
<td>• Projects</td>
<td>• Points not deducted for spelling, cap/punc, when not focus of test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in fine motor functioning</td>
<td>• Make up work</td>
<td>• Quizzes count as daily grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deficit in language/communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Math fluency probes will not count as grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not an exhaustive list*  
Accommodations must adhere to district grading policies.

### Modified Grading

- Modified grading systems may be used when performance criteria of the course content is substantially changed.
- Modified grading must adhere to requirements in district policies and administrative regulations.
- Modified grading decisions are made by the ARD committee and must be based on disability related needs.

- Most often completed with rubrics or other type of data collection.
- Note the modified grading under the accommodation/modification section of the IEP as well as in the ARD notes.
- Attach the rubric or data collection sheets as a part of the IEP.
- Being on Modified Curriculum does NOT mean that a student would need Modified Grading.
Modified Grading: Data Collection Rubric-Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Activity</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Mode:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can choose correct answer and generalize</td>
<td>Can choose correct answer in 6 of 5 opportunities</td>
<td>Can choose correct answer in 3 of 5 opportunities</td>
<td>Can choose correct answer in 1 or 2 of 5 opportunities</td>
<td>Unable to choose correct answer (0 of 5 opportunities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to maintain participation throughout the activity</td>
<td>Ability to maintain participation with minimal redirection (1-2 times)</td>
<td>Ability to maintain participation with some redirection (3-5 times)</td>
<td>Ability to partially maintain participation with significant redirection (&gt;5 times)</td>
<td>Unable to participate enough to complete the activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CUEING AND PROMPTING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed the tasks without cueing or prompting</td>
<td>Completed the tasks with minimal cueing (1-2 times)</td>
<td>Completed task but required prompting (3-5 times)</td>
<td>Completed task but required significant prompting (&gt;5 times)</td>
<td>Unable to complete the task without cueing or prompting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection

Credit Where Credit is Due

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- http://www.cathysartainindustries.com
- rubistar.4teachers.org/
- http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/assessment/rubrics.html
- http://www.teachnology.com/web_tools/rubrics

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