

Grading in the Diverse Classroom: What's Fair?

Grading & Assessment Resources

- www.ideapractices.org/search.htm
 - Type "assessment" in the search box ←
 - Find several articles on assessment
- www.newpaltz.edu/migrant/grading.html
- www.marilynfriend.com

Plain and simple...

- Grading in the inclusive setting is controversial!
- There is very little research available on this topic.
- There are no magic bullets.

What's Fair?

"Fair," according to the American Heritage Dictionary, means free of favoritism or bias, impartial, just to all parties, equitable. In light of this definition, evaluation might need to be different at times in order to be considered "just to all parties."

Definition of Assessment Accommodation

- "Assessment accommodations alter the way a test is administered. They are designed to respond to a student need. They are not intended to give the student an unfair advantage. Students with disabilities may use assessment accommodations to show what they know without being impeded by their disabilities."

What's With the Terms?

The terms "modification" and "accommodation" and "adaptation" have been used interchangeably in the literature to refer to adjustment of the facilities, curriculum, and instruction relating to the education of students with disabilities.

Accommodation has been used in court cases to refer to adjustments in the instruction of students with disabilities.

- SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS, Price, Mayfield, McFadden, and Marsh, *Copyright © 2000-2001 Parrot Publishing, L.L.C.*

Levels of Services

- Accommodation:
 - Mild supports and services
 - Tutoring, support materials, equip.
- Adaptations:
 - Instructional tools and approaches
 - Calculators, tape recorders, adapted text books, modified procedures
- Modifications
 - Significant changes made to the curriculum *content* so that a student may be successful in the general classroom.

Classroom Grading

- Testing Considerations
 - Create tests before planning unit.
 - Clearly Define Expectations for assignments and tests
 - Weekly written (computer) progress reports
 - Use a range of assignments
 - Provide feedback on assignments and tests
 - Audio feedback on a cassette tape
 - Take time to have students understand test mistakes
 - Use rubrics to involve students in the grading process

What's Palatable?

- Separate grades for process and product
- Grades indexed against student improvement
 - Were particularly helpful, whereas passing students "no matter what" or basing grades on effort alone were not perceived as helpful
 - (see William Bursuck et al., in press)

Grading Options

- Pass/Fail options
- Differentiated syllabi/contract grading
- Portfolio summaries
- Weighted grades for courses, specific class work, or areas of performance (ability, effort, achievement.)
- Alternative tests
- Separate grades for content and style
- Use median scores instead of averages which accentuates the effect of poor scores (zeros because of absence, tardiness, or misbehavior)

Some Specific Test Adaptations

- Highlight Key Words/Phrases
- Spell checker or WP for Essays
- Practice Questions as Study Guide
- Teach Test taking skills
- Keep Format Simple

Test Bias

- Look for questions that have two answers
- Bias, stereotypes, language issues
- Vocabulary overdose in directions

Report Card Grades

Grading Special Needs Students

- A good rule of thumb based on current research and litigation is: If a student is receiving adaptations (< 33% change to the curriculum content):
 - Should be evaluated and graded similar to that of general student population.
 - Do not require indications of adaptations on report cards
 - Adaptations are a civil rights issue.

Grading Special Needs Students, Cont.

- If a student is receiving significant curriculum modifications (curriculum content reduced >33%):
- Conflicting data on whether it should be indicated on the report card, but local policies should be followed to avoid inappropriately calling attention to the student's disability. Latest civil rights info says, "Do not indicate on report card".
- Pass/fail or credit/no credit might be used on the report card.
- May change the course # for that student to indicate a different curriculum while in the general classroom. *Check local policy.
- Teachers *must* explain modified grades to parents.
- You may put info on reports that go home, but not on the permanent record.

State Assessments

Assessment Accommodations: IEP

- "IEPs must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment."

Assessment Accommodations: Practice

- "In general, no accommodation should ever be recommended for a student unless that student also has an opportunity to use it during instructional activities."

Types of Accommodations

- Timing
- Scheduling
- Setting
- Presentation
- Response