



Grading Limited English Proficient Students' Performance

Limited English Proficient (LEP) students frequently have difficulty expressing their mastery of academic content until they have attained a certain level of English proficiency. Teachers of LEP students should explore alternative forms of assessment and grading.

Mainstream teachers should use a grading system that reflects individual student progress, but does not unfairly compare a LEP student to his/her native English-speaking peers' performance.

The focus should be on the LEP students' meaning and content, not on the language or grammar in which the information is communicated. For example, an LEP student may not be able to write an essay on the water cycle, but is capable of demonstrating the knowledge of that content through carrying out an experiment and hands-on activities. In this case, the knowledge would be graded, not the manner in which that *knowledge* is expressed by the student.

Use the following points as a guideline when assigning grades:

- Provide grades based on mastery/knowledge of concepts. Focus on essential skills and concepts from the content area.
- Give grades based on what the student **CAN DEMONSTRATE** in the classroom according to the student's level of English proficiency.
- Design rubrics and/or checklists that link students' work with the criteria you have established.
- Pair LEP students with native English-speaking peers or high level LEP students and assign a grade for group work completed.
- Give an achievement grade in the subjects where the student is able to perform the skills (i.e., math), and an effort/meaningful participation grade in the subjects where the student is not able to perform the skills due to very low English proficiency.
- In a Language Arts class where it is extremely difficult to separate content area knowledge and language ability, focus on language in some activities and content in other activities. (Be sure that students know in advance what is being graded.) Establish grading criteria for when the focus is on language (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, appropriate title and organization, etc.)
- Use scoring rubrics/descriptors in evaluating student performance and achievement.
- Know your LEP student's level of English proficiency and assign work accordingly. Work in close cooperation with your ESL teacher.