

Equitable Grading Practices: An Introduction for Leaders

May 5, 2023

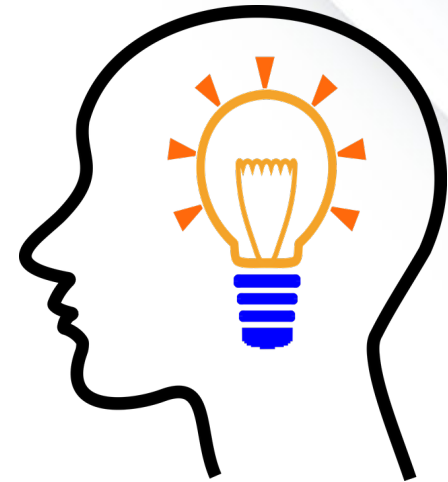
Welcoming Ritual

An SEL Signature Practice:

- Builds respectful community.
- Welcomes all participants to the learning environment.

Consider the image on the following slide:

What does this image have to do with grading reform?





TST BOCES
TOMPKINS • SENECA • TIOGA

“Traditional grading practices have served some students well in the past but...we now have the knowledge to serve all students better .”

- T.R. Westerberg (2016). *Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading*. ACSD. p. 46.

Today's Learning Targets:

- We will define Equitable Grading.
- We will identify potential inequities in traditional grading practices.
- We will explore strategies for increasing Reliability and Validity at the system and classroom level.



A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is green and labeled 'Reliability'. The right circle is teal and labeled 'Validity'. The overlapping area in the center is a lighter green color and labeled 'Grading Practices'. Below each circle is a descriptive sentence.

Reliability

Scores are consistent over time, between students, and from teacher to teacher.

Grading Practices

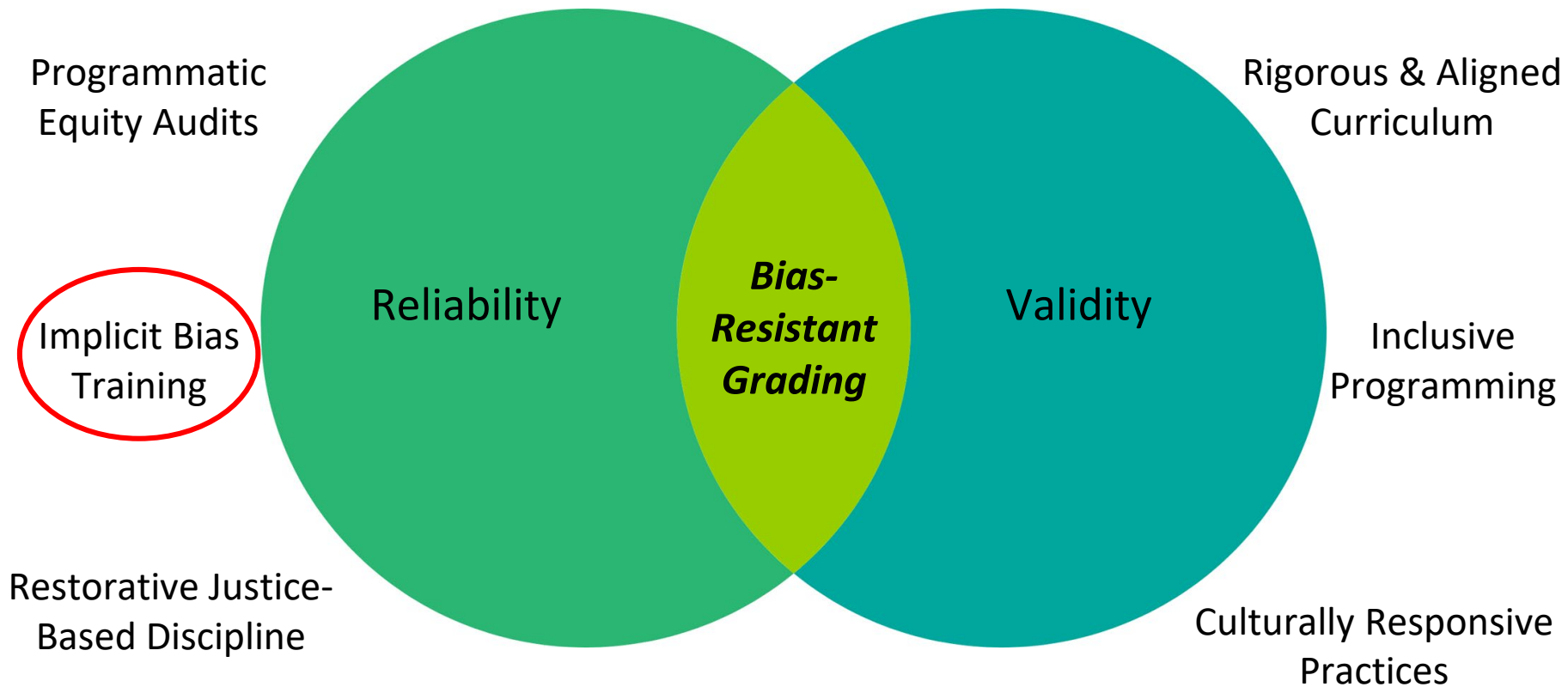
Validity

Scores communicate accurate, actionable information about student learning.

*But that's just good
assessment!*

(Isn't it?)

Systemic, Explicit Focus on Educational Equity



Programmatic
Equity Audits

Rigorous & Aligned
Curriculum

Implicit Bias
Training

Reliability

***Bias-
Resistant
Grading***

Validity

Inclusive
Programming

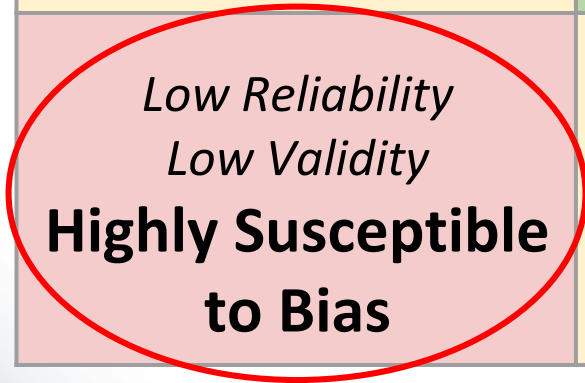
Restorative Justice-
Based Discipline

Culturally Responsive
Practices

Reliability



<p><i>High Reliability</i> <i>Low Validity</i> Moderately Bias Resistant</p>	<p><i>High Validity</i> <i>High Reliability</i> Highly Bias-Resistant</p>
<p><i>Low Reliability</i> <i>Low Validity</i> Highly Susceptible to Bias</p>	<p><i>High Validity</i> <i>Low Reliability</i> Moderately Bias Resistant</p>



Validity



Reliability

More than any other of the countless decisions teachers make about and for their students, their prerogative to judge student learning and assign it a grade is **subject to the least professional oversight.**

- S. Brookhart et. al. (2016). "A Century of Grading Research: Meaning and Value in the Most Common Educational Measure."

What grade did each student earn?

Joshua:

Assignment 1: **83**

Assignment 2: **83**

Assignment 3: **0 (Missing)**

Assignment 4: **87**

Assignment 5: **86**

Average with Zero: **68**

Average without Zero: **85**

Julie:

Assignment 1: **79**

Assignment 2: **80**

Assignment 3: **105 (Extra Credit)**

Assignment 4: **78**

Assignment 5: **82**

Average with EC: **88**

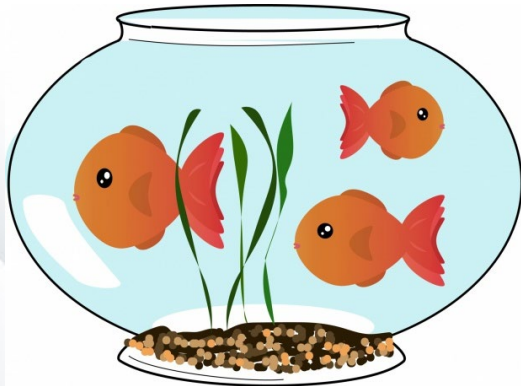
Average without EC: **80**

“If we are attempting to evaluate a paper by a scale of 100, 99, 98, 97, 96, etc., we are attempting the impossible. **The mind simply cannot discriminate between a paper grade of 85 and another of grade 86.**”

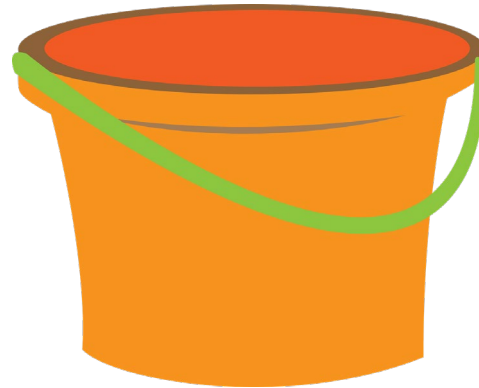
- D. Starch, 1913

(Quoted in J. Feldman (2019). *Grading for Equity*, p. 97.)

Fewer Levels = Greater Reliability



V.S.



Example: 0-4 Scale

*Adopted by Lansing Middle School for 2022-2023.
Lansing High School intends to adopt beginning 2023-2024.*

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4

Pros:

- Shows 5 levels of achievement for greater differentiation of reporting.
- Relatively easy to convert to 0-100 scale if needed (i.e. high school courses).

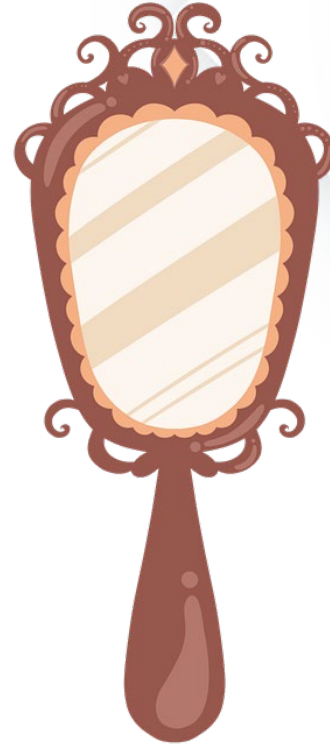
Cons:

- Still includes 0.
- Will need to be explained to parents and students.

Pause & Reflect:

How could *bias* impact grading reliability?

What steps can you take to reduce this risk in your school?



Validity

On average, over the last 100 years and across subject areas, standardized measures of academic achievement account for only 25% of the variance in teacher-assigned grades ($R=0.5$).

These statistics suggest that 75% of a student's grade is based on "something else" other than academic ability.

- A.J. Bowers (2018). "Standards-Based Grading," in *What We Know About Grading*, S. Brookhart & T. Guskey, Eds.

Separate Reporting for Product, Process, and Progress:

Product
(May be further divided into specific standards.)



Math:				
	MP 1	MP 2	MP 3	MP 4
Academic Skills	3			
Group Work	3			
Time Management	2			
Persistence	4			
Comments: MP 1 - Ariel has improved her problem problem solving skills since the beginning of the school year! MP 2 - MP 3 - MP 4-				



Process

Progress



Compare these gradebooks (using 0-4 scale):

Reported Grade	Assmt 1 Homework	Assmt 2 Quiz	Assmt 3 Homework	Assmt 4 Participation	Assmt 5 Test	Assmt 6 Quiz
2	1	3	0	1	3	4

Reported Grade	Assmt 1 Standard 1	Assmt 2 Standard 1	Assmt 3 Standard 2	Assmt 4 Standard 2	Assmt 5 Standard 2	Assmt 6 Standard 3
Strd 1: 3 Strd 2: 1 Strd 3: (in progress)	2	3	1	2	1	3

What intervention does each student need to be more successful?

How would you grade
this student?

Jenny:

Assignment 1: 75

Assignment 2: 0 (missing)

Assignment 3: 85

Assignment 4: 95

Assignment 5: 0 (missing)

Assignment 6: 100

Assignment 7: 95

Assignment 8: 55 (incomplete)

Assignment 9: 95

Assignment 10: 100

Which student
learned more?

Sean:

Assignment 1: 45

Assignment 2: 60

Assignment 3: 55

Assignment 4: 62

Assignment 5: 70

Assignment 6: 75

Assignment 7: 72

Assignment 8: 80

Assignment 9: 90

Assignment 10: 85

69

Sarah:

Assignment 1: 80

Assignment 2: 81

Assignment 3: 82

Assignment 4: 79

Assignment 5: 80

Assignment 6: 75

Assignment 7: 77

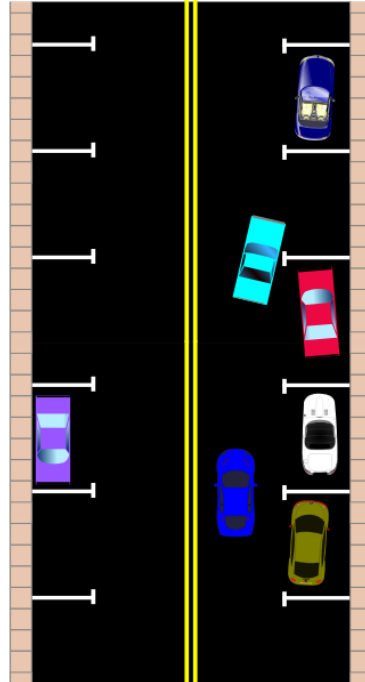
Assignment 8: 80

Assignment 9: 81

Assignment 10: 85

80

The final grade communicates what students know *at the end* of the unit of study.



Pause & Reflect:

How could *bias* impact
grading validity?

What steps can you take to
reduce this risk in your
school?



Take the first step...

“I feel like there’s a monumental inner shift that’s happening as we’re shifting on the outside.”

- MS ELA Teacher

Assignment-Based vs Standards-Based Mindsets

Assignment-Based:

- Marking period & course grades are *calculated based on individual assignment scores*.
- Students must generally accomplish the *same number and type of tasks* to succeed.
- Teachers and students are concerned with earning or losing *points*.
- *Behaviors* are factored into the final grade.

Standards-Based:

- Grades are assigned based on students' learning of *prioritized skills or standards*.
- Final grades represent a *summative assessment* of student learning.
- Assignments are *data points that help teachers evaluate learning*, not an end in themselves.
- Behaviors are *reported separately*.

Questions?

Optimistic Closure

An SEL Signature Practice & Culturally Responsive Strategy:

- Provides closure for community.
- Encourages continued learning

Consider your next steps:

What are 3 key ideas or suggestions you will take back to share with your districts?

Share with a neighbor.



Additional resources

Thank you!

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