

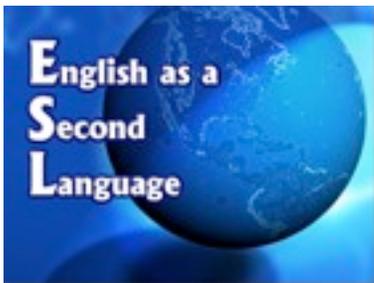
# Grading English Language Learners



ESOL Department, HCDE

LEP students **may not** be retained or **failed** due to English language development. If there is a **language problem** that denies access to the curriculum, the district/school has the obligation of making that program/class accessible to the LEP student. These guidelines are firm whether or not the district accepts Title III funding.

*(State of TN English as a Second Language Policy Guidance, July 2010)*



## How should I grade my ESL students?

Learning a new language is a complex process

and in some cases requires up to 10 years to reach full academic proficiency. It is essential to know which students in your class are ESL students and at what level of language acquisition they are in. Your site based ESOL professional would be the best resource for finding out this information

Beginning ESOL students have very limited proficiency in four domains-reading, writing, listening and speaking. Federal and State laws protect these students from failure based on language development. All measures need to be taken to make these students successful in the regular classroom. ESOL

professional will provide a list of classroom accommodations and guidance to the grading process.



Students who have attained a certain level of English proficiency (Advanced or Transitional level)

should be assessed and graded according to the same criteria as the other students in the class. This may mean that for some students their grades are low at first, but nevertheless it is important that ESL students, together with their parents and their ESL teacher get accurate feedback on the standards they are reaching in their mainstream classes.



## Sympathetic Grading

Within the above guidelines, however, it is still possible to treat ESL students in a way

that is appropriate to their particular status and needs. **Sympathetic Grading** is a useful term to describe this special treatment of ESL students in terms of grading and assessment. It means for example that students are given credit for demonstrating understanding even if their ability to

express their understanding in clear and accurate English is limited.

*It means that they **are not** graded down for grammar and spelling mistakes (unless these are an integral and clearly stated part of the assignment.) It means further that students **have the chance** to give an oral explanation of answers that they were not able to write down very clearly. It also means that they may be allowed the chance to redo homework or retake tests.*

## Factors to consider when assigning grades or values to the work completed by English language learners:

- ❖ Concentrate on what the student is trying to communicate and not on the errors. Ask yourself if they really understood the material and/or assignment.
- ❖ Grade not only what the student produces, but evaluate if they give **good effort** and follow the process you set out for them to achieve.
- ❖ Tell the class very early in the year or semester how you will grade them. Use rubrics, when appropriate.
- ❖ Make sure the grades reflect a variety of products such as **participation, projects, presentations**, etc.
- ❖ Train students to evaluate their own work before turning it in to the teacher.
- ❖ Use “satisfactory/unsatisfactory” scoring for beginning students.
- ❖ Put a note on the grade card describing how the student was evaluated.
- ❖ Use pictures to assess vocabulary.
- ❖ Draw the concept rather than write about it.
- ❖ Let students point to the correct answer.
- ❖ Let students give oral responses and oral reports instead of using the written word.
- ❖ Use a limited word bank of new words for evaluation.
- ❖ Allow group reports.
- ❖ Use cooperative learning techniques.
- ❖ Review journals and notes to give grades.
- ❖ Keep a reading journal and review for evaluation.