DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 728 TM 030 360

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TITLE Grading and the Ethos of Effort.
PUB DATE 1999-09-01
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Beliefs; *Females; *Grades (Scholastic); Grading; *Middle School Students; Middle Schools; *Report Cards; Rural Schools; *Teacher Attitudes; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Effort

ABSTRACT

As part of a larger study, variables that significantly influenced the grades of young girls were investigated. The sample included 52 middle-level girls (grade 7), all of whom were participants in a project examining factors that support or inhibit rural and urban girls' participation in science, mathematics, and technology. Preliminary analyses of the academic achievement and grades of the participants identify pronounced school-level effects related to the variables that affected students' grades. A questionnaire was developed to determine teacher beliefs about grades. The questionnaire was administered to 52 teachers in the 3 schools attended by the participants. Results reveal that, at least among the schools studied, there are certain beliefs about grading that differ from school to school. School-level scores on a scale named "ethos of effort" (one of three scales from the questionnaire) distinguished among teachers from the three schools. Results suggest that teachers in schools with a more custodial orientation may compound effort and achievement to a greater degree than teachers in schools with a more optimistic and humanistic orientation. Findings lend support to the contention that report card grades should be based on achievement only, since the incorporation of other factors, such as effort, confounds the meaning of grades. When grades are deflated by the inclusion of nonacademic measures, students may come to see themselves as less capable than they actually are. (Contains 1 table, 1 figure, and 43 references.) (SLD)

Grading and the Ethos of Effort

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Clarissa: Stanford Achievement Test basic skills score - **64th** percentile, comprehensive battery score - **69th** percentile; 7th grade GPA - **2.0**. "I don't know why she's in that top group ... The top group are kids who would be on your honor society, which we recognize for good citizenship, model students, A's and B's students. Clarissa would not be there, because a lot of teachers would not recommend her because of her attitude." (Interview with science teacher)

Victoria: Stanford Achievement Test basic skills score - **64th** percentile, comprehensive battery score - **69th** percentile; 7th grade GPA - **4.0**. "She is very interested in learning, and she knows that her education is important to her if she does want to make anything of herself. I think she has talked sometimes about being a doctor or a lawyer, and she knows she has to work to get it. She knows it isn't just going to be handed to her. She's very cooperative in class. She's very well-mannered. She's the kind of kid you like to have. (Interview with math/science teacher)

The interview excerpts depict two girls, similar in some ways, different in others. Both participated along with 82 others in *Rural and Urban Images: Voices of Girls in Science, Mathematics, and Technology (Voices)*, a three-year research and development program sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The project was designed to examine the factors

that support or inhibit rural and urban girls' participation in science, mathematics, and technology (SMT) and to enhance girls' participation in these subjects. *Voices* staff worked with groups of ethnically diverse, economically challenged middle-school aged girls, along with their families, schools, and communities to increase girls' engagement with SMT. The project began with a group of sixth grade girls and attempted to retain these girls in the project through their eight grade year of school.

As part of the project, a team of researchers was able to study the ways in which young adolescent girls negotiate the sometimes competing demands of academic and social life. This negotiation is accomplished in the highly nuanced context of school, where academic and social expectations are confounded in complicated ways affecting the choices that girls make and the opportunities made available to them. Emblematic of the complexities of this context is the practice of grading — a practice that we studied in several ways as it related to the academic and social development of the girls in the *Voices* project.

Background: The Purpose of Grading

Among measurement experts, conventional wisdom suggests that the proper purpose for assigning report card grades ought to be to provide information about students' achievement to them and to their parents (Cross & Frary, 1996; Olson, 1989; Stiggins, Frisbie, & Griswold, 1989; Terwilliger, 1989; Waltman & Frisbie, 1994). If teachers held to this purpose, in fact, one would expect that the grades students received on their report cards would correlate at least moderately with their scores on standardized measures of achievement, and as Agnew (1989) reported, correlations between grades and standardized achievement measures do tend to be

moderate, generally hovering around .40. Arguably, however, achievement tests tap valued learnings similar (though never identical) to those tapped by teacher-made tests and other classroom measures of achievement. Robust correlations between achievement test scores and grades would, at the very least, reflect alignment between classroom learning and mandated assessments. Moreover, to the extent that students' access to educational opportunities is dependent upon their performance on standardized measures, there is some benefit to practices that increase the correspondence between what is counted as achievement in classrooms and what is counted as achievement on standardized tests.

Studies of teachers' grading practices show that teachers do not use grades solely to reflect students' achievement (however construed) but rather use them to accomplish a variety of different aims (e.g., Leiter & Brown, 1983; Nava & Loyd, 1992; Olson, 1989; Wood, Bennett, & Wood, 1990). Beyond giving feedback about achievement, other aims include: encouraging effort, acknowledging improvement, and rewarding compliance. According to Cross and Frary (1996, p. 1), "it is undoubtedly true that many teachers blatantly use grades based on factors such as conduct, attitude and even attendance to control student behavior" (see also Hills, 1991; Stiggins et al., 1989; Zeidner, 1992). Findings from a national survey conducted by Bursuck, Polloway, Plante, Epstein, Jayanthi, and McConeghy (1996, p. 308) show:

> Approximately 50% of all teachers [use] certain specific grading adaptations for their students ... including basing grades on improvement, giving multiple grades (e.g., grades for tests and effort), and making individual adjustments to grading weights (e.g., counting projects more than tests for some students).

The literature on grading practices, in fact, illustrates that teachers construe grading both

more loosely and more broadly than measurement experts do. According to some measurement experts, teachers' practice of including a variety of criteria in the assignment of grades distorts grades, rendering them invalid and meaningless (e.g., Olson, 1989). A more tolerant view suggests that, when they confound achievement, effort, and compliance in their construction of grades, teachers are actually responding to the complex social meanings attached to grades (Brookhart, 1994). Teachers tend, in fact, to base their grading practices on assumptions about the parallels between the reward structures of the classroom and those of the workplace — assumptions that may also be shared by students (Brookhart, 1993; Feldman, Kropf, & Alibrandi, 1996; Rowe, 1996).

> To teachers, grades are something students earn; they are compensation for a certain amount of work done at a certain level. Achievement is part of the construct but not the whole of it. Among teachers, a more common image than achievement is that of grades as currency; this image is evident in teachers' frequent use of the words earn, work, and perform. The teachers' emphasis is on the activities students perform, not what grades indicate about theoretical achievement constructs. (Brookhart, 1993, p. 139)

Regardless of the strength of their rationale for doing so, teachers' practice of confounding effort and compliance with achievement in their construction of students' grades makes grading vulnerable to race and class bias. That such bias influences how teachers perceive students and what they expect of them is already well established (e.g., Fine, 1991; Gaines & Davis, 1990). Moreover, recent research on teachers' grading practices suggests that teachers tend to grade low-SES and minority students differently from the ways they grade higher-SES

and white students.

A study of approximately 300 high school teachers, for example, revealed that "low status and minority students are graded not on their academic achievements, but on their attendance and deportment" (Agnew, 1985, pp. 35-36). Other research (e.g., Stiggins et al., 1989) reports similar findings.

Researchers disagree, however, about whether such grading practices are intended to harm or help minority and low-SES students. On the one hand, the practice of rewarding such students for their compliance and good behavior tends, over the long term, to reinforce existing patterns of social stratification (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Lipman, 1997). Schooled to behave rather than to achieve, such students either acquiesce or rebel (e.g., Willis, 1977). When they lack opportunities to use their education to obtain good jobs or a higher quality of life, such students rarely regard academic achievement as a way to transcend their circumstances (e.g., Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Bickel, 1989; Cook, 1996; cf. Taylor, 1981). On the other hand, teachers may include non-cognitive criteria in their grading of minority and low-SES students as a way, in the short term, to compensate for social inequities. According to Brookhart (1991, p. 36), "what teachers seem to intend when they add nonachievement factors to grades is to mitigate negative social consequences." Brookhart is quick to note, however, that "grades are not the appropriate tool for social engineering" (p. 36).

Some researchers suggest that teachers' practices of grading differ by school. The implication is that a school's ethos of grading, rather than the decision-making of each individual teacher, influences the use of non-achievement factors in the construction of grades. As Agnew reported (1989, p. 35),

> The school in this study which placed the least amount of emphasis on actual learning in the assignment of course grades was also the school with predominantly low-status (measured by parent education) and minority students. Teachers at this school used behavior, attendance, and effort to a much greater degree than grade-level criteria to award grades. At every other school in the sample the situation was the reverse.

Other research shows that there is significant grade inflation in schools that serve predominantly low-SES or minority students. In an analysis of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), researchers at the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI, 1994) found that students in high poverty schools who received high grades had lower achievement test scores than students in wealthier schools who received the same grades.

> "A" students in the high poverty schools received lower scores, on average, than did their counterparts in the more affluent schools .... "B" students in the schools with the highest poverty concentrations received about the same test scores as the students who received D's and less than D's in the schools with the lowest concentrations of poor students. The "C" students in the poorest schools got about the same test scores as the failing students in the most affluent schools." (OERI, 1994, p. 4)

Findings from the OERI study and from Agnew's study suggest that grading practices may be shaped by school culture, but other researchers seem to hold an opposing view. A study of 143 elementary and secondary teachers, for example, reported that teachers' grading practices

varied widely and unpredictably (Cizek et al., 1995). Furthermore, according to the authors, teachers were unaware of the grading practices used by their colleagues. Kain (1996) summarizes the research aptly:

> Although there is evidence of some district and building-level grading policies, which are sometimes constructed by groups of teachers, teachers appear to maintain a sense of privacy about their own grading practices, guarding these practices with the same passion with which one might guard an unedited diary or what Thomas calls "sacred ground." Teachers make assumptions and conform to implicit rules and standards, but tend not to discuss grading ... (p. 569)

The competing claims in the literature and the limited amount of research in support of these claims suggests the possibility that different schools might, indeed, cultivate different stances toward grading. Many educators do, in fact, recommend that schools work to establish shared philosophies of grading (Austin & McCann, 1992; Cizek et al., 1995; O'Conner, 1995). As Austin and McCann (1992, p. 4) note, "the meaningfulness of grades depends on the extent to which a school community has a shared understanding of what they stand for." Because we had preliminary evidence that such an ethos of grading existed at the schools with which we were working, part of this study was designed to test the tentative assertion that, at least among some schools, there is a shared ethos of grading.

We approached this part of the research in a roundabout way as we pursued the major, though certainly applied, research question: What accounted for the report card grades obtained by the group of young adolescent girls who were participating in the *Voices* project? We were struck in our review of the literature by the paucity of generalizable research on the effects of

actual achievement on report card grades. Because this literature was so sparse, we determined that analyses of the data from what amounts to a convenience sample of girls might be worth sharing, despite their obvious limitations.

The Effect of Achievement on Report Card Grades

A variety of studies address the relationship between classroom achievement (as measured on teacher-made tests and assignments) and students' report card grades. Many of these studies are based on teachers' reports of the extent to which they use measures of academic achievement in calculating the grades recorded on students' report cards (e.g., Allal, 1988; Nava & Loyd, 1992; Senk, Beckman, & Thompson, 1997). According to these studies, teachers do emphasize what they take to be measures of achievement in constructing students' report card grades. Such measures, which include teacher made quizzes and tests, class work, and homework assignments, often lack the technical adequacy to serve as accurate gauges of students' actual achievement (see e.g., Marso & Pigge, 1987, 1993). Even objective tests, carefully constructed by teachers, fail to provide valid and reliable measures of students' achievement either in relationship to the academic performance of a reference group or in relationship to a set of content standards (e.g., Cross & Frary, 1996).

In our search of ERIC from 1966 to the present, we were able to locate only two studies that used a more stringent measure of achievement to evaluate the extent to which achievement might influence students' grades. The first of these, conducted by Leiter and Brown (1983, p. 8), examined the effects of "widely valued achievement" as well as a variety of other factors on the grades of second and third graders in a rural North Carolina district. Based on data from 213

students, these researchers concluded:

> In neither second nor third grade is widely valued achievement., as measured by end-of-the-year standardized test scores, an important determinant of the grades teachers give .... By far the strongest force shaping grading in both years is the teacher's perception of student conformity with the teacher's preferred attitude and behavior patterns. (p. 12)

As is the case with the present study, Leiter and Brown's results cannot be widely generalized. Neither can findings from Olson's (1989) study, which examined the effects of both teacher-made and standardized achievement tests on students' grades. Based on an examination of grading patterns in 12 Dallas schools, these researchers reported zero-order correlations of from .44 to .54 to demonstrate the moderate relationship between achievement on standardized tests and students' report card grades. Zero-order correlations at or close to .80 suggested a stronger association between scores on teacher-made tests and students' report card grades.

While providing no greater generalizability than either of these two earlier studies, our study does uncover some curious dynamics that reveal school-level differences in how teachers approach grading. Moreover, it provides evidence that the value that teachers in a school place upon non-achievement factors such as effort and improvement diminishes the role that achievement plays in determining the grades students receive on their report cards.

Method

Sample

The sample included 52 middle-level girls, all of whom were participants in the *Voices*

Project, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and administered by staff at the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. The girls included in the study represented a subsample of a larger group (n = 84) of girls who participated in the project during their 7th grade year. Those included in the study were the girls for whom we were able to obtain cumulative grades in the academic subjects they studied in the 7th grade as well as 7th grade Stanford Achievement Test scores. For a variety of reasons, some of the girls who participated in the project lacked either a complete transcript of grades or a complete set of Stanford Achievement scores.

The 84 girls had been selected randomly when they were in the 6th grade as participants in a project to increase interest and achievement in science and mathematics. By the time they were in the 7th grade, all of the participants had graduated from elementary school and had moved into one of the three middle-level schools involved with the *Voices Project*. One of the schools was in an urban center, one was in a remote rural area, and the third was in a small town.

We have no reason to believe that the academic characteristics of the girls in our subsample were markedly different from those of girls in the larger sample. The average grade in 5th grade math for the entire group was 2.7 (sd=.86), and the average grade in 5th grade math for the subsample was 2.7 (sd=.85). Fifth grade science grades differed more noticeably but not significantly (μ=2.9, sd=1.06 for the entire group of participants and $\bar{x}$=3.1, sd=1.07 for the subsample, t=1.59, df =49, p≤ .12).

There are also indications that the subsample represented a group of girls whose academic characteristics were average and distributed fairly normally. The mean percentile rank for basic skills on the Stanford Achievement battery was 51.5 (sd=23.2), and the median was 53.5. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated no significant difference between the actual distribution of

scores and a normal distribution, and the Q-Q plot provided a similar interpretation. The distribution was not seriously skewed (with a skewness of -.029), but the kurtosis of -1.09 and the stem and leaf plot both indicated that there were fewer extreme cases in the subsample than would be included in a normal distribution.

The study also included a sample of teachers at the three schools that the girls attended. We asked all teachers at each school to participate, but our actual sample consisted of those teachers from whom we received usable data. These included 10 (50%) of the teachers from the small town school, 9 (75%) of the teachers from the rural school, and 33 (73%) of the teachers from the urban school.

Measurement of Variables

Our initial analyses examined data for the 52 girls. Staff of the *Voices* project gathered these data from students' permanent school records. Data included: students' Stanford Achievement Test Scores in Reading, Math, and Language Arts; their grades in academic subjects in the 7th grade; and their final grades in math and science from the 5th and 6th grades. Project staff also provided information about the race of each of the girls and the free and reduced lunch rates for each of the schools. All of these data were used in our preliminary analyses, but only some of them turned out to be germane.

As a result of our preliminary analyses, which we report below, we identified pronounced school level effects related to the variables that affected students' grades. To explore these effects, we constructed an instrument to measure teachers' beliefs about grading practices. We developed a pool of items for the instrument by first conducting a content analysis of the

available literature on teachers' grading practices. We included at least one and often several items related to each discrete practice identified in the literature. We decided to develop our own scale rather than to use one already available in the literature because we could not locate an instrument that included all of the different beliefs about grading that we found in the literature about teachers' grading practices. Our objective, then, was to produce an instrument that provided more exhaustive coverage of the domain than was provided in any instrument thus far published.

Using factor analysis, we identified three scales, each including at least three items and all with Eigenvalues > 2. The items on the scales were related conceptually, and each explained a substantial portion of the variance (15 percent, 13 percent, and 11 percent, respectively). Based on the content of the items constituting the scales, we named them "ethos of effort," "ethos of control," and "ethos of academic achievement." We refined the scales by eliminating items that detracted from the alpha reliability of each scale. The final scales each included three items and had adequate alpha reliabilities. The reliability for ethos of effort was .82. Reliabilities for the ethos of control and the ethos of academic achievement were .62 and .64, respectively. The items included in each of the three scales are presented in Appendix A.

In addition to the quantitative data collected, we made use of a richly textured set of narrative data, assembled as part of the qualitative research on the *Voices* Project. These data provided us with a way to contextualize and in some cases confirm what our quantitative analyses seemed to reveal.

Results

Our initial purpose in conducting the study was to identify variables that significantly influenced the grades of girls in the *Voices* project. Based on our preliminary equations, we found that of the individual and contextual variables included in the equations, two variables had distinct and significant effects on students' grades. These variables were the Stanford Achievement Test basic skills composite score and school. The effect of the school that each girl attended was determined by including two dummy variables (SCHOOL1 and SCHOOL2), and we noticed that the effect for one of these variables was pronounced and significant, whereas the effect for the other was negligible and insignificant. The equation had an adjusted R^2 of .624. Beta weights for the two significant variables were .66 (basic skills) and -.35 (SCHOOL2). Appendix B provides the results of this regression analysis.

To further examine the effect of school, we then constructed a series of simplified regression equations, omitting the control variables of SES and race because neither had had significant effects on GPA in the more elaborate model. Moreover, both SES and race suffered from restriction in range. In the first simplified equation we regressed GPA on basic skills achievement only. In the second we regressed GPA on both basic skills achievement and SCHOOL1, and in the third we regressed GPA on both basic skills achievement and SCHOOL2. By conducting these analyses we were looking for changes in R^2 associated with the inclusion in the model of each of the schools represented by the dummy variables. We found that the adjusted R^2 for the first equation (GPA regressed on basic skills achievement only) was .5. For the second equation (GPA regressed on both basic skills and SCHOOL1), the adjusted $R^2 = .53$. And for the third equation (GPA regressed on both basic skills and SCHOOL2), the adjusted $R^2 = .57$. It

appeared from the observed changes in adjusted R^2 values that attendance at SCHOOL2 had a greater effect on GPA than attendance at SCHOOL1.

To explore this apparent school effect, we also conducted separate regression equations for each of the schools. These were simplified equations, regressing GPA on basic skills achievement only. Our purpose in conducting these analyses was to compare the amount of variance in GPA explained by achievement at each of the three schools included in the study. At the first school, the adjusted R^2 was .69, at the second it was .57, and at the third it was .32. Using a procedure described by Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan (1991), we performed t-tests to compare differences among the unstandardized regression coefficients in the three equations. All of the differences were significant at $p \leq .001$. These results showed that the variable, SCHOOL, had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between achievement and grades.

This discovery prompted us to conduct further explorations. Our findings suggested that we might be observing, albeit indirectly, school-level variations in grading practices. This likelihood was, however, not strongly supported in the extant literature on the topic.

To determine, then, if there were measurable differences in grading practices by school, we developed an instrument (described above) and administered it to 52 teachers in the three schools. We observed differences, especially with regard to the scale, "ethos of effort." These differences approached but did not achieve statistical significance at the .05 level. The mean score for teachers at the small town school was 9.5. For teachers in the rural school it was 12.0, and for teachers at the urban school it was 11.6. Sample sizes in two of the schools were relatively small (9 and 10 respectively), which perhaps explains why comparisons did not quite achieve statistical significance.

We did, however, know from our qualitative study of the schools that teachers in both the urban and rural schools saw their students as disadvantaged and difficult. According to the guidance counselor at the urban school: "[Our biggest challenge] is discipline. There's no discipline in the home, and we get these kids and we're having rules and trying to make this a society." Staff in the rural school made similar comments. In contrast to the small town school, both of the other schools seemed troubled — dominated by a custodial orientation to control and by feelings among staff of being powerless to effect change (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973).

When we grouped these two schools together into one category, we noticed that the differences between teachers' scores on ethos of effort in the two sets of schools (i.e., the "troubled" schools in contrast to the non-troubled one) did achieve significance ($t = -2.22$, $df = 48$, $p \leq .031$). With a range on the scale of 12, the mean difference of 2.1 seemed practically significant as well. Like the teachers in Agnew's (1989) study, the teachers in the troubled schools in our study also seemed to emphasize effort. Our previous findings about the mediating effect of school on the relationship between achievement and grades suggested that ethos of effort might, indeed, help to explain this school-level effect.

We conducted one additional analysis to explore Brookhart's (1993, 1994) contention that teachers incorporate non-cognitive measures into grades as a way to compensate for the harmful effects of low grades on the life chances of low-achieving and low-SES students. The implication of Brookhart's claim is that when teachers incorporate non-cognitive criteria such as effort and improvement into the grades of low-SES students, they are doing so in order to boost such students' grades.

Given the size of our sample, our explorations were, of course, tentative. Nevertheless,

they were disturbing and somewhat counter-intuitive, considering Brookhart's findings. In order to test whether or not schools that placed more emphasis on the ethos of effort did, indeed, use effort to compensate for low achievement, we compared grading patterns in the two sets of schools. We compared these patterns in the schools (i.e., the two troubled schools) that tended to favor the ethos of effort with those in the one school that did not. We reasoned that, if effort were being used to compensate for low achievement or low-SES, grades in schools that favored the ethos of effort would be as high as or higher than grades in the school that did not favor this approach to grading. In other words, if Brookhart's contention were correct, we would find evidence of grade inflation in the troubled school.

To test this conjecture, we performed a simple t-test, comparing GPAs in the schools where effort was incorporated into grades with GPAs in schools where it was not. The differences were marked and statistically significant ($t = -3.7$, $df = 60$, $p \leq .001$). In the schools that incorporated effort, average GPA equaled 2.4 (sd = .93); in the schools that did not incorporate effort, average GPA equaled 3.4 (sd = .66). Because achievement also was significantly lower in the troubled schools, we could not support the conclusion that teachers' practice of including effort in constructing grades punished students in the low-achieving schools. Nor, however, did we find evidence to suggest that it was responsible for grade inflation.

Discussion

We can conclude from these analyses that, at least among the schools we studied, there are certain beliefs about grading that differ from school to school. This finding tends to confirm what Agnew (1989) observed and to differ from findings reported by Cizek and associates (1995)

and Kain (1996), among others. In our study, school-level scores on a scale named "ethos of effort" distinguished between teachers at three different schools, and these scores were significantly different when the two troubled schools were conjointly compared to the less troubled one. In light of our qualitative data, this finding suggests that teachers in schools with a more custodial orientation may confound effort and achievement to a greater extent than teachers in schools with a more optimistic and humanistic orientation. Stiggins and associates' (1989) and Agnew's (1989) studies supported a similar interpretation.

Whereas several researchers have documented this phenomenon, its implications for students have not been well enough explored. Some studies of teachers' views about grading (e.g., Brookhart, 1993, 1994) seem to suggest that teachers incorporate non-cognitive factors into report card grades as a way to compensate for students' low achievement (see also Lipman, 1997). Our findings did not lend credence to this interpretation.

Although our findings are tentative and additional research is obviously called for, we see some support in these findings for two assertions in the literature. First, our findings suggest that the practice of grading is responsive to the hidden curriculum. In troubled schools, good behavior may, in fact, replace achievement as the desired response of students. Our analyses, then, seem to confirm the conclusions of various qualitative studies that have examined the workings of the hidden curriculum in advantaged and disadvantaged schools (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Brantlinger, 1993; Brown, 1991; Lipman, 1991).

Second, our findings lend support to the claim made by many measurement experts that report card grades should be based on achievement only (e.g., Friedman & Manley, 1992; Terwilliger, 1989). The incorporation of factors other than achievement confounds the meaning

of grades, but doing so might be justified if the practice actually worked to deflect harmful social uses of grades (cf. Brookhart, 1993. 1994). If, as appears to be the case with our findings, the practice does not have this effect, there seems little to justify it. By confounding effort and achievement, teachers keep recipients of grades (e.g., parents, potential employers, college admission officers) from gaining an accurate picture of students' achievement. And when students, particularly minority or low SES-students, receive grades that fail to provide an accurate representation of their achievement, they can be seriously harmed. Both grade *inflation* resulting from the practice of confounding effort and achievement and grade *deflation* resulting from this practice can have damaging effects.

When the inclusion of effort serves to inflate the grades of such students, they may come to believe that they are making adequate academic progress, whereas their progress is not really sufficient to prepare them to perform well on college entrance examinations or in college classrooms. In a case study of the effects of school restructuring on the ideological perspectives of teachers at a junior high school, Lipman (1997) demonstrated how the dynamic of academic nurturing worked to the detriment of low-income African-American students. Restructuring in this school enabled teachers to act upon views of children that were rooted in a deficit model, promoting a double-standard of success for children from different backgrounds.

> [The school's] restructuring motto, "Success for all," was constructed differently for the two groups of students. For students whom teachers and administrators assumed lacked a positive home environment ... success was feeling good about school, adjusting to rules and expectations, having positive interactions with adults, and attaining a sense of belonging. This definition was quite different from

> the high academic achievement for which the school was known.... In [the school's] racialized, and class polarized, context, this dichotomy meant generally different definitions of success for African-American and White children. (Lipman, 1997, pp. 24-25)

When grades are deflated by the inclusion of non-academic measures, students may come to see themselves as less capable than they actually are. A diminished sense of their own capabilities may impair these students' aspirations for academic and professional attainment. Alternately, such students may continue to recognize their own capabilities while at the same time comprehending and responding to a system rigged against them. Although these students may continue to voice high aspirations for professional success, "they may not actually expect ever to obtain the jobs they desire" (Gibson, 1991, p. 366). Viewing acculturation as a trap, these students may disengage from and even actively resist dominant-culture schooling. The effects of this pattern of response are contradictory. Whereas these patterns may reinforce teachers' diminished expectations for low-SES and minority students' academic performance, they may, at least, permit such students to maintain a sense of personal worth, rooted in a supportive counter-culture identity (Fordham, 1993; Gibson, 1991; Willis, 1977).

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APPENDIX A

Items on the Three Scales of the Grading Beliefs Instrument

Scale #1: Ethos of Effort
Alpha Reliability = .82

The effort of a low-ability student ought to be taken into account in determining his or her report card grade.

The improvement of a high-ability student ought to be taken into account in determining his or her report card grade.

The improvement of a low-ability student ought to be taken into account in determining his or her report card grade.

Scale #2: Ethos of Control
Alpha Reliability = .62

When a student fails to turn in an assignment, it is appropriate to give him or her a zero for that assignment.

If teachers couldn't assign grades to students, they would have a harder time managing their classrooms.

Report card grades are important because they supply students with information about their effort.

Scale #3: Ethos of Academic Achievement
Alpha Reliability = .64

The students with the highest academic achievement should receive the highest report card grades.

Students grades ought to be based on the extent to which they master the learning objectives for a particular subject and grade level.

Grades should be objective representations of students' academic achievement in a particular subject.

APPENDIX B

Regression Coefficients: Predictors of GPA

Variable	Unstandardized	Standardized
Basic Skills	0.03	.66***
Free/Reduced Lunch	-0.03	-.20
School 1	-0.05	-.02
School 2	-0.69	-.35**
Race	0.12	.06
		Adjusted R^2 = 62.4%
		N = 47

** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

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