Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions
about Ethical Practices in Student Evaluation

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Test anxiety has been a subject of a great deal of research and the focus of practical guides for educators (Collins, 1999; Harris & Coy, 2003; Hembree, 1988). Most of this work has focused on students' test anxiety and how teachers can help. In the present age of standards and accountability, teachers themselves can have similar anxiety about the impact of tests and assessments on their reputation and employment (Denning, 2006; Hayes, 2002; Mulvenon, Stegman, & Ritter, 2005). Depending on their previous teaching experiences and school contexts (e.g., grade level, subject), teachers hold differing perceptions of standardized achievement tests (Urdan & Paris, 1994). These differing perceptions lead to a variety of approaches to testing, including how to prepare students and how to administer tests. Such differences in perceptions of testing and test preparation lead to ethical dilemmas in the classroom.

In a Virginia middle school, for example, some students were allowed to take a mandatory exam while the correct answers were shown via an overhead projector. Two teachers were found responsible for providing this inappropriate assistance (Vegh, 2010). In Atlanta, struggling students showed improbable gains in test scores, which resulted in an investigative panel review of 109 public school staff members, including principals, test coordinators, and teachers from 58 different school buildings, who were

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suspected of cheating (Torres, 2010). Most of the suspected cheating was not programmatic but, rather, occurred independently among individual staff and teachers (Dewan, 2010). In a school outside Houston, students were reportedly given a study guide containing questions from the state science test. In this particular district, math and science teachers could receive nearly $3,000 in bonuses for successful student test performance. After the investigation, the school's principal, assistant principal, and three teachers resigned (Gabriel, 2010).

Teaching to the test has been, and continues to be, a common concern in educational circles (Mehrens, 1989). In the current era of high-stakes assessments, however, teachers may use this approach inappropriately, in what Shepard and Kreitzer (1987) have dubbed "teaching of the test." For many teachers, the boundary between ethical and unethical test preparation, however, is ambiguous (Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989). This confusion between "legitimate and illegitimate" teacher practice (Mehrens, 1989) results in further stress and debate about what is (and is not) ethical.

Ethics Context and Ethical Issues

Ethics has been defined as dealing with the actions and practice one ought to do in a situation (Pojman, 1998). Professional ethics focuses on "those norms, values, and principles that should govern the professional conduct" (Strike & Ternasky, 1993, p. 2). The ethical responsibilities of teachers include an obligation to help students learn. This includes the teachers' maintaining regular work hours, having knowledge of students, planning and teaching with care, reflecting and improving one's teaching, cooperating with colleagues and parents, and positively addressing disagreements (Wynne, 1995).

The stress related to determining and enacting ethical behavior is further heightened by the unique role of teachers in communities and society. Teachers are often considered to be moral agents and models for their students (Campbell & Thiessen, 2001). In the classroom and beyond, teachers are viewed as exemplars of ethical behavior who clearly and confidently discern between right and wrong. Moreover, this multifaceted responsibility continues to grow. "The demands on teachers to contribute to not only the intellectual and physical but also the moral and social development of children have increased in emphasis and detail" (Thompson, 1997, p. 9).

Various teacher organizations, such as the National Education Association (NEA) (2012) and the Association of American Educators (2010), have outlined ethical and unethical behaviors via a code of eth-

ics. The NEA Code of Ethics, however, primarily addresses what the professional educator should *not* do. Further, neither group provides specific statements about ethical, or unethical, teacher behaviors related to standardized testing or student evaluation. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) (2003) has created *The Student Evaluation Standards*, which prescribes appropriate educator practice when evaluating students.

Some state associations and agencies also provide their own manuals or policies that outline ethical conduct with standardized testing (Utah State Office of Education, 2011; Washington Educational Research Association, 2001). Like the national teacher organizations, these often identify what educators should not do in regard to student evaluation. Nevertheless, they offer specific guidelines and behaviors for teachers and principals before, during, and after evaluations. For example, the Georgia Association of Educators (2008) provides a code of ethics document that specifically addresses standardized testing. This document highlights two of its State Professional Standards Commission's standards for teachers that connect to testing and evaluation and that define unethical conduct such as:

> falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding the evaluation of students [and] violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items. (p. 16)

The Kansas State Department of Education (2008) does not have policy for testing ethics but, instead, provides resources from local districts that include "Test Preparation Dos and Don'ts" and a PowerPoint file, "Staying off the Front Page of the Newspaper: Ethics of Testing."

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2002) accreditation process requires teacher preparation programs to evaluate each potential classroom teacher with respect to professional ethical dispositions. Ethical practice is a common theme in most teacher preparation programs' conceptual frameworks or mission statements (Peterson, 2005). Teaching ethics in education is done in various ways, including the use of case studies, role-playing, direct instruction of specific professional criteria, exemplars, problem-solving strategies, and conflict resolution (Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999; Benninga, 2003). Teacher education textbooks with a focus on ethical practices have been published (Goodlad & McMannon, 1997; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Sockett, 1993; Strike & Soltis, 2009; Tom, 1984). Yet, the presence

of this curriculum does not always result in sufficient preparation. The Character Education Partnership (2002) conducted a national survey of over 500 deans of schools of education in regard to teacher preparation. Although 90% of the respondents affirmed the need for character and ethical education, only 24% stated that their programs were "highly emphasizing" such content. More recently, Warnick and Silverman (2011) found evidence that "professional ethics is currently a neglected topic in teacher education programs" (p. 273).

Despite the availability of resources and curriculum for ethics instruction, ethical uncertainty and public scrutiny continue to confuse and distress classroom teachers, novice and veteran alike, about their role in student evaluation (Urdan & Paris, 1994). Studies of educators have revealed much disagreement on what is ethical and unethical in the evaluation of student learning. The results of one survey showed that teachers had strong agreement about ethical versus unethical practices in fewer than half of the presented scenarios (Green, Johnson, Kim, & Pope, 2007). A similar survey of educational leaders found disagreement about the ethicality of one-third of the example classroom grading practices (Johnson, Green, Kim, & Pope, 2008).

What constitutes ethical-based practices in assessment and student evaluation is not widely agreed upon among teachers and administrators. This lack of agreement in K-12 school classrooms adds to the challenge of making the transition from pre-service to in-service.

> A dichotomy often exists . . . between fair and ethical educational practices promoted in teacher preparation programs and the harsh realism of behaviors associated with high-stakes testing observed by pre-service teachers. A disconnect becomes distinctly obvious when students move from the college classroom to early field experiences and student teaching and observe clear indicators of ongoing instruction delegated only to test preparation. (Peterson, 2005, p. 4)

In addition to long-standing concerns about classroom management, content knowledge, performance evaluations, and other issues (Clement, 1999; Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Fuller, 1969; Hart, 1987; Phillips, 1932), new teachers face pressure to produce immediate gains in their students' assessment performance, through whatever means necessary in some cases.

Purpose of the Study

Research has investigated the perceptions of educators, including a joint group of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers, as well as a group of principals and principal candidates, in regard to ethical practice

in student evaluation (Green et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2008). In fact, my introduction to this field was through a colleague who was surveying principal candidates in our university's education administration program. I saw immediate application of the topic of student evaluation to our pre-service teachers in my educational foundations class, in terms of studying their perceptions and enhancing instruction of ethical practice. In this regard, there are few studies that concern pre-service teachers' perceptions of ethical evaluation and even fewer that provide a comparison of the perceptions of different groups of pre-service teachers, e.g., elementary versus middle or secondary majors.

The purpose of this study was to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions of ethical evaluation and determine implications for teacher preparation and student evaluation. To this end, the study was guided by the following research questions: (a) What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers about ethical-based practices in assessment and student evaluation? and (b) How do these perceptions compare among pre-service teachers who seek elementary certification and those who seek middle/secondary certification?

Methodology

Participants: Participants (N=264) included all undergraduate pre-service teachers at a large urban Midwestern university who were enrolled in a required teacher education course, "Philosophical, Historical, and Ethical Foundations of Education." Data were compiled from 10 sections of the course. These pre-service teachers were chosen due to their being in the initial phase of the teachers' professional continuum and, as such, represented a convenience sample (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Pre-service teachers in this class are typically in their upper level courses and are seeking initial certification for teaching in an elementary, middle, and/or secondary school. Two years of data were collected over the course of four semesters (fall 2010 through spring 2012; data collection is continuing for ongoing research activity). The sample of participants was mostly homogeneous in race and ethnicity (>90% Caucasian), and the geographic demographics were reflective of the university community.[1]

Measures and Procedures: The survey instrument used in this study was adapted from a tool developed by Green et al. (2007) and is used to study teachers and administrators (Johnson et al., 2008).[2] The instrument contains 36 scenarios of classroom evaluation and testing, based on authentic experiences as well as assessment and evaluation standards documents (Joint Advisory Committee, 1993; JCSEE, 2003). The survey scenarios align with the following seven categories, with the

number of scenarios given in parentheses: standardized test preparation (6), standardized test administration (2), multiple assessment opportunities (3), communication about grading (4), grading practices (13), bias (5), and confidentiality (3). The survey instrument is found in the Appendix. Participants completed a paper version of the survey at the beginning of the semester in their education foundations course.[3]

To complete the survey, participants read each scenario and marked whether they believed that the particular example featured ethical or unethical actions by an educator. Using text resources related to student evaluation, the survey designers identified 10 scenarios as ethical and 26 as unethical (Johnson et al., 2008). The present study investigated agreement among participants in a manner similar to that of the previous researchers. A label of "high agreement" was assigned to scenarios for which at least 80% of the participants agreed about the ethicality of the scenario, and a label of "high disagreement" was assigned to any scenario in which 50-70% of participants agreed (disagreement could be no greater than a 50/50 split). Scenarios for which 71-79% of the participants agreed about the ethicality were considered as having neither high agreement nor high disagreement. Further analysis provided a sorting of the scenarios according to the seven categories and the percentage of scenarios in each category for which the participants agreed and disagreed (number of scenarios identified/total number of scenarios).

To determine whether individual scenarios differed across the participants' various teaching certifications, chi-square analyses were conducted with the data from participants who sought elementary (grades K-6) or middle/secondary (grades 5-12) certification. For the chi-square analysis, Yates' Correction for Continuity was used to compensate for any overestimation of the Pearson chi-square value when used with a 2 x 2 table (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003).

Results and Analysis

Responses of All Pre-Service Teachers. Table 1 provides a summary of pre-service teachers' responses and agreement on the seven categories of student evaluation. Participants had high agreement on the ethicality of 19 scenarios (53%) but had high disagreement on 6 scenarios (17%). Eleven scenarios had neither high agreement nor high disagreement among the pre-service teachers. The Appendix contains the percentages of pre-service teachers in regard to the ethicality of each scenario.

The evaluation topic given the most attention in the survey was grading practices (13 scenarios). Pre-service teachers had high agreement on five (38%) of these scenarios: considering student effort when

Table 1

Agreement of Pre-Service Teachers Indicating Ethicality of Assessment Scenarios

Category (Number of Scenarios)	Number of Scenarios (%)		
	High Agreement	High Disagreement	Neither
Grading practices (13)	5 (38)	2 (15)	6 (46)
Standardized test prep. (6)	4 (67)	1 (17)	1 (17)
Bias (5)	2 (40)	2 (40)	1 (20)
Communication about grading (4)	3 (75)	1 (25)	0
Multiple assessment opps. (3)	2 (67)	0	1 (33)
Confidentiality (3)	2 (67)	0	1 (33)
Standardized test admin. (2)	1 (50)	0	1 (50)
Total	19 (53)	6 (17)	11 (31)

Note. High agreement (80%+), high disagreement (50-70%), neither high agreement nor high disagreement (71-79%).

determining grades, basing each student's grade for a group project on the group's product and a heavily weighted individual component, counting class participation as 30% of the final grade to encourage lively discussion, weighting homework heavily in determining report card grades, and lowering grades for late work by one letter grade for each day. There was high disagreement on two (15%) grading practice scenarios: homework grade of zero for not returning a signed parent form and giving a student a course grade of "F" for missing the final exam. Standardized test preparation had the second highest number of scenarios in the survey (6 scenarios), and pre-service teachers had high agreement on two-thirds (67%) of these scenarios. High disagreement occurred on the scenario in which a teacher creates activities that use specific math problems found in the annual achievement test. In regard to bias (5 scenarios), the results were nearly evenly split. Pre-service teachers had high agreement on two scenarios and high disagreement on two scenarios, with the last scenario's receiving neither high agreement nor disagreement. Communication about grading featured three scenarios (75%) in which pre-service teachers had high agreement about ethicality. High disagreement occurred in regard to the fourth scenario, in which a teacher includes "a few surprise items" on the test that were not on the study guide. The other categories on the survey, multiple assessment opportunities, confidentiality, and standardized test administration, had no scenarios about which the participants were in high disagreement (see Appendix).

Comparison of Elementary and Middle/Secondary Pre-Service Teachers. Chi-square analysis was performed to compare the responses of elementary and middle/secondary school pre-service teachers. Significant differences in responses about ethicality were found in 6 of the 36 scenarios (17%). The responses of the two groups to these six scenarios, along with the results of the chi-square analysis, are found in Table 2.

Four of the scenarios that had significant differences in their responses are in the category of grading practices. In two of these scenarios (offering extra credit and lowering grades for behavior), elementary pre-service teachers had high disagreement, whereas the middle/secondary pre-service teachers had high agreement. For multiple assessment opportunities, middle/secondary pre-service teachers were in high agreement about using multiple-choice tests to determine final grades. However, elementary pre-service teachers had neither high agreement nor high disagreement in regard to this scenario. Both groups had high disagreement about the communication about the grading scenario in which a teacher uses "surprise items" in the final test. Nevertheless, 51.4% of the elementary participants deemed this practice unethical, compared to 66.1% of the middle/secondary participants. In all six instances of significant differences between the responses of the two groups, the elementary pre-service teachers had a higher percentage who judged the scenario to be ethical. On average, the percentage of elementary pre-service teachers who deemed one of these scenarios as ethical was 17.0% more than that of their middle/secondary counterparts.

Discussion and Implications for Future Research

This study of pre-service teachers' perceptions about ethical evaluation practices found that participants had high agreement in more than half (53%) of the survey scenarios, and high disagreement in one-sixth (17%) of the scenarios. This percentage of disagreement is relatively low, compared to that seen in previous research with in-service teachers and educational leaders. In past studies, in-service teachers had high disagreement 31% of the time (Green et al., 2007), and administrators were in disagreement with one-third (33%) of the scenarios (Johnson et al., 2008). In the latter case, principals and principal candidates had high disagreement in twice as many instances as did pre-service teachers in this study. If uncertainty about ethical behavior increases with experience in schools, further conversation about ethical practices may be beneficial for professional development and for graduate courses for in-service teachers. Future research, such as longitudinal studies or case analyses of individuals as they continue their career path in education, could provide insight and suggest applications.

Table 2
*Scenarios with Significant Differences between Elementary
and Middle/Secondary Pre-Service Teachers*

Scenario (Chi-square, p-value)	Ethical %	Unethical %	Ethical %	Unethical %
	Elementary		Middle/Secondary	
Grading Practices (4 of 13)				
A physical education teacher gives a student a zero as a homework grade effort for not returning a form requiring a parent's signature. (Chi-square = 9.87, p = .002)	59.2	40.8	37.1	62.9
A middle school history teacher offers extra credit opportunities to all his classes except the advanced class. (Chi-square = 5.51, p = .019)	34.3	65.7	19.5	80.5
A teacher weights homework heavily in determining report card grades. (Chi-square =8.67, p = .003)	90.4	9.6	74.1	25.9
A teacher lowers report grades for disruptive behavior. (Chi-square = 12.42, p = .001)	33.3	66.7	12.7	87.3
Communication about Grading (1 of 4)				
For the final exam, a teacher always uses a few surprise items about topics that were not on the study guide. (Chi-square = 4.36, p = .037)	48.6	51.4	33.9	66.1
Multiple Assessment Opportunities (1 of 3)				
A high school social studies teacher bases students' final semester grades on two multiple-choice tests. (Chi-square = 5.04, p = .025)	29.8	70.2	16.2	83.8

Note. Chi-square values with Yates' Continuity Correction for a 2 x 2 table.

More specifically, with regard to the 13 grading practices scenarios, pre-service teachers in this study had high disagreement about only two scenarios in this group (15%), whereas principals/principal candidates were in disagreement about seven (54%) of the scenarios (Johnson et al., 2008). A lack of disagreement among the pre-service teachers may be due to a lack of experience in school and in evaluation practices from a teacher's perspective. Principals and teachers who study to become principal candidates most likely have a much richer history of encounters, either directly or indirectly, with issues similar to those presented in the survey instrument. Studies in the future could examine the impact of various approaches to preparing teachers for grading, including readings, lessons, and assignments in on-campus courses, as well as clinically-based activities, experiences, and projects in schools. Additional research could focus on the change in teachers' perceptions of grading practices over time.

Interestingly, pre-service teachers had high agreement (at least 80% of participants) that 14 of the survey's scenarios were ethical (39% of all scenarios). Moreover, for 20 of the 36 scenarios, a majority of pre-service teachers (over 50% of all participants) judged them as ethical. Pre-service teachers show a tendency to accept behaviors as ethical that may actually be unethical with respect to evaluation standards for educators. Again, a lack of exposure to methods and standards of evaluation might lead to such perceptions. In this regard, more insight could be gained through a comparative study of ethical perspectives of other pre-professionals such as novices in the fields of business, medicine, and law.

Elementary pre-service teachers, in particular, had a tendency to judge more scenarios as ethical than did middle/secondary pre-service teachers. There was a significant difference between these two groups' responses in one-sixth (17%) of all scenarios, with a higher percentage of elementary participants' deeming the scenario as ethical in every case. In three of these scenarios, middle/secondary pre-service teachers were in high agreement about an example's being unethical; conversely, elementary pre-service teachers were either in high disagreement (two scenarios) or had neither high agreement nor high disagreement (one scenario). The difference in responses between these two groups may be due to their context of instruction. Elementary majors might be more accepting or forgiving of a teacher who works with younger children, for whom there are perhaps fewer instances of high-stakes assessments. In comparison, middle/secondary majors may feel additional pressure to adhere to building or department policies, given the more direct translation of their students' test scores to college and career-related endeavors. Similarly, elementary, middle, and secondary teachers might

hold different views of their students' "personhood" and the associated levels of responsibility. Further research that examines this issue and proposes possible explanations is warranted.

During the administration of the survey, akin to a pre-test at the beginning of the semester, several pre-service teachers individually questioned the context of some scenarios. Many mentioned to the proctors that, in some cases, the ethicality of a scenario would depend on certain parameters such as school policies, grading requirements, or district expectations. Likewise, several participants attempted to add clarifiers to the scenario, verbalizing their thoughts, e.g., "Well, if a teacher made these expectations clear to the students, I suppose it *could* be ethical." When participants brought up such issues during survey completion, they were instructed to simply mark either ethical or unethical based on the information given in the scenario. Nevertheless, some participants chose to leave some scenarios unanswered or attempted to mark their answer halfway between ethical and unethical. These responses were subsequently removed from the data set. Future studies might benefit from converting the dichotomous format of the survey to a Likert scale or to an open-ended questionnaire. Further consideration of the complexity of educational ethics, as well as cultural differences, could enhance data collection and analysis.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The scenarios in the survey frequently prompted participants' desires to discuss the assorted issues, especially the potential context of particular examples. Although a whole-class discussion about many of these scenarios was not formally planned until later in the semester, it was encouraging for instructors to witness participants' increased interest in and motivation to examine the topic. In addition to being a research tool, the survey instrument used in this study also acted as a catalyst for teaching and learning. With such a complex topic, however, one activity is not enough for adequate instruction.

Texts and strategies for addressing ethical assessment are available for teacher educators (Bebeau et al., 1999; Benninga, 2003; Goodlad & McMannon, 1997; Goodlad et al., 1990; Sockett, 1993; Strike & Soltis, 2009; Tom, 1984). However, instructors must be careful not to assume that one project or even one class that features ethical issues constitutes sufficient preparation. To highly emphasize ethical education, preparation programs need to feature a multiple-semester progression of continued study, reflection, and application. An interlaced approach would parallel other key curricular components woven throughout teacher preparation

programs, such as clinical/field experiences (Adler, 1984; Thompson & Thornton, 1989), technology (Adamy & Kellogg, 2001), diversity and social justice (Goodwin, 2004; Roberts, 2007), literacy and English language learning (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008), lesson study (Lewis, Perry, Foster, Hurd, & Fisher, 2011), inquiry (Wolkenhauer, Boynton, & Dana, 2011), and reflection on beliefs about teaching and learning (Thompson, 2007). During every semester, each education class could have at least one ethics-related project or assignment that pertains to the specific course context and builds from previous ethical study.

In addition to already established activities, pre-service teachers might also benefit from timely and authentic techniques. For example, a survey such as that used in this study is not only a research tool, but also a pedagogical tool, serving as a springboard for discussion and investigation. Technological devices such as "clickers," SMART Boards, and tablets could enhance the experience, as students could quickly share and examine each other's responses to specific scenarios. Other strategies for ethics instruction include studying specific regulations outlined by local districts or the state department of education, discussing news reports of actual cases, and hearing from guest speakers with expertise in evaluation protocol. Teacher educators themselves should always model ethical standards by showing sensitivity and honoring confidentiality in these discussions. Such activities should permeate the program and include opportunities for review, extension, and assessment of pre-service teachers' understandings. Together, these methods have the potential to create meaningful experiences that not only heighten pre-service teachers' awareness of ethical issues but also provide pragmatic skills.

Pre-service teachers need additional investigation into and exposure to ethical student evaluation practices. Accountability, standards, and assessments are mainstays in ongoing educational reform efforts. Participants in this study will encounter such issues throughout their careers and would likely benefit from purposeful inspection and instruction at the beginning of their professional work. At this stage, pre-service teachers are most malleable and will "develop new visions about teaching, and gain increasing understanding of learners and the learning process as they expand their teaching repertoires" (Fishman & Davis, 2006, p. 536).

Teacher educators and mentors need to consider how to effectively incorporate ethical practices in formal preparation and induction programs. Similar to other aspects of education, ethics can be embedded throughout the entire teacher preparation curriculum. Coursework should provide opportunities for explicit attention to ethical principles, along with application and reflection. Preparing teachers through a continual examination of ethical behavior involves honest dialogue and a constant

pursuit of professional integrity. Such an effort should be the ambition of every educator, no matter the level of experience.

Notes

[1] Although the sample of participants was mostly homogeneous, differences in culture and previous experiences (e.g., religion, community, family) may affect views about ethical behaviors (Cordeiro, 1995; Li & Persons, 2011). When examining perceptions of ethical assessment, researchers and educators must be mindful of cultural differences (Gielen, Ahmed, & Avellani, 1992; Smith, Hume, Zimmermann, & Davis, 2007) as well as equity issues (Gipps & Murphy, 1994).

[2] Survey scenarios from "Educational leaders' perceptions about ethical practices in student evaluation," by R. J. Johnson, S. K. Green, D.-H. Kim, & N. S. Pope, 2008, *American Journal of Evaluation, 29*(4), 520-530. Copyright 2008 by the American Evaluation Association. Adapted with permission.

[3] The survey instrument used in the current study is based on the application of Kant's (1785) and Rawls' (1971) definitions of ethical behavior, as presented by Green et al. (2007): "acting based on one's judgment of an obligation—a duty by virtue of a relationship with a person, persons, or social institution" (p. 1000). This definition acknowledges that ethical behavior concerns relationships, which can be culturally defined. Educators often struggle to ensure that assessment practices avoid cultural bias (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2011; Luykx et al., 2007; Valencia & Suzuki, 2001); and the same concern was extended to this survey instrument in the current study. With these potential limitations in mind, the survey was still selected due to its effective use in earlier studies (Green et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2008) and to provide a catalyst for further study and learning, both by researchers and the participating pre-service teachers.

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Appendix

*Ethical Practices in Student Evaluation Survey and
Percentages of Pre-Service Teachers' Indicating Ethicality*

Scenario	Ethical %	Unethical %
Grading Practices (13 Scenarios)		
A teacher considers student effort when determining grades.	88.2	11.8
For a group project, a teacher bases each student's grade on the group's product and a heavily weighted individual component.	85.4	14.6
To encourage lively discussion in English III, a teacher counts class participation as 30% of the final grade.	85.1	14.9
A teacher weights homework heavily in determining report card grades.	81.6	18.4
A teacher lowers grades for late work by one letter grade for each day.	80.0	20.0
A teacher considers students' growth in assigning grades.	75.4	24.6
A physical education teacher gives a student a zero as a homework grade for not returning a form that requires a parent's signature.	49.2	50.8

Scenario	Ethical %	Unethical %
An accounting teacher gives a student an F for the course because the student missed the final exam.	31.4	68.6
To minimize guessing, a teacher announces she will deduct more points for a wrong answer than for leaving the answer blank.	26.2	73.8
As a teacher finalizes grades, she changes one student's course grade from a B+ to an A because tests and papers showed the student had mastered the course objectives even though he had not completed some of his homework assignments.	26.0	74.0
A middle school history teacher offers extra credit opportunities to all his classes except the advanced class.	25.0	75.0
A teacher lowers report grades for disruptive behavior.	23.5	76.5
A teacher uses student peer ratings as 40% of the grade on an oral report.	23.2	76.8

Standardized Test Preparation (6 Scenarios)		
A teacher spends a class period to train his students in test-taking skills (e.g., not spending too much time on one problem, eliminating impossible answers, guessing).	93.9	6.1
A teacher administers a parallel form of a norm-referenced achievement test to her students in preparation for the state testing. The parallel form is another version of the state test that assesses the same content; however, the items on the parallel form are not the same ones as on the state form of the achievement test.	90.1	9.9
A teacher uses Scoring High on the MAT, a commercially available publication with the same format and skills as the Metropolitan Achievement Test (but not the same items), in preparation for the MAT.	88.2	11.8
A teacher adds vocabulary words from a standardized, norm-referenced verbal aptitude test to classroom vocabulary tests.	82.2	17.8

Scenario	Ethical %	Unethical %
An elementary teacher quizzes students in the lunch line about the number of pints in a quart because students had missed the item on previous administrations of the state standardized test.	79.9	20.1
Based on his review of the district's mathematics frameworks, a teacher creates learning activities with specific math problems that are included in the annual achievement test.	66.2	33.8

Bias (5 Scenarios)

A teacher allows a student with a learning disability in the language arts to use a tape-recorder when the student answers the essay questions on social studies tests.	90.9	9.1
A teacher always knows the identity of the student whose essay she is grading.	64.0	36.0
To enhance self-esteem, an elementary teacher addresses only students' strengths when writing narrative report cards.	37.3	62.7
Two teachers teach different sections of the same course. Because of his belief that students' work is rarely perfect, one teacher gives very few grades of A.	20.6	79.4
A teacher who knows a student had a bad week because of problems at home bumps the student's participation grade up a few points to compensate for his bad score on a quiz.	14.1	85.9

Communication About Grading (4 Scenarios)

A teacher states how she will grade a test when she assigns it.	98.9	1.1
A teacher tells students what materials are important to learn in preparing for a class test.	98.9	1.1
A middle school principal directs teachers to give students a written policy that explains how report card grades are calculated in their classes.	98.9	1.1
For the final exam, a teacher always uses a few surprise items about topics that were not on the study guide.	40.9	59.1

Scenario	Ethical %	Unethical %
Multiple Assessment Opportunities (3 Scenarios)		
A teacher assesses student knowledge by using many types of assessment: multiple-choice tests, essays, projects, portfolios.	99.1	0.8
A high school social studies teacher bases students' final semester grades on two multiple-choice tests.	26.3	73.7
A second grade teacher uses observations as the sole method to assess what students have learned.	15.6	84.4
Confidentiality (3 Scenarios)		
A teacher discloses to the parents of a student their child's score on an intelligence test.	79.4	20.6
To motivate students to perform better, a science teacher always announces that he is passing out scored tests to students in order of points earned, from the top score to the bottom score.	2.7	97.3
To calm the fears of distraught parents, a teacher compares their child's achievement scores with the results of the student's cousin who is also in the class.	0.4	99.6
Standardized Test Administration (2 Scenarios)		
While administering a standardized test, a teacher notices that a child has skipped a problem and is now recording all his answers out of sequence on the answer form. The teacher stops at the child's desk and shows the student where to record the answer he is working on and instructs him to put the answer to each question with the same number on the answer sheet.	75.5	24.5
While administering a standardized test, a teacher notices a child has missed a problem that the student obviously knows. The teacher stands by the child's desk, taps her finger by the incorrect problem, shakes her head, and walks on to the next desk.	3.4	96.6

Note. Survey scenarios from "Educational leaders' perceptions about ethical practices in student evaluation," by R. J. Johnson, S. K. Green, D.-H. Kim, & N. S. Pope, 2008, *American Journal of Evaluation, 29*(4), 520-530. Copyright 2008 by the American Evaluation Association. Adapted with permission.