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As a special ed teacher, much of what I do is about differentiation. Many of my students are not working at grade level, so materials need to be modified to make them appropriate for my students. For my students who are included in grade level classes, the modifications that I generally make are in assessment pieces. These range from modifying tests by rewording questions to modifying a project to make it more autism friendly. One of the biggest challenges I have faced is finding appropriate reading and math materials for older students who are working many years below their grade level.

I have a real problem with grading students based on criteria that they cannot achieve. If a students work needs to be modified and/or differentiated, then so should their grading rubric. The students’ scores should reflect how they did with the modified assignment. This spring, the principal and I decided that the ASD students who were included in grade level classes but also worked with me would not get a gen ed grade in the subjects that were covered by me. My students are not a grade level in those subjects and to assess them based on grade level expectations is not fair. The progress report I sent home was a more appropriate place to assess the work they were doing in my classroom.