

Teacher Expectations for Student Achievement: TESA and GESA

Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA)

TESA is a training which emerged from studies such as *Pygmalion in the Classroom* by Rosenthal and Jacobs and *expectation theory* from the research of Thomas Good and Jere Brophy. teacher expectations are “inferences that teachers make about the future behavior or academic achievement of their students based on what they know about these students now.” Students are more likely to feel accepted and valued when teachers use behaviors that are equitable toward all students.

This research indicates that either consciously or unconsciously, teachers often behave differently toward students based on the beliefs and assumptions they have about them. For example, teachers engage in affirming nonverbal behaviors such as smiling, leaning toward, and making eye contact with students more frequently when they believe they are dealing with high-ability students than when they believe they are interacting with "slow" students.

Students who are perceived to be low in ability may also be given fewer opportunities to learn new material, asked less stimulating questions, given briefer and less informative feedback, praised less frequently for success, called on less frequently, and given less time to respond than students who are considered high in ability.

TESA identifies teacher behaviors which are observed more often with students for whom the teacher has higher expectations. They are observed less often with students for whom a teacher has lower expectations.

There are 15 identified interactions— arranged in three categories or strands of five actions each— which are positively correlated with high expecta-

tions. The categories reflect how teachers solicit and manage students’ responses to questions, how they give feedback, and how they demonstrate personal regard for students.

What is Equitable Distribution of Response Opportunity?

The problem: Teachers are less likely to call on perceived low achievers and, when they do call on these perceived low achievers, they are more likely ask easier questions.

A response opportunity is any specific opportunity provided by or permitted by the teacher for a student to respond to a question, recite, read aloud, express an opinion, give a report, demonstrate something or confirm a response given by another.

Unit	STRAND		
	A Response Opportunity	B Feedback	C Personal Regard
1	Equitable Distribution	Affirm/Correct	Proximity
2	Individual Help	Praise	Courtesy
3	Latency	Reasons for Praise	Personal Interest and Compliments
4	Delving	Listening	Touching
5	Higher Level Questions	Accepting Feelings	Desist

What is individual help?

The problem: Teachers intend to provide individual help and attention to students who need it most, but often end up giving to those who seek it. Individual helping is any indicator of individual assistance to a student by the teacher that

results in the student improving their work

What is latency?

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What is delving?

The problem: Teachers are less apt to provide clues or delve for the answers to questions with low achievers and are more apt to “let them off the hook” if these students look hesitant about an answer.

Delving occurs when the teacher asks a question or provides additional information verbally or non-verbally to help the student respond to a question.

What is higher-level questioning?

The problem: Perceived low achievers are consistently asked lower level questions than other students.

Higher-level questioning occurs when the teacher asks a student a question that requires him to do something more than merely remember the answer.

What is affirming and correcting?

The problem: Specific feedback regarding academic performance is given more often to perceived high achievers. Perceived low achievers frequently receive little or no feedback, and the feedback received doesn't provide remedies for improving the work.

Affirming and correcting is feedback from a teacher to a student regarding academic work that indicates if the work is acceptable or not, and how to correct it if needed.

What is praise?

The problem: Teachers are less likely to praise perceived low achievers and when they do praise them, it is often for marginal or even inadequate work, due to sympathy for the student.

Praise happens when the teacher comments positively on the student's performance.

What is listening?

The problem: Teachers of low achieving students spend 25% less time listening to students than teachers of high achievers.

Listening occurs when the teacher maintains eye contact with the student, or indicates to the student that the response was heard (e.g. writes the response on the board).

What is accepting feelings?

The problem: While teachers often state that they believe in expressing feelings, they are inhibited in doing so in the classroom environment, focusing more on feedback (positive or negative).

Accepting feelings occurs when the teacher recognizes and acknowledges, in a non-judgmental manner, the feelings underlying a student's particular behavior.

What is proximity?

The problem: Perceived low achievers are more frequently placed farther from the teacher, or in a group that receives less of the teacher's attention. Proximity is when the teacher purposefully comes

within arm's distance of any student.

What is courtesy?

The problem: Many female and minority students are treated discourteously by teachers.

Courtesy is attentive, considerate and thoughtful behavior demonstrated by use of courteous words towards students.

What is personal interest and compliments?

The problem: Teachers are less likely to show personal interest in perceived low achievers, largely due to a belief that they lack experiences similar to these students.

Personal interest and compliments are recognition of a student's behaviors or ideas that are extraneous to the instructional tasks.

What is touching?

The problem: An increasingly litigious society has created an overall fear of touching students. When teachers are comfortable with touching students, they tend to touch perceived low achievers less than high achievers.

Touching is any brief, physical touch given in a friendly manner by the teacher to indicate support, the need to talk, or encouragement.

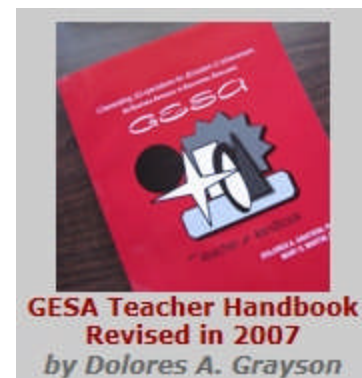
What is desisting?

The problem: Communication between teachers and perceived low achievers is more often focused on correction of problems than other students, and the manner of the correction is more often highly negative.

Desisting occurs when the teacher responds to problem behavior in a calm manner.

Gender Expectations and Student Achievement

GESA promotes that same types of changes to teacher behavior but the target is gender, race and ethnic background.



High Expectations for All

Robert J. Marzano

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The idea of communicating high expectations for all students burst onto the K–12 education scene in the late 1960s. An important study indicated that teachers form expectations about their students' chances for academic success and then interact with students on the basis of those expectations.¹ That is, teachers treat their "high-expectancy" students differently from their "low-expectancy" students. Students quickly recognize this differential treatment and begin to act in accordance with the expectations that the treatment implies.

Having high expectations for all students is, of course, a good and noble goal. Two problems arise here, however.

- First, expectations are subtle and difficult to change. Teachers may be unaware that they have low expectations for some students; even when they become aware, they may have difficulty changing their expectations because their beliefs and biases have developed over the years.
- Second, what actually communicates expectations to students is teacher *behavior*. If teachers consciously work to change their biases but don't change their behavior toward those students from whom they have tended to expect less, their change of attitude will have little effect on student achievement.

A Four-Step Process

In working with teachers on this issue, we have found it helpful to think of communicating high expectations as an instructional strategy that involves four steps.

Step 1: Identify students for whom you have low expectations.

Do this as early in the school year or the course as possible, because once you form expectations, it's hard to change them. Teachers might simply scan their class rosters and mentally place students into two categories—"I expect them to do well" and "I don't expect them to do well." This is not an easy task because it requires teachers to admit that they have formed negative expectations about some students.

Step 2: Identify similarities in students.

This is the most difficult part of the strategy because none of us likes to acknowledge that we automatically form conclusions about certain types of people. For example, a teacher might find that the students for whom she has low expectations all tend to look a certain way, speak a certain way, or come from a certain ethnic group. Research has demonstrated that such characteristics are commonly the basis for early expectations about students.²

If teachers do find patterns in their expectations, it does not necessarily mean that they are racists or bigots. To some extent, all adults have preconceived notions regarding different groups of people, simply because they are influenced by the biases of the people who raised them and the people with whom they interacted as children and by their personal experiences growing up. A bigot or a racist knowingly or unknowingly behaves in accordance with such notions. However, an individual who actively seeks to behave in a manner that is *not* controlled by biased patterns of thoughts or behaviors is anything but a bigot.

Step 3: Identify differential treatment of low-expectancy students.

In practice, teachers' *behaviors* toward students are much more important than their expectations: Students cannot know what teachers are thinking, but they do observe how teachers behave—and they make inferences on the basis of these behaviors.

In general, there are two ways that teachers treat low-expectancy students differently. One involves the general affective tone established between teacher and student. With low-expectancy students, teachers tend to make less eye contact, smile less, make less physical contact, and engage in less playful or light dialogue.

The second way involves the type and quality of interactions regarding academic content. Teachers tend to call on low-expectancy students less often, ask less challenging questions, delve into their answers less deeply, and reward them for less rigorous responses.

Teachers can determine their differential treatment of low-expectancy students simply by noting and recording their behavior toward those students.

Step 4: Treat low-expectancy and high-expectancy students the same.

It is fairly easy to establish a positive affective tone with all students. Teachers simply make sure that they exhibit the same positive behaviors to all students—smiling, involving students in good-natured discussions, and engaging in appropriate physical contact. All students will typically respond well to this type of behavior.

Providing equal treatment is more difficult when it comes to academic interactions, however, particularly when questioning students. Students for whom teachers have low expectations become accustomed to the teacher asking them fewer and less challenging questions than other students.

When teachers change this behavior, some students might feel uncomfortable. They will probably need to go through this uncomfortable phase, however, to arrive at a place where they will risk putting forth new ideas and asking questions that disclose their confusion about certain topics. Because this is the goal—for all students to embrace complex and challenging issues and for the teacher to acknowledge and respect their ideas.

Out in the Open

Addressing the issue of low expectations and differential treatment is a powerful strategy to enhance the achievement of those students who traditionally do not do well in the K–12 system. One of the more challenging aspects of effective teaching is confronting one's own expectations openly and productively.

Endnotes

¹ Rosenthal, R., & Jacobs, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

² Dusek, J. B., & Gail, J. (1983). The bases of teacher expectations: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75(3), 327–346.

High Expectations Video from Edutopia

<http://www.edutopia.org/high-expectations-elementary-assessment-video>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP_JoO7Ic0o

In Business:

http://www.media-partners.com/leadership/pyg-maion_effect_managing_the_power_of_expectations.htm