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TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter	
i. TEACHER EXPECTATIONS: A BACKGROUND.....	7
Factors Affecting the Behaviour and Attainments of Pupils Rosenthal and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy Ethnographic Research on Teacher Expectations How Teacher Expectations are Communicated	
ii. FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER EXPECTATIONS.....	20
The Pupil Staffroom News and Streaming	
CONCLUSION.....	40
APPENDIX A.....	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	49

INTRODUCTION

In October of last year when I began teaching experience in St. Paul's C.B.S. in North Brunswick Street, I was nervous for two reasons. Firstly, I had never taught before and I found the thought of walking into the classroom, any classroom, intimidating. Secondly, reports on the school from friends and some of the school staff had left me wondering how I was going to cope. Individual students had been pointed out to me as having a range of problems from severe learning disabilities to being emotionally disturbed and difficult to control. Reasons for the many 'problem cases' were given, and usually referred to the pupils' social class and difficult home background. Very little of my own background and experiences seemed to relate to the students' problems. Having attended an all-girl secondary school myself, I was even unsure as to what to expect from a class of boys rather than girls and ended up simply expecting the worst.

I began teaching and discipline was a problem but improved weekly as the students and I got to know each other. I was helped by a strong emphasis on discipline throughout the school and a network of staff back-up for dealing with particularly difficult students. The standard of work was often poor but not appalling and the younger classes who are particularly enthusiastic, have shown great improvements. I became angry with myself for having had such low expectations of both pupil behaviour and performance. I decided to do my dissertation on teacher expectations. I wanted to find out how expectations are formed and communicated and, more importantly, if they affect pupil performance.

Chapter one is divided into four sections. It begins with a discussion on the factors affecting child learning as detailed by Michael Rutter in his research on the subject. (1) Rutter includes teacher expectations in his study and in section two of this chapter, I give a history of Rosenthal's experimental research on teacher expectations and the related self-fulfilling prophecy (Nash, 1976), (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1990). (2) I include criticisms of Rosenthal's study (Rutter, 1979), Banks, (1982), (3) and the third section of chapter one is a review of some of

the more successful research on teacher expectations. The authors I refer to here are Galton (1983), Banks (1982), Delamont (1978) and Rutter (1979). (4) The final part of this chapter is a brief analysis of the process of teacher-pupil interaction as an explanation of how teacher expectations are communicated (Fontana, 1988) (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1990). (5)

Chapter two details the factors affecting teacher expectations and is divided into two sections. The first of these gives an account of research on the influence of a pupils' social class, ethnic background, gender and age upon teacher behaviour, and consequent pupil performance. The authors referred to include many of those mentioned above and also Mortimore (1988) Sharp and Green (1984), Read (1978), Keddie (1973) and Drudy and Lynch (1993). (6) In the second section of this chapter I look at research by Hammersley (1984) and Hargreaves (1984) on staffroom conversation and how it can help shape teachers' attitudes towards, and expectations of their pupils. (7) I also detail the affects of streaming on teacher expectations and pupil performance (Pidgeon, 1970), (Rutter, 1979), (Reid, 1978) (8) and question the validity and accuracy of

tests used for streaming. (Drudy and Lynch, 1993),
(Pidgeon, 1970).

In my conclusion I place teacher expectations into the wider context of the school system and social inequalities in education. I also include the results of interviews held with the teaching staff of St. Paul's C.B.S, North Brunswick Street.

FOOTNOTES INTRODUCTION

1. Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore, and Janet Ouston, Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children (London: Open Books, 1979).
2. Roy Nash, Teacher Expectations and Pupil Learning (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1976).
Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: A Developmental Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1990).
3. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours.
Olive Banks, The Sociology of Education (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1982)
4. Maurice Galton and John Wilcocks, eds. Moving from the Primary Classroom (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983).
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Sara Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom: Contemporary Sociology of the School (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1978).
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5. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1988).
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6. Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stoll, David Lewis and Russell Geob, School Matters: The Junior Years (Wells, England: Open Books, 1988).
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Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1993).

7. Martin Hammersley, "Staffroom News" in Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers on Teaching, eds. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods (London: Open University Press, 1984).
David H. Hargreaves, Interpersonal Relations and Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).
8. Douglas A. Pidgeon, Expectation and Pupil Performance (London: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1970).
9. Drudy, Schools and Society in Ireland.
Pidgeon, Expectation and Pupil Performance.

CHAPTER 1

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS: A BACKGROUND

Factors Affecting the Behaviour and Attainments of Pupils

In his book Fifteen Thousand Hours (1979), Michael Rutter compares the progress of over two thousand pupils in twelve secondary schools in inner London throughout the whole of their secondary schooling. (1) In his summary and conclusions, Rutter first notes that the schools in the study differed significantly in the behaviour and attainments shown by their pupils. Surprisingly, physical factors such as the size of the school, the age of the buildings or the space available did not account for these differences. Similarly, broad differences in the administrative status or organisation of the individual schools were not found to be particularly significant. Although the schools studied differed in the proportion of behaviourally difficult or low achieving children they admitted, these differences did not account either for the variations between schools in their pupils' later behaviour and attainments. The differences between schools in outcome were found, however, to be systematically related to their characteristics as

social institutions:

Factors as varied as the degrees of academic emphasis, teacher actions in lessons, the availability of incentives and rewards, good conditions for pupils, and the extent to which children were able to take responsibility were all significantly associated with outcome differences between schools. (2)

He further notes that:

...the total pattern of findings indicates the strong probability that the associations between schools process and outcome reflect a causal process. In other words, to an appreciable extent children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experience at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution. (3)

One of the most important aspects of the school as a "social institution" is the relationship between the teachers and the pupils. Rutter's research showed that children had better academic success where homework was regularly set and marked and, more importantly, where the teachers expressed expectations that a high proportion of the children would do well in the national examinations. (4) Children worked better in an atmosphere of confidence in which they could and would succeed at the tasks they were set - "In turn, the

children's good work [tended] to reinforce and support the teachers' high expectations of them." (5) In other words, the teachers' expectations work as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Rosenthal and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

The idea of self-fulfilling prophecy came originally from Merton (6) but its educational implications were made famous, or rather infamous by Robert Rosenthal. In 1968, Rosenthal and his assistant Leonora Jacobson published Pygmalion in the Classroom (7) - an experimental study which claimed to show that teachers' expectations had an important impact on student performance. Researchers told teachers that tests indicated that certain pupils (actually randomly selected) would make unusual intellectual gains, would have a "growth spurt" during the coming year. It was said that these predictions were then fulfilled when at the end of the school term, the results showed that the pupils originally identified as in the growth-spurt group did much better on a series of tests than the other pupils. Their academic performances had improved and their measured IQs were significantly higher, and it was reason of that this improvement happened because the

expectations held by the teachers were communicated to their pupils and that as a direct result of having this knowledge, the pupils responded with higher scholastic performances - a self-fulfilling prophecy.

All of the designated pupils in the Rosenthal study received glowing comments from their teachers. A second finding of this study concerns the teachers' attitudes towards the other children. Rosenthal selected a subgroup of pupils in his control group, pupils who showed intellectual gains during the term but hadn't been identified ahead of time to the teachers. He found that the teachers regarded these children as less well-adjusted, less interesting and less affectionate than the others. (8) In other words, those pupils who gained intellectually without having been predicted as a "growth-spurter" and experiencing the accompanying teacher expectations, were perceived negatively by the teacher.

Thus, what became known as the "Rosenthal effect" has four aspects. Firstly, pupils who are expected to do well tend to show gains. Secondly, pupils who are not expected to do well tend to do less well than the first group. Thirdly, pupils who make gains despite

expectations to the contrary are regarded negatively by the teacher. Finally, those processes take place without there necessarily being awareness in the consciousness of the people concerned about what is going on. Rosenthal quoted Eliza Dolittle from George Bernard Shaw's famous play 'Pygmalion':

You see, really and truly.....the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he...treats me as a flower girl,.....but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will. (9)

At the time of Rosenthal's original study, serious objections were raised concerning aspects of the research design and many of his assertions about teacher expectations and the self-fulfilling prophecy were thrown into doubt. In the first place, the effect for the school as a whole was largely accounted for by very large differences in only two out of eighteen classrooms, and in general effects were both small and inconsistent. The teachers themselves, two years after the study, could not recall which children had been involved in the experiment, which raises the question whether they did in fact pay much attention to the lists of names. (10) More recently, Rutter has claimed that

the study had serious methodological faults and that the results do not truly indicate what the book claims. (11) Despite criticisms, Rosenthal continued to study the topic and by 1978 published The Behaviourial and Brain Sciences which included a review of 345 studies on teacher expectations and showed the cumulative significance of how expectations affect pupil performance and subsequent achievements. (12)

Ethnographic Research on Teacher Expectations

Whereas Rosenthal focused his research on experimental studies (he attempted to produce the effect by telling teachers that subgroups of children in their classes had different levels of learning potential), a second, more ethnographic method of research in which teachers and pupils are observed in the classroom has proven more convincing. It has been found that the interactions between the teacher and pupil are the most important determinant of a pupil's progress. (13) If the observed and recorded teachers' behaviour reveals differences among the children, the characteristics of the children are then analysed. Reviewing a number of these ethnographic studies, Brophy and Good (1974) argue that although findings are not always consistent, expectation affects have been convincingly demonstrated. (14) They

have shown that teachers give better student advantage over their 'slower' peers during instruction:

They wait longer for them to answer, offer more clues, rephrase their questions more helpfully, and accept a wider range of responses. They assume that the bright pupil will eventually reach the answer and behave accordingly. (15)

This is, of course, how the self-fulfilling prophecy works: teachers encourage the clever pupil to think and rethink. In other studies, Barker Lunn (1970) has suggested that the observed decline in reading performance of children of lower social origin relative to higher social class children might, in some measure, be due to their teachers' lower expectations of them. (16) This argument has also been advanced by Burstall (1970), who showed, in a study of primary school French teaching, that low scores in an oral test, given after two years instruction, were not scattered randomly among the various schools in the sample, but were concentrated in a small number of schools where teachers expressed negative attitudes. (17) Burstall concluded that the teachers attitudes were of paramount importance. (18) Rutter concluded from his research that children had better academic success where the teachers expressed expectations that a high proportion of the children would do well in national

examinations. (19) Rutter also refers to Seaver (1973), who found that pupils taught by the same teachers as their older siblings had higher academic attainments than pupils taught by different teachers if their older siblings had been academically bright, but lower achievement if their siblings had been dull. (20) Other studies have shown that teachers' expectations and attitudes have an impact on how they behave towards their pupils. However, not all teachers respond in the same way - some give more attention and praise to those for whom they have high expectations whereas others give more encouragement to the low achievers whom they think need it more. (21)

How Expectations are Communicated

It has been demonstrated above that teachers have different expectations for different groups of students, and that these expectations can result in differences in student performance. The studies referred to however, do not reveal the way in which expectations communicate themselves to the student, and influence his or her achievement. For this purpose, I propose to look briefly at those studies which are concerned with the process of classroom interaction or, more specifically, pupil-teacher interaction.

Research has shown that people with positive views of their own worth tend to be more successful. (22)

Furthermore, people's self-esteem is much influenced by the manner in which they are treated by others. (23)

Rutter following his study suggested that:

...pupils behaved better and achieved more when teachers treated them in ways which emphasised their successes and good potential rather than those which focused on their failings and shortcomings. (24)

Although verbal communication is important in communicating what we mean, it has been found to be far less significant than the non-verbal elements of communication such as tone of voice, facial expression and posture. Indeed, it has been suggested that from 75 to 95 percent of a message is translated non-verbally. (25) Thus, for teachers, although the content is important, the way in which the message is transmitted cannot be under-emphasised.

Actions speak louder than words: the way in which the teacher sits, stands, moves, gestures, raises or lowers her voice will convey what she really means to the students.

David Fontana (1988), analysing the way in which the

teacher and the class interact socially gives gazing as one example of non-verbal communication:

Very often as much social information is conveyed through gaze as through speech. Teacher and class spend a great deal of time during the lesson looking at each other and registering their reactions, and much of the relationship between them is mediated and monitored in this way. (26)

Commenting on teachers' gesture and posture, and the way they move about the class, he says:

...they may be stiff and formal, nervous and jerky, relaxed and at ease, explosive and hasty, slow and uncertain, smooth and fluent, in command of their environment or dominated by it. (27)

Thus, through association alone, the teacher's unspoken feelings and expectations about his/her role and about students can become known to the class. In America studies have shown that teachers who have positive attitudes use "an important set of non-verbal cues to encourage student participation and involvement". (28) Galloway (1977) identifies these as including, maintenance of eye to eye contact with the pupil, smiling, and leaning towards pupils. (29) Negative attitudes manifest themselves with a bored posture or facial expression and avoidance of eye to eye contact,

and are seen as constricting students' growth. (30)

Sprinthall and Sprinthall continue:

Researchers could predict what type of non-verbal behaviour a teacher would use if they knew the teacher's attitude set. Moreover, it was obvious that the children understood the meaning of the different body language systems. (31)

Although children may not respond to a teacher on the strength of what is communicated (verbally and non-verbally) during one lesson, the influence of the teacher's attitudes during several classes per week over the course of a years instruction will certainly have an accumulative effect and will be responded to appropriately by the pupil. Whether positive or negative, they are self-perpetuating. A self-fulfilling prophecy becomes a factor in the pupil's school career.

To study the teacher's perceptions of her pupils correctly, to understand why she has different expectations for different pupils, we need to know what aspects of the pupil the teacher takes to be significant and meaningful. How does she see her pupils? It will be assumed throughout the remainder of this research paper that teacher expectations do exert an influence on pupils and it is proposed to examine how these expectations are acquired.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore and Janet Ouston, Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their effects on Children (London: Open Books, 1979).
2. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours, p.178
3. Ibid., p. 179
4. Ibid., p. 188
5. Ibid.
6. See Sara Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom: Contemporary Sociology of the School (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1978) p. 55.
7. See Roy Nash, Teacher Expectations and Pupil Learning (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976) p. 14.
8. See Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: A Developmental Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990) p. 380.
9. Rosenthal on G.B. Shaw's Pygmalion, quoted by Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, pp. 380 - 381.
10. Olive Banks, The Sociology of Education (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1982) p. 233.
11. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours, p. 14.
12. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 381.
13. Maurice Galton, "Teaching and Learning in the Classroom", in Moving from the Primary Classroom, eds. Maurice Galton and John Wilcocks (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983) p. 181.
14. See Banks, The Sociology of Education, p. 233.
15. See Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom, p. 71.

16. See Roy Nash, "Measuring Teacher Attitudes", in Personality and Learning 2, ed. Jane Wolfson (Kent: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982) p. 247.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours, p. 188.
20. Ibid., p. 15.
21. Ibid.
22. Guy Le Francois, Psychology for Teaching (California: Wadsworth Inc., 1991) p.139
23. Ibid.
24. Michael Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours, p.196
25. Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: A Developmental Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990) p.338.
26. David Fontana, Psychology for Teachers (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1988) p.271.
27. Ibid.
28. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p.338.
29. Ibid. p.339.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

FACTORS AFFECTING TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

Every classroom inevitably contains pupils of differing personality and background. Rosenthal, in his original study, looked only at pupils' perceived ability in terms of intellectual growth. Since then, research has been carried out on some of the other factors that might affect teachers' expectations and their consequent behaviour towards individual pupils. These factors include social class, ethnic background, gender, age, streaming and staffroom news.

The Pupil

The influence of pupils' background upon teacher behaviour in the classroom has concerned researchers for some time. Some studies have found no social class effect. Hargreaves (1968), for example, in his study of social relations in a secondary school was unable to find any relationship between allocation to stream and social class. He noted, however, that this may have been due to the small size of his sample - only one hundred pupils. (1) Croll (1981) found that both the number and type of interactions which a pupil received from a teacher was not dependant on social class. (2)

Other studies, however, have indicated that social class is one of the major sources of expectations teachers hold for their pupils and that teacher behaviour can vary according to a child's background. For example, Sharp and Green (1975) found that pupils whom teachers regarded as most 'successful' were given greater attention than other children and that these pupils invariably came from a 'good area'. (3) In their study of three American infant school classes, they reported that "whereas in the teachers' ideology as educationalist, openmindedness towards all pupils should prevail, in their substantive practice it only seemed to apply to some of them". (4) Sharp and Green continue "Some pupils acquired reified identities and were thought of as really 'thick' or 'peculiar' or had other stable and hard categorizations applied to them". (5) The researchers secondly noted that there was a marked differentiation among pupils in terms of the amounts and kinds of interactions they had with their teachers, with those pupils whom the teachers regarded as more successful being given far greater attention than the others.

In his 1970 observations of a black American Kindergarten class, Rist (1970) was able to show that

the children were grouped according to criteria such as family income, family size and level of parental education. (6) The school did not stream by ability and it was on the basis of the teachers' observations and judgements of the pupils' behaviour that the class was divided into three groups. Rist's observations revealed that the groups received differential treatment, with the lowest group having less interaction with the teacher and receiving more ridicule from the other children in the class than the other two groups. When the class reached the end of kindergarten their intelligence was tested. The top group contained marginally higher scores but there were overlaps between all of the groups. This raises the question as to how much these initial decisions about grouping and subsequent treatments - based on social criteria - help to predetermine the school careers of children.

"Subsequent teachers will be affected by school records and will support initial group and labelling, while the pupils will respond with, or be socialised into, appropriate behaviours and achievements". (7) Thus, it seems, that although there is no clear relationship between social class and ability and attainment within a group of children, social class may affect the way in which those children are perceived by their teachers.

In 1967, Goodacre observed that while infant school teachers' estimates of children's reading ranked in order of merit - upper-middle class, working class and lower class - this was not reflected on the children's performance on standardised reading comprehension tests. The investigation revealed that teachers regarded pupils' home backgrounds as an important factor in learning to read and that they frequently categorised pupils as coming from 'good' or 'poor' homes. (8) In 1981 Jasman's study of teacher ratings of pupils again showed a relationship with social class. "Teachers tended to rate children better listeners, more creative and better gathers of information if they came from middle-rather than working-class backgrounds". (9) The influence of social class may not always be relevant, particularly if teachers know little about a child's home circumstances. School staff however, usually have access to information about pupils which may include family data and background and teachers' classroom behaviour may be "considerably altered" by the possession of this information. (10) It is almost certainly the case that some teachers are more sensitive to their pupils' social class than others and this in turn raises the question as to how teachers' own social class may affect the evaluations they make of their

pupils. Becker (1969), examining a large urban school system found that most of the teachers could be viewed as lower middle class on a socioeconomic scale and that in general they valued "conformity, obedience, neatness, cleanliness, punctuality and hard work - highly conventional values" (11) in their pupils. Interviewing over sixty teachers to find out how they perceived their pupils, Becker found three sets of perceptions that closely followed class lines. Firstly, teachers perceived children from their own class as the best pupils seeing them as "neat, orderly, clean and eager to follow directions". (12) Secondly, pupils from lower-class backgrounds were seen as not really valuing education or wishing to improve themselves. Finally, pupils from upper-class wealthy backgrounds were perceived as difficult to teach because, although clever, they were also bad mannered and lacked respect for the teachers' authority. Commenting on the study, Sprinthall and Sprinthall conclude that:

Where the social class of the pupil and teacher differ, especially if the pupil comes from a lower socioeconomic class than the teacher, then there is a real possibility that the teacher systematically expects less from and does less effective teaching with such children. (13)

Even if the teachers know little about a pupils' home

circumstances, assessments about social class may be made using the child's speech, eligibility for free school meals (where available) or physical appearance as judgement criteria. In the United States, for example, one study asked four hundred and four elementary school teachers to rate children on a number of characteristics on the basis of a report card and a photograph. All reports were filled out for an above average student. It was found that the child's attractiveness (independently rated by twenty educators) was "significantly associated with the teachers' expectations about how intelligent the child was, how interested in education his parents were, how far he was likely to progress in school and how popular he or she would be with peers". (14)

Regarding pupils speech, Crowl and MacGinitie (1974) found that teachers listening to pupils' taped answers were more favourably disposed to those rendered in a 'white' accent as opposed to a 'black' one. (15)

Similarly, Williams (1972) reported that teachers had higher academic expectations of pupils who spoke in a standard way than those whose English was non-standard. (16) Negative teacher responses to 'black' accents and non-standard English suggest that teachers

may have a negative attitude towards ethnic minorities. Labov (1969) in his work on the socially constructed nature of language showed that non-standard English is discouraged in school and thought by both teachers and researchers to be "inadequate as a vehicle for logical or formal thought". (17) Studying students' names and teacher responses, Haras and McDavid (1973) found that teachers made more favourable judgements of essays which were apparently written by children with common names (which had in fact been randomly selected) and less favourably to ones bearing unusual names. (18) The Rampton Report (1981) which studied the reasons for the high failure rates of ethnic minority children in British schools proposed that the performance of ethnic minority children might be affected by low teacher expectations due to negative stereotypes about the abilities of such groups. (19) An alternative view was offered by Short in 1985 who suggested that teachers' expectations might be influenced by their experience of ethnic minority groups in the classroom. (20) This is a circular argument as one might argue that all teacher expectations are influenced by the experience of teaching different pupils, just as that experience is influenced by teacher expectations - again a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In 1984 Tomlinson reviewed British research on teacher expectations of Asian and West Indian pupils and their parents and concluded that teachers tend to hold very negative expectations for the behaviour and academic potential of West Indian pupils. They were regarded as being more aggressive than other children while the boys were more likely to be reported as "behaviourally deviant". (21) Eleanor Leacock (1969) and her associates found in their observations of teachers' behaviour and student achievement at the Bank Street school in New York that there was a systematic pattern of negative attitudes and expectations towards most lower-class (black) ghetto children. (22) More recently, Trujillo (1986) in her examination of classroom interactions between professors and minority and non-minority college students revealed that professors took more time to answer questions asked by non-minority students, asked less complex questions of minority students and gave fewer cues and feedback to the latter. (23)

Like social - and ethnic - stereotyping, the reinforcement of sex-stereotyping in the classroom, as evidenced by differences in teacher action towards and judgements of boys and girls, has been pointed out by

many researchers. Again, as with many expectations, teachers unfortunately may be completely unaware of their own behaviour in encouraging and sustaining stereotyping or of the subsequent effect upon the academic progress and behavioural development of boys and girls. Delamont pointed out that at American junior school level teachers tend to underestimate the abilities of boys and reprimand them more often than girls. (24) Sprinthall and Sprinthall referring to later research, report that classroom observation in preschool reveals that teachers respond to the sexes differently but to the disadvantage of girls:

Teachers encouraged assertiveness, autonomous problem solving and independence on the part of boys. They were more likely to devalue the very same behaviour in girls. The girls were getting a different message to show less activity and more docility in learning. (25)

In Britain, Walden and Walkerdine (1985) noted that primary school girls linked being good at their work with being a nice, kind and helpful person:

It appears that primary school teachers, because of their need continuously to occupy and manage thirty or more lively individuals, expect and aim for conformity and passivity in their pupils and as both Whyte and Walden and Walkerdine point out, direct much of their energy to controlling and motivating the boys who they expect to be greater risk takers. (26)

Mortimore also found that in general, boys received more communication and work feedback from their teachers and that, although boys gave poorer performances in cognitive areas, teachers tended to rate them slightly more favourably than girls in terms of ability. He noted that these differences were not relevant to the sex of the teacher and suggests that the teachers were being influenced by the generally livelier behaviour of the boys. (27) Dweck (1978) reported that teachers accounted for the poor performances of girls in terms of 'intellectual inadequacies' while they attributed boys low performances to poor motivation. (28)

In Ireland, Drudy and Lynch (1993) refer to Buckley's study in an urban primary school where it was found that tasks in the classroom and around the school were stereotypical for girls and boys. It was also argued that boys "received more specific teacher reaction and benefited from longer, more precise and intense educational interaction than did girls". (29)

Block (1984) after several studies on the subject in America reported that high achieving girls received the lowest level of support in the classroom and the least feedback from teachers. More alarmingly, negative expectancies for girls were found at all levels - "from nursery school to college". (30)

In 1970, Pidgeon suggested that teachers 'know' that older children are capable of doing more work than their younger peers and that they subsequently expect more from them. (31) In order to test out this theory, Peter Mortimore (1988) and his colleagues during a four year study of 2,000 pupils from over fifty randomly selected London primary schools analysed teachers' communications with different aged pupils. It was found that teachers consistently judged pupils born in the summer months as being of lower ability and as having more behaviour difficulties. (32) The younger pupils (those born in the summer term) were found to have received the least feedback on their behaviour whereas the oldest received most. Teachers also listened to autumn-born pupils read more frequently, even though the older children scored more highly in reading assessments and were rated as being of higher ability.

Staffroom News and Streaming

In my introduction I mentioned how, before beginning teaching, individual pupils had been pointed out to me as having a range of problems from severe learning disabilities to being emotionally disturbed and difficult to control. Such descriptions of pupils by teachers are often employed to guide their actions:

Knowing what to expect from different quarters minimizes the cues required to come to some conclusion about what's going on, what's about to happen, who is involved, in what role, and what can be done about it. Knowing what 'type' a pupil is important, otherwise one might be caught unawares. (33)

Martin Hammersley (1984) further suggests in his analysis of staff room conversation that pupil descriptions or 'typifications' are mainly formulated in terms of how much trouble the pupil is for the teacher and that for the most part, they refer to psychological characteristics of pupils - "moods, characters and mental disorders". (34) Sharp and Green (1975) believe that in the categorisation of a child as a 'problem':

...a career is potentially being generated beyond the classroom context by the involvement of increasingly anonymous agencies as structural gestures of his fate. As this occurs the teacher may receive feedbacks from the agencies which feed into the present definition of the child and in doing so tend to rectify the categorisation she has of him. (35)

Interestingly, Hammersley notes that "the setting, including the actions of the teachers, is taken for granted as natural and normal and warranting certain behaviour". (36)

Although staffroom discussions on / typifications of pupils may well enable a teacher to anticipate how a

class will go and what problems are likely to arise, it also runs the risk of creating false expectations about the class or individual pupils. Delamont (1978) has noted that conversation between teachers about individual pupils "solidifies the individual perceptions into a reputation which travels before the pupil into new classroom encounters". (37) Hargreaves (1972) points out that although teachers may disagree about the behaviour of a pupil disagreement can only occur between teachers who both have direct experience of the child. (38) Thus, for the teacher who is unfamiliar with the class, staffroom news categorising individuals may foster expectations about 'good' or 'bad' pupils in advance of actual interaction.

In a streamed school the teacher can categorize the pupil not only in terms of behaviour but also in relation to what stream the child is in. Streaming (or 'tracking' or 'banding' as it is sometimes known) is the grouping of children into classes of relatively homogeneous ability. Pidgeon (1970) suggests that it is under the influence of streaming that teacher expectations exert their greatest influence on student performance. (39) Hargreaves in his study of streaming in a secondary school and its affect on teacher and

pupil attitudes reported that there was a tendency for lower-stream children to be labelled as failures and to perceive themselves as such. (40) Keddie (1971) suggests that teachers' knowledge about the stream of class they teach affects which part of the curriculum they teach them and the way in which they respond to pupils' questions:

The best illustration is that the question 'Why are we learning this?' is regarded as serious enough to require an answer if from a high-stream child, but as 'Why do we have to learn anything?' if from a low-stream child. (41)

Barker Lunn (1970) found that the attitude of teachers to streaming affected the classroom climate with those pupils being taught by 'non-streamer teachers' (those teachers not in favour of streaming) in non-streamed schools having better relationships with their teachers and holding higher academic self-images than other children. (42)

Streaming as an organisational device within schools works as a result of two main beliefs being accepted by teachers. (43) The first of these is teachers' acceptance that their pupils have been accurately tested/assessed and that they are in the correct stream.

Several researchers have argued, however, that the intelligence tests commonly used to assess pupils for streaming are problematic for a number of reasons. Drudy and Lynch, for example, believe that the artificial situation of intelligence tests cannot determine how a pupil might perform in a real-life situation. They note that tests are usually given in a once-off examination-type setting and therefore give "no scope for assessing functional ability or intelligence". (44) They continue:

The items used in intelligence tests are a set of symbols that are both restricted in range and artificial in form...they try to isolate cognitive skills and measure them independently of emotional and behavioral responses. (45)

Drudy and Lynch also note that tests are frequently class-based. They refer to Paul Henderson who has argued that the definition of intelligence or ability is still determined by the dominant groups in society, namely white middle-class men. (46) Intelligence tests also fail to take into account many factors such as fatigue or stress which may depress pupil performance. Taking these arguments into account, one can conclude that streaming on the basis of intelligence tests is inaccurate. Not surprising, Barker Lunn, after her

large scale research into streaming in primary schools found that 15 per cent of the pupils in her sample were in the wrong stream on the basis of their attainment scores. (47) Drudy and Lynch summarize that:

The predictive validity of tests, therefore, may be nothing more than a by-product of circumstances and processes that have little to do with the test itself. (48)

Thus, teacher expectations formed on the basis of a stream label may be inaccurate as streaming on the basis of intelligence tests may work very much as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The second belief accepted by teachers about streaming is that pupil performance within a stream is standardised:

There will be a tendency, therefore, for all the children in any given stream to be taught what the teacher expects pupils at that level of ability to be able to learn. (49)

The above assumption also applies to the behaviour expected from classes in different streams. Streams tend to get labelled with a stereotyped identity. Tajfel (1978) commenting on the phenomenon of the

stereotype observes that the less information one holds about a person, the more likely it is that group-related characteristics are assigned to that person. (50) For teachers, this means that incorrect assessments may be formed about classes or individuals based on the labels applied to different streams before any teaching has actually begun:

Each stream label carries its own particular status within the school and staff frequently work with strongly institutionalised and therefore preconceived notions about the typical 'A' stream or band three child. Such labels are embedded aspects of the shared meanings that teachers rely on in their everyday work with pupils. (51)

Thus a teacher may form an evaluation or develop expectations on the basis of stream label rather than make an assessment of the relative abilities of individual pupils.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. See Roy Nash, "Measuring Teacher Attitudes", in Personality and Learning 2, ed. Jane Wolfson (Kent: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982) p. 248.
2. See Maurice Galton, "Teaching and Learning in the Classroom", in Moving from the Primary Classroom, eds. Maurice Galton and John Wilcocks (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983) p. 181.
3. See Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stoll, David Lewis and Russell Ecob, School Matters: The Junior Years (Wells, England: Open Books, 1988) p. 164.
4. R. Sharp and A. Green, "Social Stratification in the Classroom", in Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching, eds. Peter Woods and Andy Hargreaves (London: Open University Press) 1984 p. 123.
5. Ibid., p. 123
6. See Ivan Reid, Sociological Perspectives on School and Education (London: Open Books, 1978) pp. 46-47
7. Ibid., p. 47.
8. Ibid., p. 134.
9. See Galton, "Teaching and Learning in the Classroom", p. 181.
10. Sara Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom: Contemporary Sociology of the School (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1978) p. 57.
11. See Norman A. Sprinthall and Richard C. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology: A Developmental Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990) p. 382.
12. Ibid., p. 382.
13. Ibid., p. 383.
14. See Olive Banks, The Sociology of Education (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1982) p. 234.
15. See Reid, Sociological Perspectives, p. 141.

16. Ibid.
17. See Nell Keddie, "Introduction", in Tinker, Taylor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation ed. Nell Keddie (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973) p. 9.
18. See Reid, Sociological Perspectives, p. 141.
19. See Mortimore, School Matters p. 168.
20. Ibid.
21. See David Galloway and Anne Edwards, Primary School Teaching and Educational Psychology (Essex, England: Longman, 1991) p. 55.
22. See Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 383.
23. Ibid., p. 384.
24. Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom, p. 57.
25. Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 387.
26. See Galloway, Primary School Teaching, p. 56.
27. Mortimore, School Matters, p. 167.
28. See Galloway, Primary School Teaching, p. 56.
29. See Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1993) p. 199.
30. See Sprinthall, Educational Psychology, p. 388.
31. See Mortimore, School Matters, p. 164.
32. Ibid., p. 168.
33. Martin Hammersley, "Staffroom News", in Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching, eds. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods (London: Open University Press, 1984) p. 206
34. Ibid., p. 211.
35. Sharp, "Social Stratification", p. 125.

36. Hamnersley, "Staffroom News", p. 211
37. Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom, p. 55.
38. David H. Hargreaves, Interpersonal Relations and Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) p.210.
39. Douglas A. Pidgeon, Expectation and Pupil Performance (London: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1970) p. 105.
40. See Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore and Janet Ouston, Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Affects on Children (London: Open Books, 1979) p. 13.
41. See Reid, Sociological Perspectives, p. 47.
42. See Drudy, Schools and Society in Ireland, p. 253.
43. Pidgeon, Expectation and Pupil Performance, p. 39.
44. Drudy, Schools and Society in Ireland, p. 232.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p. 231.
47. Ibid., p. 248.
48. Ibid., p. 233.
49. Pidgeon, Expectation and Pupil Performance, p. 39.
50. See Galloway, Primary School Teaching, p. 56.
51. Stephen J. Ball, "The Sociology of the School: Streaming and Mixed Ability and Social Class", in Education and Social Class, ed. Rick Rogers (East Sussex: The Falmer Press, 1986) p. 85.

CONCLUSION

Many teacher predictions about pupil achievement are based on previous experience and may well reflect accurate teacher expectations. Furthermore, as Brophy and Good (1974) point out, not all teachers will allow their expectations to interfere with their ability to treat pupils appropriately. (1) Unfortunately however, teachers are often unaware of their own expectations and how they are formed and communicated. They may consequently be ignorant of the debilitating dangers of low expectations, negative preconceptions and stereotypes. Several researchers have also highlighted the often paradoxical nature of teacher attitudes towards pupils in theory as opposed to in practice. Delamont (1978) distinguishes two separate dimensions in teachers' perspectives on pupils - "the theoretical versus the practical and the stereotypical versus the idiosyncratic." (2) She elaborates:

The two are not, in fact, contradictory, for the nature and quality of educational theory leads easily to stereotyping ('lower-class children are verbally deprived'), while the 'conventional wisdom' of the teaching profession leads to individualising ('all children are different')... (3)

Sharp and Green (1975) in their research on social stratification in the classroom found that:

although all the teacher surveyed were well aware of the dangers of premature labelling, preferring to retain open minds regarding the potentialities and capabilities of their pupils, some pupils seemed to have acquired reified identities and were thought of as really 'thick', 'peculiar' or how other stable or hard categorizations applied to them. (4)

Thus, it seems that, whereas in theory, most teachers will prescribe to an ideology of open mindedness towards all pupils, in practice, this ideology may not apply. The labelling of pupils as 'thick' or 'dull' as mentioned above by Sharp and Green has been studied by Drudy and Lynch (1993) who believe that such pupils are "socialised into a culture of failure and self-blame". (5) They propose that by continuously labeling a pupil as a failure, the school system works to make the individual blame himself for his own failure, rather than pinpointing any inadequacy in the system itself. (6) The teacher's role is to carry out this work. Hammersley (1984) commenting on staffroom news says that pupil typifications "operate to explain away poor pupil performance as a product of ineducability". (7) Again the fault lies with the pupil

rather than the educational system. Fuchs (1968), in explaining high rate of failure in school among children living in slums, puts forward the theory that it is the slum-school systems' belief that social conditions outside the school make such failures inevitable that do make such failures inevitable. (8) The school system works as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Regarding the high rate of failure in school among children from low social classes, I have already demonstrated in Chapter Two that membership of a particular social class is not itself sufficient reason for poor school achievement since not all children from low social classes do badly at school and vica-versa. Keddie (1973) argues that schools function to transmit the mainstream values of society and that since many lower social class children come from homes where mainstream values may not prevail, they are seen as "less educable" and this is the reason for their failure in the schools system. (9) Interviewing members of the staff in St. Paul's C.B.S., North Brunswick Street, I found that a pupil's background (family circumstances etc.) was often seen as adversely affecting pupil performance. (10) Interestingly, the majority of teachers interviewed were not from the local area and

felt that they had not got a lot in common with the pupils they were teaching. (11) Although I interviewed the teaching staff of only one inner city secondary school, I suggest that the above results are a reflection of teacher opinions and attitudes throughout the country. Sharp and Green giving an explanation for teacher labelling of pupils, refer to the difference in pupil and teacher perspectives, and define 'normal children' as those "within the parameters of the teachers' background expectancies". (12) Hargreaves (1978) further suggests that the teachers role is one of:

...a crucial lynch-pin in the wheel of causality that connects structured features of the society to interactional patterns in the classroom and back again, thereby reproducing the structural arrangements. (13)

If the school system is functional in the reproduction of society's inequalities, then the school curriculum must be examined as well as the role of teachers. As with the intelligence tests discussed earlier the curriculum has been criticised as reflecting the knowledge and experiences white middle-class men only.

Writing about ways to combat this bias, Giroux and his assistants suggest that:

...teachers would have to develop forms of knowledge and classroom social practices, that validate the experiences pupils bring to school. This would demand acknowledging the language forms, styles of presentation, dispositions, forms of reasoning and culture forms that give meaning to student experience. Thus the cultural capital of students from subordinate social categories must be related to the curriculum developed or taught, and to questions raised in classes. (14)

My research thus documents that for a move towards greater equality in education, teacher expectations must be examined. A commitment to open-mindedness in the assessment of pupils and a belief in the potential for change in students is crucial. Teacher-trainers must also impress upon their students the need to lift and sustain expectations. Finally, in considering teacher expectations it must be remembered that just as a low perception of the abilities and behaviour of a pupil may be stultifying, for the pupil about whom the teacher holds a positive view, the effect will be stimulating.

FOOTNOTES CONCLUSION

1. See Peter Mortimore, Pamela Sammons, Louise Stolls, and Russell Geob, School Matters: The Junior Years (Wells, England: Open Books, 1988) p. 163.
2. Sara Delamont, Interaction in the Classroom: Contemporary Sociology of the School (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1978) p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. Rachael Sharp and Anthony Green, Education and Social Control: A Study in Progressive Primary Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) p. 115.
5. Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd., 1993) p. 235.
6. Ibid.
7. Martin Hammersley, "Staffroom News", in Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching, eds. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods (London: Open University Press, 1984) p. 212.
8. Estelle Fuchs, "How Teachers Learn to Help Children Fail", in Tinker, Tailor... The Myth of Cultural Deprivation, ed. Nell Keddie (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd.) p. 75.
9. Nell Keddie, "Introduction", in Tinker, Tailor...The Myth of Cultural Deprivation, ed. Nell Keddie (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd.) p. 8.
10. See Appendix A, question eight.
11. Ibid., questions three and four.
12. Rachael Sharp and Anthony Green, "Social Stratification in the Classroom", in Classrooms and Staffrooms: The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching, eds. Andy Hargreavres and Peter Woods (London: Open University Press, 1984) p. 126.

13. See Maurice Galton, "Explaining Classroom Practice", in Moving from the Primary Classroom, eds. Maurice Galton and John Wilcocks (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983) p. 180.
14. See Drudy, Schools and Society in Ireland, p. 158.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

The questions below were used as guidelines for structured interviews with members of the teaching staff at St. Paul's C.B.S., North Brunswick Street. These interviews took place on 1st March 1994.

1. What subjects do you teach?
2. How long have you been teaching in Brunswick Street?
3. Are you from this area? / Where are you from?
4. Do you think that you have a lot in common with the pupils you are teaching?
5. How would you describe a good pupil or a bad pupil?
6. Do you think that streaming is a good or a bad thing?
7. Do you think that pupils are aware of what is expected of them in the classroom (both academically and discipline-wise) and that they alter their behaviour (for better or for worse) accordingly? Why? How?
8. Do you think that a pupil's background (family circumstances etc.) affect their school performance? How?
9. Do you think it is important to know personal details (such as family background) about pupils? Why?
10. Do discipline problems form a large part of teaching for you?
11. Do you think that staff cooperation is important for understanding and controlling discipline problems in the school? Why?

Cont.

APPENDIX A continued

12. Do you think it is important for new teachers coming into the school to be aware of discipline problems with some classes or with individual pupils?

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