

Expectations and Trust in the Classroom

Establishing and enforcing high and reasonable standards for students is essential to good teaching practice. Making one's expectations a reality in the classroom takes much effort and perseverance on the part of the teacher.

In "Rumors of Inferiority," the authors Jeff Howard and Ray Hammond write, "Expectations do not always work. If they come from a questionable source or if they predict an outcome that is too inconsistent with previous experience, they won't have much effect. Only credible expectations – those that come from a source considered reliable and that address a belief or doubt the performer is sensitive to – will have a self-fulfilling impact."

We can set the highest of expectations, but without a trusting relationship as the foundation, the expectations are hollow and may go unmet.

Students want to trust you, and they want you to trust them. For example, students will be asking:

	Does my teacher trust me to:	Do I trust my teacher to:
1.	Really want to learn?	Really care about whether I master the material?
2.	Be smart enough to master the material?	Explain things in a way that I understand?
3.	Do what he or she suggests that I should do to improve?	Follow through on providing the support that he or she promises?
4.	Be mannerly and respectful? Or, alternatively, is my teacher afraid of how I might react?	Treat me respectfully, helping me feel good about myself?

Think of some ways you as a teacher can respond to the following:

1. When a student says, "I worked hard on this," you believe him but the work is of poor quality.
2. When a student says, "I worked very hard on this," but you do NOT believe him and the work is of poor quality.
3. When high expectations lead to a very stressed-out student
4. When the student's home life is in turmoil and the student does not put sufficient effort into his work?
5. When the student lacks some very basic skill?
6. Should a teacher have different expectations for students with different academic performance levels?
7. How do you balance student effort and quality of work when grading?

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