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In the last 40 years, experimental research has clearly demonstrated that teacher expectations can have self-fulfilling prophecy effects. Although expectations of teachers concerning students in their own classrooms are generally accurate and based on valid information, teacher expectation effects on student achievement that do occur tend to be undesirable, limiting effects of lowered expectations (Brophy, 1983). Brophy and Good (1970b) found that even though high expectation students succeeded much more often and failed less often, they were more likely than low expectation students to be praised when they did succeed and less likely to be criticized when they failed. Teachers failed to provide feedback to high expectation students only about 3% of the time, but failed to give feedback to low expectation students almost 15% of the time (Brophy & Good, 1970b). Good and Thompson (1998) reviewed research on the communication of performance expectations and found that some teachers "gratuitously praise low-achieving students in ways that indicate low performance expectations; whereas, other teachers communicate low expectations by criticizing low-achieving students disproportionately more often for incorrect answers than is the case for high-achieving students". Other methods of communicating low performance expectations include protecting the student from failure or embarrassment by not giving contingent feedback, criticizing a given student disproportionately more often than other students following a wrong answer, praising the student proportionately less often than other students following a correct answer, asking the student to answer only simple questions, and calling on the student only when he or she raises a hand (Good & Thompson, 1998).

A number of studies in music have focused on the relationship between expectations and evaluations of music performances. Duerkson (1972) found that subjects rated performances labeled as "student" performances lower than "professional" even though the recordings were identical. Similarly, Cavitt (1997) found that subjects listening to identical recordings had higher
ratings and expectations for bands labeled "high school" than for bands labeled "beginner". Cassidy and Sims (1991) investigated the effects of special education labels on peers' and adults' evaluations of a youth choir. They concluded that ratings of performances might have been higher because the performers exceeded initially low rater expectations. Schultz (1994) studied the influence of talent expectations and nature/nurture beliefs on evaluations of music performances and concluded that a student who was depicted as talented was rated significantly higher than a student depicted as hard working. Elliot (1995/1996) found that both race and gender influenced judgments of music performances even when those judgments were made by experienced music educators.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the expectation effects of students labeled as high or low ability and/or high or low effort on pre-service music teachers' evaluation of a musical performance.

Method

A compact disc recording of a professional trumpet player performing the first 25 measures of a grade one and a half concert band piece entitled "Fanfare and Fugue" by Anne McGinty was recorded two times on a Marantz Professional Model CDR631 Compact Disc Recorder. The trumpet player was asked to perform with (1) accuracy and good tone on the first performance trial, (2) accuracy, poor tone and without any dynamic contrast on the second performance trial. Each performance was then dubbed twice on a stimulus compact disc for a total of four performances. Pre-service music teachers were told that there were four different seventh grade performers. These performances were reordered and paired with a written anecdote describing the performers' ability and effort. The performances were described in the following order and pairing: Student 1 - recording one was paired with a description of a high ability, high effort student; Student 2 - recording two was described as a low ability, high effort student; Student 3 - recording one was described as high ability, low effort, and Student 4 - recording two was described as low ability, low effort. The first group of the participants (n=18) were asked to read the description of the student, listen to the performance, and evaluate the overall performance by circling from among the terms “very poor”, "poor", "fair", "good", and "excellent". The order of student descriptions of ability and effort were then altered and the other group of participants (n=21) was asked to read the student descriptions, listen to the recording, and evaluate performances (See Table 1).

Table 1
Labels and Performances Used as Stimuli (In Order of Presentation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A  n=18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Order number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results

Participant’s evaluations of overall performance were coded as 1= “very poor”, 2= “poor”, 3= “fair”, 4= “good”, and 5= “excellent”. The data set was analyzed using a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) with one between-subjects factor (the order that performances were labeled) and two within-subjects factors (good or poor performances and performances labeled high effort or low effort). As would be anticipated, there was a significant difference between how participants rated the good and poor performances $[F(1,37) = 25.77, p< .001]$. More importantly, there was a highly significant difference in the way participants rated performances when they were labeled as a high effort or low effort student $[F(1,37) = 148.50, p<. 001]$. This is of great interest because, as you recall, participants may have been listening to the same performance with the only difference being that of the label. There was also a significant interaction between the good/poor performances and the high/low effort labels $[F (1,37) = 4.77, p <. 035]$. This indicates that although these factors are not independent of each other, the label had a significant effect on how participants rated students. The labels did not yield an effect independent of the good or poor performances. The order in which students were labeled had no significant effect on how participants rated performances. Table 2 shows the mean ratings for performances irrespective of the order presented.

Table 2
Means for Evaluation Ratings of Labeled Student Performances
This table indicates clearly that when pre-service teachers heard the same performance and the student was labeled as “low effort” they evaluated the student lower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Effort</th>
<th>Low Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the expectation effects of students labeled as high or low ability and/or high or low effort on pre-service music teachers’ evaluation of a musical performance. Participants’ responses indicated that labels did have a significant effect on the way they evaluated the student.

Results indicated that the interaction between performances labeled as high/low effort didn’t qualify either of the main effects. There was a smaller difference between the means of the students labeled as “Good/High Effort” and “Good/Low Effort” versus the difference in means between the “Poor/High Effort” and the “Poor/Low Effort” players. This may indicate that effort is perceived as being less important if a student plays well than if a student plays poorly.

Teachers’ beliefs about students’ abilities are important. Previous studies in music have demonstrated that the expectation effects we have for students can have an effect on the way we evaluate and teach students. As discussed previously, some of the labels teachers place on students may be based on valid, accurate information while others may be based on unreliable biases. Differential expectation and treatment may be detrimental to student performance. Emphasizing student potential rather than deficits and systematically developing positive and higher expectations for students may lead to more effective classrooms and more successful students.
References


