

TEACHING TO THE TOP: THE POWER OF EXPECTATIONS

6 ~ 24/25

Teachers' expectations significantly influence students' expectations, progress and attainment. We set the tone of the classroom. We design the levels of challenge and support within learning tasks. We choose how and when to give feedback, offer praise, and use questioning. We build rapport and create a safe learning space for our students. This Spotlight looks at the research behind the impact of teacher expectations and suggests some Trusted Techniques.

The Pygmalion effect



- When educators believe in their students' potential, it profoundly impacts achievement.
- Higher teacher expectations lead to improved student performance.
- Teachers' beliefs about their students' abilities often translate into differential treatment, which in turn affects academic outcomes.
- By setting ambitious standards, we reinforce our belief in students' ability to excel. Research shows that high expectations foster resilience and help students embrace rigorous content confidently.
- The emotional aspects of expectations are perhaps the strongest: Maya Angelou writes, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

Trusted techniques



- Set challenging tasks that require in-depth thinking for all students, providing additional scaffolding to ensure all pupils can achieve success where it is needed.
- Use modelling to ensure all students know what success looks like and how to achieve it.
- Ensure all students engage with challenging, subject-specific texts, giving additional support such as teaching necessary prior knowledge or vocabulary and guided reading, where needed.
- Expect all students to answer verbal questions in full sentences, explain and elaborate on their initial answer, when appropriate and use the correct tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary.
- Expecting all students to think during questioning, for example by using Cold Calling or whole-class response systems such as mini white boards

Ready for More?

[The power of expectations ~ Inner Drive](#)

[The Pygmalion Effect ~ 4 min video explained](#)

[Teaching to the Top: Attitudes and strategies for delivering real challenge.](#)

