

Key differences between high and low expectation teachers

Teachers' expectations for students lead them to deliver instruction in line with these expectations. For example, when teachers believe that low-achieving students are not capable of higher-level thinking, they provide differentiated learning experiences in their classes. Key areas of contrast between teachers with high expectations and teachers with low expectations include the quality of teaching statements, feedback, questioning and behaviour management.

Low expectation teachers	High expectation teachers
Constantly remind students of procedures and routines.	Have procedures in place that students manage themselves.
Make more procedural and directional statements focused on students' activities and behaviours, rather than on learning. For example, "Here is your reading book and worksheet for today. Off you go and read it and then do your worksheet."	Make more statements focusing students' attention on learning, or teaching new concepts, or relating current learning to prior activities and knowledge, or explaining and exploring concepts with students. For example, "This story is called ... With that title, what do you think it is going to be about?"
Communicate details of the activities students have to complete.	Communicate learning intentions and success criteria with the class.
Ask predominantly closed questions based on facts. For example, "What's the formula for finding area?"	Ask more open questions, designed to extend or enhance students' thinking by requiring them to think more deeply. For example "And why do you say that? What clues in the story made you think that?"
Manage behaviour negatively and reactively.	Manage behaviour positively and proactively.
Make more negative statements about learning and behaviour.	Make more positive statements and create a positive class climate.
Set global goals for learning as a frame for planning teaching.	Set specific goals with students that are regularly reviewed and used for teaching and learning.
Take a directive role in planning the sequence of instruction and activities, and provide little opportunity for student choice.	Take a facilitative role and support students to make choices about their learning.
Link achievement to ability.	Link achievement to motivation, effort, and goal setting.
Use ability groupings and design different learning activities for each achievement group.	Encourage students to work with a variety of peers for positive peer modelling.
Provide lots of repetition in lower-level activities for low-ability children, and advanced activities for high-ability learners.	Provide less differentiation and allow all learners to engage in advanced activities.

Low expectation teachers	High expectation teachers
Break learning down into incremental steps and organise learning in a linear fashion.	Undertake more assessment and monitoring so that students' learning strategies can be adjusted when necessary.
Spend more time with low-achievers and give high achievers time to work independently.	Work with all students equally.
Give praise (or criticism) focused on accuracy. For example, "Well done. That's right."	Give specific, instructional feedback about students' achievement in relation to learning goals. For example, "Nice addition, I like the way you have kept your numbers in straight columns so you didn't get the tens and hundreds muddled."
Respond to incorrect answers by telling student they are wrong and asking another student to respond.	Respond to incorrect answers by exploring the wrong answer, rephrasing explanations, or scaffolding the student to the correct answer.
Use incentives and rewards for motivation.	Base learning opportunities around students' interests for motivation.