

# **Equitable Educational Opportunities**

(Resources compiled by G. Shroyer)

## **The Issues**

- What is educational equity?
- Are our schools equitable?
- In what ways are they equitable?
- In what ways are they not equitable?

## **The Students**

- Do savage inequalities exist: for whom?
- Dealing with diversity: linguistic and cultural diversity, poverty, gender, high and low achievers, and special needs students.

## **The Schools and Society**

- Who is to blame? Does it matter?
- Different expectations, different treatment, different educational experiences
- Changing demographics demand changes in our existing educational systems.

## **Schools Can Make a Difference**

- Effective School Research demonstrated schools can make a difference even under the most difficult conditions.
- OBE, QPA, and NCLB, are all based on this assumption that schools can make a difference.

## **What Can We Do**

- Assess and problem solve personal teaching behaviors to ensure equitable classroom opportunities for all students.
- Assess and ensure equitable school and district opportunities for all students.
- Utilize professional development programs to help educators provide equitable opportunities in the classroom, school, and district [ie Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA), Gender/Ethnic Expectation and Student Achievement (GESA), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)].

# SAVAGE INEQUALITIES?

## Expectations

Parents, Peers, Teachers, Society

We must rethink our notion of who can learn and expand our limited stereotyped expectations for our children's future roles and aspirations.

## Classroom Differences

**Instructional interaction:** instructional contact (teacher attention, teacher assistance), response opportunities (distribution and level of questioning and interaction), probes, wait time, classroom organization and grouping

**feedback:** evaluation of performance (grades and reasons for praise and criticism), analytical feedback, listening, classroom management, behavior management strategies and policies

**personal regard:** priority, courtesy, personal interest, enhancing self-esteem

**curriculum:** stereotyping, imbalance/selectivity, invisibility, linguistic bias, unreality, fragmentation/isolation

## School Wide Differences

- the distribution of judgements about ability
- tracking, ability grouping, labeling
- access to science and mathematics programs
- counseling, course selection, prerequisites - "critical filters"
- access to qualified teachers
- access to resources
- school funding, special programs, extra-curricular experiences
- classroom opportunities

## Tracking

80% of American secondary schools and 60% of American elementary schools use some type of between-class grouping based on the perceptions educators have about children's ability to learn.

## Characteristics of high track classes

experience-based learning; innovative, diversity of strategies; include higher level open-ended critical thinking opportunities; greater use of group learning; challenging, deeply contextualized curriculum; more experienced, confident teachers with greater repertoire of teaching strategies; highly motivated students with fewer behavior problems; more special privileges and student choices.

## Characteristics of low track classes

passive learning; greater use of worksheets; greater tendency to work alone; more traditional, less diversified strategies; low-level, abstract disconnected, fragmented curriculum; less experienced, less confident teachers; emphasis on control with fewer choices and privileges; students are unmotivated and are characterized by learning difficulties, school failures and misbehavior.

## **What Can Educators Do?**

- Assess personal teaching behaviors to ensure equitable classroom opportunities for all students. Examine: personal attitudes, expectations, and stereotypes; instructional interactions between teacher and students and between students; teacher feedback to students; evidence of personal regard for students; and curriculum materials and resources for bias.
- Assess and ensure equitable school and district opportunities for all students. Examine: student prerequisites for advanced courses, counseling advice, and course enrollment patterns; student access to resources, student access to quality teachers, and student participation in special programs and extra curricular activities; test scores; and parent, teacher, and student expectations, attitudes, and stereotypes.
- Help to create an equitable, relevant, meaningful, engaging, high-level curriculum for your class, your school, and your district.

## Assess Personal Teaching Behaviors

\*Self reflection of attitudes, expectations, and stereotypes

\*Self assessment of teaching behaviors (peer coaching, videotape, audiotape)

- questioning patterns

- probes

- wait-time

- academic feedback

- encouragement/assistance

- praise

- punishment

- non-biased language

\*Assessment of classroom interactions

- active participation and involvement of all students

- assessment of student attitudes and stereotypes

- non-stereotyped laboratory and learning roles

- non-stereotyped duties and responsibilities

- equal opportunity to handle science equipment

- non-biased language and social interactions between students

## Analysis of Curriculum

Texts, Tradebooks, Workbooks, Curriculum Guides, Audio-Visual Materials, Classroom Environment, Software and Supplemental Materials

- \*Addresses needs, interests, and backgrounds of all students
- \*Includes hands-on, minds-on activities
- \*Are personally and socially relevant to lives and futures of all students
- \*Subject matter recognizes the contributions of both sexes and diverse cultures
- \*Helps all students explore a wide range of roles and career options
- \*All materials are free from bias in the forms of: invisibility, stereotyping, imbalance/selectivity, unreality, fragmentation/isolation, and linguistic bias

"Why Did You Call on Me? I Didn't Have My Hand up!"

# Teacher Expectations And Student Achievement

by Sam Kerman

*Mr. Kerman has perfected techniques in a long-term Los Angeles project that may have important implications for teachers everywhere.*

Mr. Smith, eighth-grade social studies teacher, has just posed a question to his class: "What advantages did the North have over the South during the Civil War?"

Following a reasonable pause, Mr. Smith calls upon Betty to answer. Betty stares at Mr. Smith incredulously and asks, "Why did you call on me? I didn't have my hand up!"

Betty's response is familiar to all experienced teachers. And it didn't surprise Mr. Smith. All of her teachers perceive Betty as a low achiever; she rarely answers questions when called upon. So teachers call on her less frequently than other students. Why bother? It's a waste of valuable class time. Moreover, calling on an unprepared student embarrasses that student in front of his peers, according to the conventional wisdom.

What Mr. Smith may not be aware of is the fact that Betty, as early as kindergarten, learned that she's not called upon as frequently as other students in class; over the years she has progressively "tuned out." We can now raise a very important question: Was Betty unable to answer because she was incapable of following the class discussion, or because she wasn't listening and didn't hear the question?

Extensive research shows that teacher interaction with students perceived as low achievers is less motivating and less supportive than interaction with students perceived as high achievers. Research also tells us that high achievers receive more response opportunities and are given more time to respond to questions. When high achievers do have difficulty, teachers tend to delve, give clues, or rephrase the question more frequently than with low achievers. This fact should not be construed as an indictment of teachers, since the biases demonstrated in teacher/student interactions are, in most cases, unconscious. Discriminatory interactions can as easily be identified between parents and their children, principals and their teachers, and corporate executives and their administrative staffs.

Calling on students to answer questions, express ideas, or give opinions constitutes one method of involving students in class activity. As we learned in that first teacher prep course, giving students opportunities to respond is a useful teaching strategy. Yet researchers Thomas L. Good and Jere R. Brophy discovered as long ago as 1969 that students perceived as high achievers were being given response opportunities three to four times more frequently than those perceived as low achievers.

During inservice training, more than 2,000 teachers in California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Oregon were asked why they believed high achievers might be called upon more frequently than lows. Overwhelmingly, the responses were: "It might embarrass my low achievers"; "The whole class benefits from a good response"; "It is important to cover the curriculum content, which leaves little time for calling on those who are unprepared, slow, or confused."

Is it any wonder that low achievers who have tuned out of classroom discussions over a period of years react with a blank stare when called upon? The stare only reinforces the teacher's perception of the student's low status.

Part of the remedy should be obvious. Teachers must start calling on perceived lows as frequently as they call upon other students in class. Not that the lows will suddenly come forth with brilliant responses. They won't. But we have proven, over the course of a seven-year project, that they will, within a relatively short time, begin "tuning in." They become conscious of being called upon more frequently, and they begin to adapt to the new situation.

Normally, one defines low achievers as those students functioning below grade-level expectancy; high achievers function above grade level. However, a teacher must realize that the terms "low achiever" and "high achiever" are above all else relative. As an example, consider a National Merit finalist enrolled in a freshman physics class at MIT. He may

very well function at a level below most of the other students in his class. In the eyes of his professor, such a student is a low achiever. A student in a fourth-grade remedial class, on the other hand, may be perceived as a high achiever, the one selected to carry notes to the office, assist in distributing materials, or lead the Pledge of Allegiance. The point is that all classrooms, regardless of number enrolled, curriculum content, grouping strategies, etc., will, in the eyes of the teacher, have low and high achievers. And how they are perceived will predictably determine how they are taught from day to day.

In 1970 consultant Mary Martin of the L. A. County Schools Office approached me with an idea for developing an inservice training program based on comparatively new research dealing with the effects of teacher expectations on student achievement. She asked if I would be interested in collaborating in such an enterprise, and I accepted with delight.

The next year, with funds made available through an ESEA Title III grant, we embarked on a three-year study to find out whether, if teachers practiced *specific* motivating and supportive interactions more frequently with low achievers, statistically significant academic growth would result. The project, titled Equal Opportunity in the Classroom (EOC), was conducted under the auspices of the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools.

Fifteen separate interactions were identified that educators would recognize as being supportive and motivating. Research was cited proving that these interactions were practiced in classrooms with high achievers more frequently than with lows. An interaction model was developed for the presentation of these specifics. The interactions were grouped in three major strands, five interactions in each strand. (See the accompanying chart.)

### Equal Opportunity in the Classroom Interaction Model

Monthly Workshops	Strand A Response Opportunities	Strand B Feedback	Strand C Personal Regard
Workshop #1	1. Equitable distribution	1. Affirm/correct	1. Proximity
Workshop #2	2. Individual help	2. Praise	2. Courtesy
Workshop #3	3. Latency	3. Reasons for praise	3. Personal interest and compliments
Workshop #4	4. Delving	4. Listening	4. Touching
Workshop #5	5. Higher-level questions	5. Accepting feelings	5. Desist

noted; also, there was a significant reduction in absenteeism and a significant reduction in discipline referrals. Although project emphasis was directed to perceived low achievers, all students in the experimental classes, not just the lows, showed statistically significant gains over those in the control classes.

One of the most valuable and significant program spinoffs grew out of the observation/coding component. Since the program is not directly related to any one curriculum area or grade level, teachers of various disciplines and grade levels are observing each other. This has resulted in improved communication and understanding between teachers, kindergarten through twelfth grade; awareness and appreciation of the accomplishments of those in other subject areas; observing good teaching strategies that can often be replicated, regardless of the subject area.

In 1974 the EOC project won over 1,800 Title IV-C projects as one of the most outstanding in the nation and was awarded an Educational Pacesetter Award by the National Advisory Council on Supplementary Centers and Services. From 1974 through 1977 EOC received three consecutive dissemination grants from the California State Department of Education. During the dissemination years project staff members were instrumental in installing the program in more than 100 school districts, experiencing the same success that met the pilot program.

Also in 1974, it became apparent that the number of project staff members was inadequate to meet all district requests for implementation services. It was then that a new component was added to the program, the "training trainers." Project Coordinator Training Seminars were initiated in December, 1974. School districts desirous of implementing the program were instructed to send one or more of their staff to be trained as program coordinators and implementers. Those identified for training were to possess experience and skills in the area of staff inservice training or show potential for success in this area.

EOC project coordinator candidates attend a three-day seminar conducted by

the EOC staff from the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools. The project concept is simple enough so that within these limited time periods the training will prepare one to supervise the five-month inservice program for teachers. In the past five years 1,200 educators representing 480 educational agencies have attended these seminars. Numerous comments by educators attest to the success of the program. Here are typical comments:

*Marvin L. Marshall*, director of secondary education, Baldwin Park Unified School District — "The Equal Opportunity in the Classroom project is, in my estimation, one of the best staff preparation programs available to classroom teachers."

*Clifford Low*, area administrator, Portland Public Schools — "The results of this program have been positive beyond our highest expectations. I am highly impressed by the fact that our phenomenal success with this program was built on a mere three-day leadership training experience."

*M. A. Nottingham*, professor of educational administration, University of Southern California — "My observation of the program over the past three years convinces me that it should become a part of university teacher training programs."

*James W. Clemenger*, principal, Redondo Beach City Schools — "It is the finest teacher inservice education program I have ever seen."

The Equal Opportunity in the Classroom Project is not a simple program to be mastered in one reading of a manual. It is, on the contrary, a five-month experience built around 15 teaching practices that must be internalized by the teacher and incorporated into the classroom experiences of the student. Students are *not* all alike physically and mentally, but they *are* all alike in having the right to an equal opportunity to learn.

During the three-year study a total of 742 teachers from more than 30 school districts in Los Angeles County volunteered to participate. There was equal representation of elementary, middle school, and secondary teachers. The teachers were divided into experimental and control groups. In order to test the hypothesis that teachers unconsciously interact more favorably with high achievers, a statistically significant number from each group were observed interacting with their students prior to initiating inservice training for our program. As the teachers practiced the interactions we were to introduce in training, a tally mark was placed opposite the name of the student recipient. The teachers were observed on two occasions approximately one week apart. The collected observation data clearly substantiated the hypothesis. All teachers in both groups, without exception, practiced the identified 15 interactions more frequently with high achievers. Once we had established this baseline data, we began inservice training.

The implementation design consists of scheduling five workshops approximately one month apart. Each workshop is three hours in length. Three interactions, one from each of the major strands, are introduced. With each of the specific interactions, we cite literature and research, participants discuss techniques, and all concerned offer illustrations, demonstrations, and role-playing activities. Most important, since a majority of the techniques well known to teachers as "good teaching strategies," the training focuses on identifying all possible reasons why techniques are *not* being practiced as frequently with "lows" as with "highs." Following each workshop, during a period of approximately three weeks, participants observe each other a minimum of 30 times, each observation of 30 minutes duration. A teacher is observed more than twice a week and (preferably) on two consecutive days. While observed, teachers consciously attend to practice the interactions covered in the workshop with *all* students in the manner. The observer simply records the frequency of the interactions in target students. The observations are always left with the teacher, and he, at his leisure, examines his own conclusions. In the absence of possible anxieties about the procedure, rather, it is emphasized on explaining that this is a procedure; rather, it is a process.

At the conclusion of the three-year study, approximately 2,000 identified experimental classes and their counterparts in the control classes were academic gains

TESA

**INTERACTION MODEL**

UNITS	STRAND A: RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES	STRAND B: FEEDBACK	STRAND C: PERSONAL REGARD
Desired student feeling	I am going to be given opportunities in class to be successful.	I am going to be informed of my degree of success by a teacher who wants me to do well.	I am in a class with a teacher who cares about me and respects me as a person.
1	<b>Equitable Distribution of Response Opportunities</b>	<b>Affirm or Correct Student's Performance</b>	<b>Proximity</b>
Teaching behavior	Asking or allowing a student to participate in class discussion.	Informing the student that their response or work is or is not acceptable	Standing for 2 seconds or more within arms reach of a student.
2	<b>Individual Helping</b>	<b>Praise of Learning Performance</b>	<b>Courtesy</b>
Teaching behavior	Giving assistance to a student, (time is not considered).	Reacting positively to a student learning performance.	Using expressions that show respect when interacting with a student.
3	<b>Latency</b>	<b>Reasons for Praise</b>	<b>Personal Interest Compliments</b>
Teaching behavior	Allowing student at least 5 seconds before terminating a response opportunity or attempting to assist the student.	Giving explanations as to why a student's performance was noteworthy.	Asking questions or making positive statements relating to a student's individual experiences or interests.
4	<b>Delving</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Touching</b>
Teaching behavior	Providing additional information verbally or nonverbally to help a student respond to a question.	Reacting to a student during their response that indicates interest and patience.	Touching a student in a friendly, respectful manner.
5	<b>High Level Questioning</b>	<b>Accepting Feelings</b>	<b>Desists</b>
Teaching behavior	Asking a student to respond in a manner beyond exhibiting simple rote memory.	Dealing with students' feelings in a non-evaluative manner.	Asking a student calmly, courteously, and in a way that does not imply the action was expected, to stop a misbehavior.

# GESA

## Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement

Areas of Disparity	Interactions	Curriculum Issues
I. Instructional Contact	a. Response Opportunities b. Acknowledgment/Feedback	Evaluating Materials for Bias
II. Grouping Organization	a. Wait Time b. Physical Closeness	Mathematics Science Technology
III. Classroom Management/Discipline	a. Touching b. Reproof	Multicultural/ Pluralistic Resources
IV. Enhancing Self-Esteem	a. Probing b. Listening	Gender/Race/Ethnic Balance in History
V. Evaluation	a. High Level Questioning b. Analytical Feedback	Physical Activities

# \*PROCESS FOR SELECTING UNBIASED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

## Definitions of the Six Forms of Bias Found in Curriculum Materials

**INVISIBILITY** - Underrepresentation or omission of certain groups (i.e. women or minorities not represented in descriptions or settings).

**STEREOTYPING** - Certain groups which are portrayed in traditional or rigid roles, or assigned traditional attributes (i.e. only women showing emotion or men making the decisions).

**IMBALANCE / SELECTIVITY** - Presentation of only one issue, situation, or group of people (i.e. omission of the historical contributions of Native Americans).

**UNREALITY** - Inaccurate portrayal of history or contemporary life experiences (i.e. controversial subjects are not discussed or acknowledged).

**FRAGMENTATION / ISOLATION** - Separating issues related to women and minorities from the main content of information (i.e. a separate chapter in the back of a textbook discussing the first female Supreme Court Justice).

**LINGUISTIC BIAS** - Discriminatory language or descriptions of people (i.e. masculine pronouns used generically such as "mankind" rather than "humankind").

\* This process was developed based on information published in "The Rural Educator", Volume 9, Number 9, Fall 1987; an article titled "The Rural Administrator's Role in Achieving Sex Equity of Curriculum", by Gerald D. Bally and Nancy J. Smith.

## Beyond Ruby Payne

### Challenges to Ruby Payne

- Based on a deficient model (blame the victim), classic<sup>X</sup> underpinnings, and a conservative frame of reference (compassionate conservative vs. equity and social justice. Individual attributes as the problem vs. an inequitable educational system and unjust social system)
- This perspective can perpetuate and intensify stereotypes and “hide” real educational and social inequalities (such as the institutional and social “causes” of poverty, differential treatment of children within classrooms and between classrooms and schools, lower expectations, fewer opportunities, differential counseling advice and lack of preparation for advanced courses, access to lower quality teachers and teaching and tracking)
- Based on a questionable research base. How accurate and realistic are the student characteristics and hypothetical scenarios? Are these characteristics of all poor? Are they also characteristics of non-poor? Are they characteristics of regions rather than conditions of poverty? Do they really help us understand and deal with inequalities in classrooms, schools, districts, or our entire systems?

### What’s needed?

- Continue and help our students understand the backgrounds, needs, interests, and experiences of all children – especially those most unlike them.

### And

- Provide a broader understanding of equity and social justice issues within our classrooms, schools, districts, and society. Help them become aware of and learn to assess and change inequitable teaching behaviors, tracking, and other school wide practices that reduce opportunities and limit access to a quality education. Motivate them to want to provide all children with high quality teaching, greater access and opportunities, and equitable treatment with each classroom, school, district, and society in general.
- Broaden the readings from just Ruby Payne to also include Jeannie Oaks, Linda Darling Hammond, Jonathan Kozal, etc.
- Provide opportunities to assess and practice effective teaching through programs like TESA, GESA, SIOP, etc.