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Study: Students often perceived differently by race.

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Study: Students often perceived differently by race

In past columns, I have reported on more than one study that shows that expectations for "fairness" for women in higher education were much higher than for men. For example, when a research paper is co-authored by a male and a female the assumption by many is that the male did "the real work.

Now comes a study showing that there is a similar bias when it comes to students — only this time the differences are based on race.

A study published in "Research in Education, Reviews" was found that when evaluating the same black teacher, white students expected less academic success than black teachers, particularly when compared to black males.

According to the study, carried out by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, when a black teacher and a white teacher evaluated the same black student, the white teacher was about 30 percent less likely to predict that the student would graduate high school.

One of the immediate effects of such perceptions is that students come to believe that the teacher is right, that they are indeed not smart enough and that there is no future for them in education. As a consequence, they may dismiss any hopes for advancement and, eventually, drop out of school.

The authors of the study analyzed data from the Educational Longitudinal Study. Begun in 2002, it is an ongoing study following 8,400 10th grade public school students and their interactions with teachers.

They asked two different teachers, who each taught a particular student in either math or reading, to predict how far that student would go in school. With white students, the ratings from both teachers tended to be the same. But with black students, boys in particular, there were big differences. The white teachers had much lower expectations than black teachers about how far the black students would go in school.

According to the authors, the quality of the interaction with the criminal justice system.

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