

The Pygmalion approach: New perspectives toward English Language teaching

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Abstract

The Pygmalion approach towards English Language teaching and learning is based on the positive form of self-fulfilling prophecy that shows how teachers' expectations lead to an increase in the students' performance. The objective of this paper is to develop, encourage, and create the right climate and input pattern for teaching English (LSRW), which would bring in a real transformation in the classroom. A close observation of undergraduate students of Bangalore University, their performance related to their curriculum both literature and language skills (LSRW) in four different classrooms with 50 to 60 contact hours was taken up for serious study. In each of the classrooms, motivation was a strong driving force to usher in a strong sense of self-esteem, converting average students to extraordinary performers. First, seeking to understand than to be understood, creating an ecology of transformation and care for students was the promise of this new approach. More specifically, it was observed that nonverbal behavior, spatial behavior, extra-linguistic behavior, and linguistic behavior played an excellent role in enhancing language skills. To conclude, new dimensions in the interaction between teachers and students' expectations, which need to be a pure transaction without distortion and disruption, were emphasized during teaching and learning.

Keywords: *Self-fulfilling prophecy, students perception, teacher's expectation, performance, influence, motivation, key deliverables*

Introduction

Pygmalion In the Classroom (Jacobson, 1968) is an ideal book that brought in new insights into the field of teacher expectations and studies in relation to it. Rosenthal's study is based on an experiment that he and Lenore Jacobson carried out in an elementary school. It was a study, which explored the psychology of interpersonal expectations and how such expectations served as self-fulfilling prophecies.

After looking at the results of this Pygmalion experiment, my research interest focused on gaining a greater understanding of these social processes and applying the knowledge towards the promotion and higher achievement and enhancement of learning of all students who were under my purview.

The Capacity to learn is underestimated many a time, and good intentions approach, instructional conditions provided to students sometimes delayed academic development. Students possess immense potential, and their power of learning is a lot more based on teachers' pattern of instruction.

This article presents empirical evidence about the causal impact of the Pygmalion approach of optimistically positive expectations on the Undergraduate Students of a college in Bangalore. This case study is based on the contact classes related to the subject English: which includes modules related to language skills such as basic communication in particular and literature for in-depth study. The study covers the teaching that covers KDC (a Bangalore University affiliated college) for a period of nine months from Feb 18th, 2019 till Nov 8th, 2019. It is based on the observation of 2 semesters of teaching the same class. The number of contact hours per semester was between 50-60 hrs, and it includes two semesters, a total of 100-120 hrs of teaching English.

The myth of Pygmalion

Pygmalion derives its name from the famous story by the Roman poet Ovid in his metamorphoses, Book X. Pygmalion, a sculptor makes an ivory statue representing his ideal of womanhood and then falls in love with his own creation, which he named Galatea. The Goddess Venus brings the statue to life in answer to his prayer.

This basic Pygmalion story has also been represented by George Bernard Shaw, an Irish playwright and political activist whose play ‘Pygmalion’ explores the notion that the way one person treats another can be transforming for better or worse. In Shaw’s Play Pygmalion, Eliza Doolittle says:

“You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick (up the dressing and the proper way of speaking and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she’s treated. I shall always be a flower girl to a Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower girl and always will: but I (Sarrazin, 2003) know I can be a lady to you because you always treat me as a lady and always will” (Shaw, 1913).

The Significance of this study

The Pygmalion approach to teaching and learning is not a one-way process as it involves various forms of interactions that take place. Both teachers’ and students’ expectations and responses are crucial during the process of learning. It takes into account all the four language skills LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) and the development of these skills to a considerable degree. Face to face communication and written communication play a significant role in the learning process and are important components that help maintain satisfactory responses.

Rosenthal (1994) summarizes that the right climate creation and input pattern appears most consequential. According to Rubie-Davies, the input patterns are an area of study that needs special focus as low expectancy students tend to receive fewer or less valuable learning experiences than their higher-expectancy peers. Cooper (1983) states that higher expectancies can be raised by assertively demonstrating greater rates of smiling, nodding, and eye contact while interacting with the students.

As this field of study is based on an interaction between teachers and students, I decided to conduct a research for the undergraduate students of KDC, Bangalore. By understanding previous literature review, one can discern that very few types of research have been conducted about this special study on the Pygmalion approach in relation to English language teaching, which can narrow the gap between teaching and learning and can usher in the right key deliverables for an enriching learning experience.

Objectives of Research and Scope

The prime objective of this study is to investigate the existence and impact of the Pygmalion effect on the Undergraduate English Programme of KDC (A college affiliated to Bangalore University).

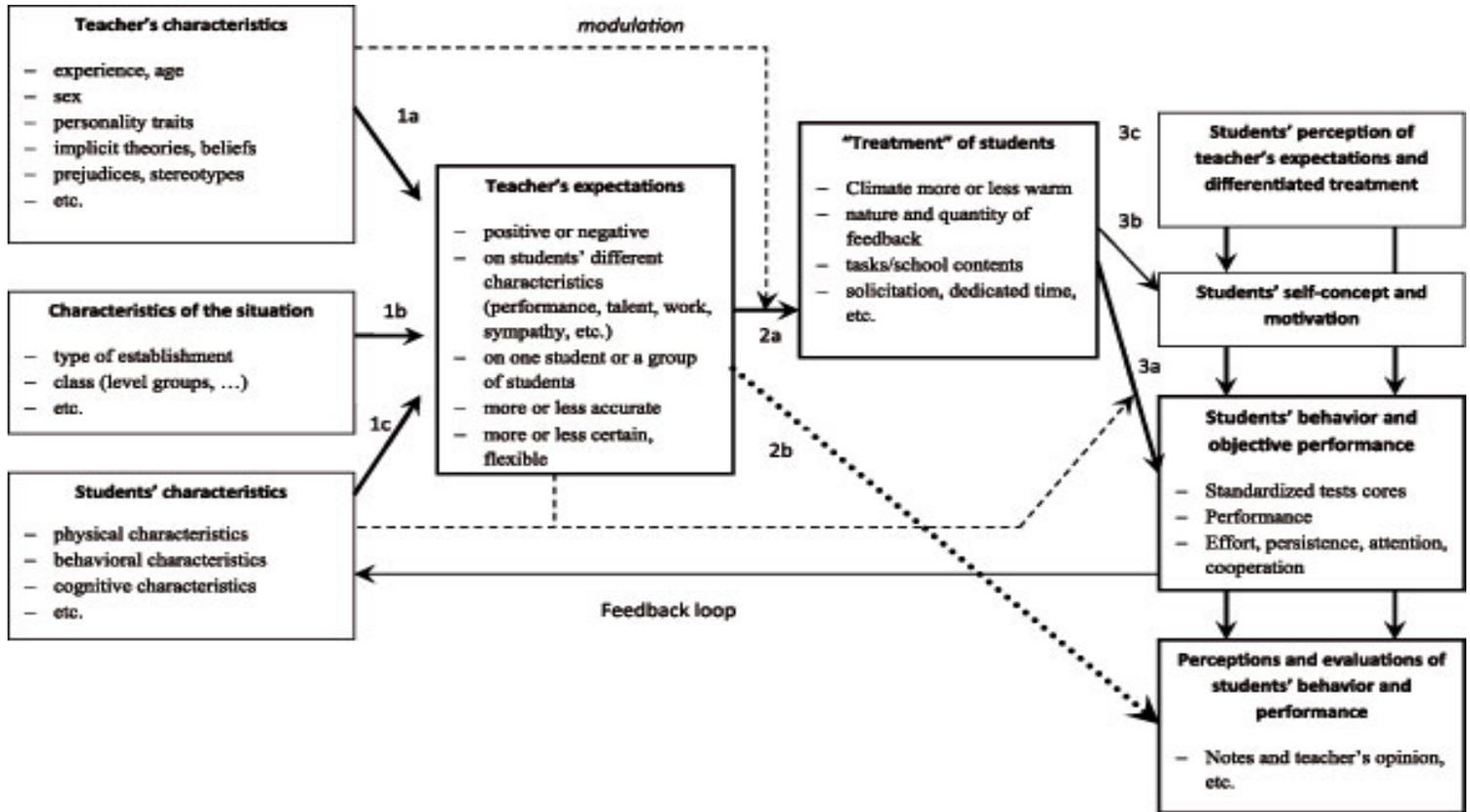
In particular, the sub-objectives were to study:

- What could be the expectation of the teacher from the students' point of view?. Does it influence the Students' performance?
- What do the students expect from a teacher? How can a teacher facilitate learning? Does it influence the performance?
- From the Teachers' point of view what does a Student expect? How does it influence his/her performance?
- What does a teacher expect from a student? How far does this facilitate one to perform better?. Does it carry an influence on the teachers' performance?

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Literature Review

The Pygmalion effect is a (Babad, 1985) kind of self-fulfilling prophecy positive in its nature and outlook that shows how teachers' expectations can influence students' performance. The higher the expectations from the teacher, the more satisfying are the results of the students and their overall performance too." "When we expect certain behaviours of others, we are likely to act in ways that make the expected behavior more likely to occur." (Babad, 1985). The Pygmalion effect can be better understood by a three-stage model. (Sarrazin, 2003).



The above model follows a pattern of instruction wherein the teacher infers or collects information for the students' benefit and modulates it with the right attitude. (stage 1). This leads to differentiated expectations and differentiated behavior according to the various categories of students present (stage 2). Indirect constant messages are used as a tool for the response. Eventually, the student 'is pushed' to a particular academic achievement and behavior, which confirms the teachers' norm of expected standards. (stage 3).

Essential conditions for gaining an effective result and creating an impact factor is "durability and high frequency in the expression of expectations" (C. Giannoudis, 2009 p.11) and an interaction fuelled with clear expression of teacher's expectations and student's behavioral response (Brophy, 1982).

The driving element for the pygmalion approach is the teachers' expectations. (Sarrazin, 2003) Trouilloud and Sarrazin (2003 P.95) were of the view that expectations could be categorized into (a) positive-negative (b) related to a student or group of students, (c) related to the ability and performance or school characteristics (hardworking/lazy/independent/dependent, likable/unlikeable, social/antisocial, etc.), (d) related to one course (Maria, 2016)

As regards to the formation of expectation, one can keep note of previous school performance (former grades, initial test/periodic assessment, etc.) generalizations - stereotypes, such as gender, appearance, socio-economic status (Sarrazin, 2003 pp.95-

96). But it is not only expectations that affect the performance and outcomes of students, but the teacher's unequal and differential behavior and students' perception and reaction also matter a lot (Brophy, 1982, p.34) 1982,p.34). According to Rosenthal (Sarrazin, 2003) teacher's behavior varies according to expectations in four aspects: (a) the pedagogical content and presentation of the work (input), (b) expression opportunities granted to students (output), (c) feedback, (d) the emotional climate and verbal or non-verbal interactions with students (97).

In this regard quality of classes can be improved by utilizing the effect of teachers' expectations during the discussion of results. Suplicz was of the viewpoint that the difference in accomplishing a higher performance and positive attitude lies in the emotional interaction between the teacher and the student (2005). In conclusion, the Pygmalion approach describes how the students' expectations and their perception of their expectations coincide with the teachers' expectations and their expectations in a concrete manner. This can affect the students' mood and attitude, which reduces the distance between the learner and the teacher.

Method

Research strategy

To begin with, the intention was to expand the research by using different forms of interaction between the teacher and the students that can take place through various channels of communication (Internal Assessments, tests, oral interactions, emails, comments to written assignments, forums, communication by telephone, face to face communication through contact Sessions). Nearly 50-60 contact sessions help one gain access to the whole range of communication, both oral and written, which facilitated intensive research on the subject matter of the Pygmalion influence to derive new dimensions and perspectives for this research topic.

Krupanidhi Degree College KDC (Affiliated to Bangalore University)

Bangalore University offers Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses for various Arts, Commerce, Science, Pharmacy, and Nursing courses. The present area of research focuses on English teaching for Arts, Commerce, and Science (a total of nearly 170) students to measure their growth and development in relation to student-teacher interaction and expectations research.

Course materials provided by the University are printed course material and set books)and learning material, both text and reference material, is circulated to the students. Video material and software essential for the module were used during classroom interaction. Students plan their own study time to study course material, submit assignments on due dates for Internal Assessments, attend Internal tests and model examinations. They were assessed for about 50-60 contact sessions per semester for about four months. Every contact session is not compulsory but is strongly

recommended to understand the complete course module and is well coordinated by the tutor.

The contact classes allow students to clarify doubts about each module, clear up misunderstandings, and eventually improve students' understanding of the subject and their performance levels. It also promotes a good rapport between teacher and student-student and student communication. Two written assignments are compulsory per semester, which is evaluated by the teacher. The academic staff continuously supported the students to promote their welfare and interest.

Procedure

As the main objective of this paper is descriptive by nature, a qualitative methodology was adopted for the collection of data and its analysis. The collection of data was based on the contact classes that took place during the semester. It was a combined review of the previous semester involving a total of 9 months of teaching English. The data collections and observations were non-participatory as it leads to flexibility, adjustability, and provides significant data for a thorough study of expectations and the outcome of those expectations (Maria, 2016). Semi-structured open-questions were taken up for data collection as it gave more room for a deeper investigation and understanding of the subject. It not only helped the researcher connect and interact with the interviewer but also gave him the chance to gain more information related to his subject (Maria, 2016).

The observations were non-participatory sent through emails to the students pursuing courses in Humanities, Commerce, and Science in KDC. We also took up another set of observations from the faculty members to review the teachers' expectations. The main aim was to observe natural behavior in the current educational context of teaching-learning processes in the classroom. We chose a semi-structural, naturalistic, holistic approach (Maria, 2016).

More concretely, we observed the:

- non-verbal behavior (face expressions, eye contact, gestures, body language) as it is an important factor for the formation of expectations, emotional climate, and interaction;
- spatial behavior, which could provide supplementary information for;
- extra-linguistic behavior, as a way of expressing positive expectations according to literature;
- linguistic behavior, more precisely the choice of words used for encouragement and support.
- Therefore, we used an observation scale based on Weik's four categories as ref in (Maria, 2016).

Also, 4 semi-structured open-questions were circulated amongst the 170 students of the college for a review of teaching expectancies with adult students (age:18-25) for the same undergraduate module between October and November 2019. The open-questioned interviews helped the researcher ask for clarifications and mark out areas that the researcher might not have predicted. The semi-structured interviews were designed

according to the objectives and the sub-objectives. The basic points of the questions were the following:

- The formation of Teacher's and students' expectations;
- How students expectations motivated teacher's performance;
- How teacher's expectations motivate students' performance;
- The interaction between teacher's and students' expectations;
- Their expression into behavior (verbal and non-verbal) both face to face and written communication;
- The impact on positive learning outcomes/the Pygmalion influence.

Keeping in mind the above viewpoints, four open questioned forms were sent to all the students, and four open questioned forms were sent to all the teachers (to have data from both sides) via email. The response was received via email for quick validation. All the responses from the teachers' and the students' sides were available for validation purposes.

Participants

The observations were taken for the undergraduate students of Science, Commerce, and Humanities, and the students were asked to give their review of effective teaching standards concerning their module for the subject General English in particular in relation to the Pygmalion approach and questions related to it cited above in this paper. The observations were taken towards the end of the semester after the course/module completion, just before the commencement of the end semester examinations so that the students can apply their knowledge gained during the course of the semester and can measure the outcome of their learning. The students who have given the reviews are experienced learners and have maintained at least 75% attendance for that semester. Hence, they can provide honest and accurate information about the Pygmalion approach towards learning and its effects on positive learning in the classroom.

KDC was chosen here (A College affiliated with Bangalore University) because this was a platform for me to use the Pygmalion approach that would cater to the individual /specific needs of English Language learners in particular.

Limitations

Of the 170 students who were asked to give a review, 34 students responded in a day or two. Of the 20 teachers who were asked to give a review, eight teachers respond at the earliest. Based on the students' performance in the classroom, assignments, tests, and internal assessment, and the available time was not much (nine months), convenient sampling was adopted. Hence, the research's validity is based on observation, interviews, and interaction with students before their end semester examination.

Findings

The table below summarizes the findings:

Perception versus reality

Students Perception of what the Teachers Expect	Students Expectations from the Teachers
Teachers perception of what the students Expect	Teachers Expectations from the Students

Findings

Sub-objective	Results
Students perception of Teachers expectations (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good behaviour ▪ Interested in class, attentive ▪ Active participation & interaction ▪ Good performance ▪ Understand concepts and apply them in reality ▪ Follow etiquette to converse effectively ▪ Realize mistakes to improve ▪ Well disciplined and Punctual ▪ Responsible with a vivacious attitude ▪ Courteous & respectful ▪ Friendly & Cooperative ▪ Honest and hardworking ▪ Awareness of things - dynamic ▪ To interact to fathom the perception of teachers ▪ To study well, be the best ▪ Well-wisher to bring out the best in them ▪ Ready for the acquisition of knowledge ▪ an attentive and active listener ▪ Focused ▪ Reciprocation ▪ Ability to Concentrate and think well ▪ Do homework, assignments on time, update knowledge ▪ Voice out doubts & improve speaking skills with confidence ▪ Maintain good relationship with all ▪ Inculcate useful habits ▪ Exhibit High moral values

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Come up in life/Growth prospects ▪ More expectations lead to more effort ▪ Influences performance only when the subject is made interesting
<p>Students Expectations from Teachers (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nurturing ability ▪ Supportive, guardian, parent guide ▪ Courteous Warm-hearted & understanding ▪ Facilitate learning ▪ Good interaction ▪ Encouraging ▪ Individual attention ▪ feel comfortable, caring, loving ▪ Make the class interesting ▪ Topics to provoke each student to learn new things ▪ Jokes in the class with a little bit of humour ▪ Motivation ▪ Communication should inspire hard work and self-development ▪ Build confidence when a student loses it ▪ Create an urge to come to college every day ▪ confidence ▪ Respectful, active & expressive ▪ Honest & patient ▪ Good behavior ▪ Help improve grades ▪ Warm-hearted understanding ▪ Optimistic in approach & vibrant ▪ Encourage to express and correct on the spot ▪ Influencer ▪ Motivate to become a better individual ▪ Explain how to deal with future ▪ Appreciate the smallest success ▪ Impart an indelible impression

<p>Teachers perception of Students Expectations (3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Approachable▪ Good Friendly teaching▪ Engage in conversation/reality talks/ Give extra work▪ Help express feelings and doubts.▪ Communicate▪ Knowledge & Creativity▪ Preparedness with concept▪ Way of teaching with new technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guide & remain goal-oriented▪▪ In-depth analysis of the subject▪ Good education/teaching▪ Aware confident knowledgeable▪ Gain extra knowledge from other sources/courses▪ Dedication▪ Help get rid of stage fear & create new ideas▪ Expect real-life examples for their cultivation▪ Basic requirement – students understanding of basics and background of the subject▪ Teach in different ways without feeling bored▪ Simple, clear, easy, good explanation▪ Provide notes for understanding▪ Activities that are beneficial for future <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ UnBiased▪ Not be biased/impartial <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Feel connected▪ Solve answers to rectify mistakes▪ Help realize strength and weaknesses▪ Relate to real life and learning▪ Delivering content with clarity▪ Good knowledge
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good Rapport ▪ Motivational speech ▪ Effective teaching ▪ Clear explanation ▪ Notes ▪ Clarification of doubts ▪ Interesting class ▪ Flexibility in lecture ▪ Good knowledge ▪ Good Rapport
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<p>Teachers' Expectations From Students' (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Knowledge and Creativity ▪ Active listening skills ▪ Doubts and clarifications related to content ▪ Ability to think outside the box ▪ Form an opinion ▪ Critically think and apply concepts to everyday life ▪ Thirst for knowledge kindles more interest in teaching and gathering information ▪ Understand the concept by questioning ▪ Motivation 2 ▪ Interest in classes ▪ Attentiveness ▪ Discipline 6 ▪ Noisy, distracted class lowers performance - self-discipline, and self-motivation ▪ Sincerity in all aspects can encourage better delivery
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Students Perception of teachers expectation

The collected data indicates that students perceive that teachers expect good behavior, active participation, interaction, discipline, respect, and awareness of things outside the classroom. On the other hand, it influences their performance only when the subject is made far more interesting.

For example:

- ST_6_ Teacher expects active listening, reciprocation, and active participation in the class. Doubts play a crucial role too; it gives the teachers an idea whether the students are actually listening /paying attention or not.
- .ST_18 A teacher looks for in a student a responsible and vivacious attitude. A good teacher definitely influences a student's performance encouraging and motivating, and inculcating useful habits and high moral values.
- ST_38: I believe my teacher expects me to understand the concepts and apply them in reality. Talking specifically about English teaching, I should respond properly, keeping in mind factors such as body language, tone, grammatical errors, and emotions.
- ST_41 Teacher expects feasible responses and being aware of things around us dynamically to interpret how much a student is interactive with her sessions. It does leave a big impact on students' performance as students' can fathom out teachers' perception.

Students expectation from Teachers

During the course of teaching English, the students do have some major expectations from teachers. Primarily, the expectations are based on nurturing, motivating, and inspiring creativity and empathizing in a friendly manner with a keen sense of insight for imparting knowledge that builds in creativity and helps them design their own future. Being impartial is also important, and so is feedback given to them as they always desire to recognize how much potential they possess. Moreover, the greatest thing a teacher can do is to create a need an urge in the student to come to college every day with utmost sincerity and responsibility for life.

For example:

ST_11 A teacher has various synonyms; one such synonym is an "influencer." A teacher must motivate the student by appreciating even the smallest of success and helping them go into depths to achieve their goals. My teacher has to be called a milestone, which has always been keen to impart her print onto me, helping me realizing my strengths and not sugarcoating my weaknesses. Yes. My teacher has been able to motivate me to become a better individual.

* ST_42 I expect a teacher to be courteous always, respectful and unbiased. These days, due to the outside world's pressure on them, a student is always searching for support, encouragement, and motivation. College students go through many problems in their lives for the first time as growing young adults. Hence they are always content with a teacher who understands and is present to help them come out of it. My teachers have always kept me as their priority and have worked hard to improve my grades.

*ST_43__We expect our teacher to give motivation first, which is most important for students. A teacher should treat every student equally, be friendly and supportive, and feel the connection. Teachers motivate us by telling us how much potential we have..... It gives us confidence and motivation, as well...

Teachers Perception of students expectation

According to the data collected herein, teachers perceive that students do expect them to deliver their lectures effectively with a greater amount of clarity and understanding. A good rapport with question-answer discussion from the point of view of exams, interesting sessions that enlighten their thought process, and a lenient valuation are their prime concerns.

For Example,

*T 5_Effective teaching, clear explanation, notes, clarification of doubts, interesting class, important questions for exams and assessments. If the students are diligent and interested in the class, it motivates me to do better in class and prepare better. If students are involved in learning, teaching becomes exciting and interesting

*T_11 Students expect us to teach them all they want to know. Irrespective of whether in the syllabus or not in a limited period of time. It is challenging to teach students. It increases our performance as a teacher.

* T 12__Questions which will make the teacher update himself. These questions make the teacher strong in that area

*T 17_Thorough knowledge in all the spheres makes the teacher be on toes to update.

*T 19 Flexibility in lecture and a lenient evaluation hampers the diligence of teachers. For example,

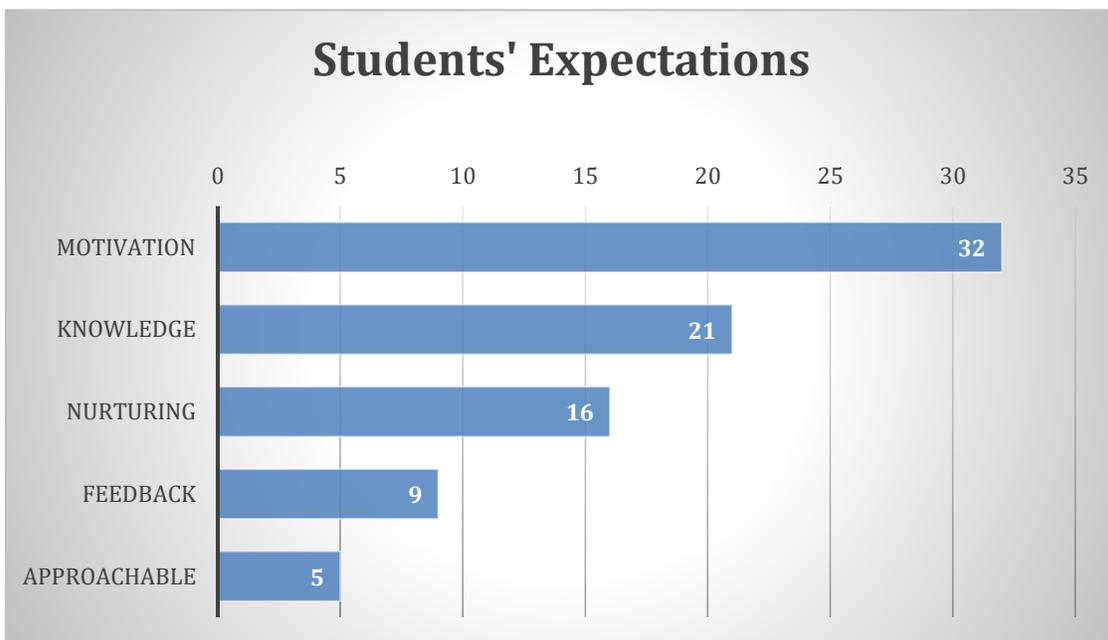
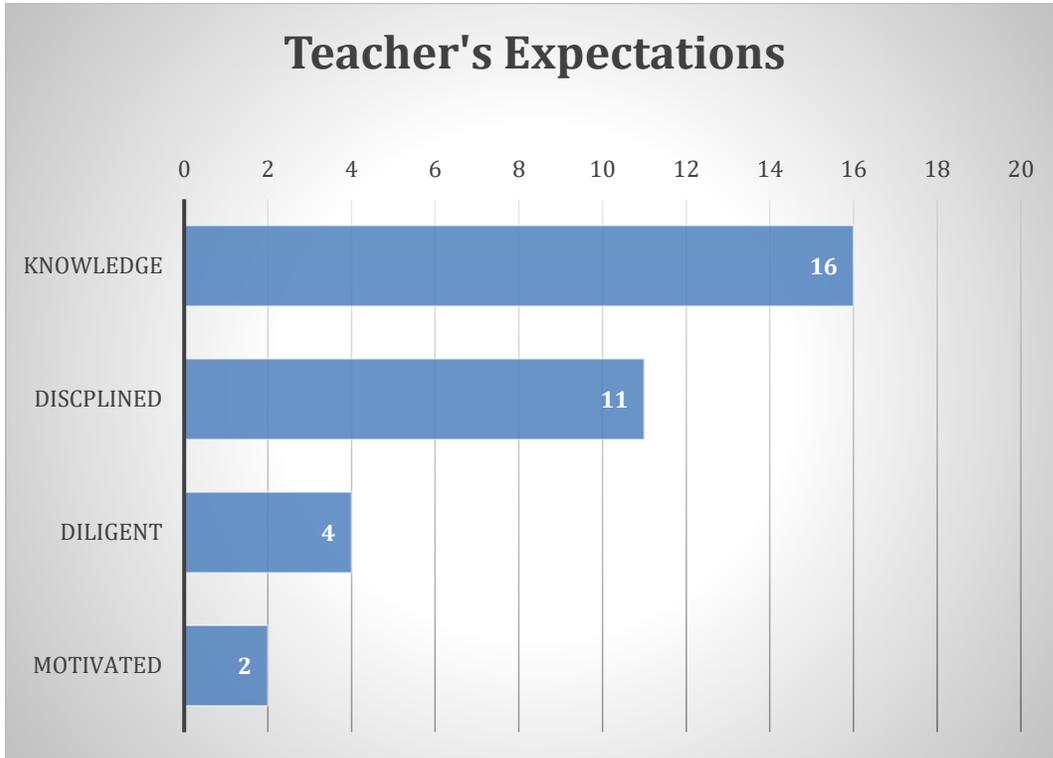
Teachers Expectations From Students

As per the data collected, the teachers' expectations are spread over three important areas of the learning experience: Knowledge, Motivation, and Discipline. Thirst for knowledge kindles more interest in teaching and gathering information for teachers. Being attentive and showing interest in what is taught motivates teachers' experience.

ST_9 Interest in the classes, attentiveness, ability to think outside the box, form an opinion, think critically, and apply concepts to everyday life expectations. It helps generate interest and encourages me to gather more information for the topic and critically analyze it.

* ST_4 A Teacher only expects students to be obedient, listening carefully to teaching, which rarely happens. Students are becoming increasingly noisy by the day. Their distractions in a class lower our performance to teach.

* ST_11 Through knowledge in all the spheres makes the teacher be on toes to update.



Conclusion

The above chart shows teachers' priorities, which rely more on knowledge and functional transactional or knowledge-based transactions, and discipline and attentiveness. But whereas the students' expectations are majorly behavioural aspects: nurturing ability, motivation, approachability, knowledge, and feedback. There is a gap that seems to be wide as far as students' expectations are concerned. The gap relates to perception versus reality. By bridging this gap using the Pygmalion approach of understanding this behavioural aspect, we can enhance the learning experience in manifold ways.

The research results are in accordance with the findings of the literature review, which takes into consideration the power of positivity or positive expectations that lead to positive outcomes. If we can use the Pygmalion approach for our teaching practices and have positive expectations for our students, it will improve our performance to a greater degree. A teacher needs to be sensitive to the people she/he is teaching and, when presenting the module or the activities herein, realize that each student will benefit from the unit's ultimate goal. Creating an emotional climate through verbal or non-verbal interaction with students can positively affect academic achievement.

Participation of the students in the learning process a positive mood, acceptance, and understanding of his role as a learner and the satisfaction of learning is influenced by teachers' expectations. But the completion of studies is not determined by expectations. It is dependent on the students' diligence, interest, and passion for achieving their goals.

Some teachers' tendency to ignore comments made by students, especially the less efficient, can help. A way to motivate them here would be that when such students struggle to answer correctly, teachers can afford to tackle such a situation by making the efficient learners give more clues, repeat or rephrase to encourage everyone's attention.

Adding a new dimension to teaching, the Pygmalion approach to teaching is a lot more to do with not just the teachers' thought process but that of a preacher's thought process. Everything is dependent on how this whole transaction of coding and decoding occurs without any distortion and disruption between the giver and the receiver of knowledge.

Motivation is the driving factor behind creating an average kid into an extraordinary performer. Telling a student what they are good at rather than the opposite is creating positive expectations. Seeking to understand than to be understood is the very essence of Pygmalion's way of thinking. The difference in language acquisition in the classroom can be handled differently. The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy should incorporate the basic assumption of what the teacher believes is what becomes of the students.

The critical need of the hour is to create an intellectual climate of change and ecology of transformation to foster a strong delivery with promising standards of excellence.

Practical implications

This research highlights the role of the teacher in creating awareness, motivation, and support. Expectancy effects are not oriented to classroom learning only. They play a major role in social interactions

One cannot deny that expectancy effects can vary from teacher to teacher and context to context. Babad E. believes that by nature, some teachers seem to be more efficient in controlling the behavior of their pupils in an impersonal manner which is related to their personality types,

“demonstrating dogmatism, authoritarianism, field dependence, bias, and cognitive rigidity self=fulfilling prophecy effects in teacher behavior and in student performance --- were found for biased, but not for unbiased teachers. (Teacher expectancies and nonverbal behaviour, 1992)

Value orientation is a way of finding out what we look for. If one knows what a particular student is capable of rather than what he is not capable of or knows what a student is good at rather than the other way around, one can find a little value in his education.

Recommendations

- The Pygmalion approach and its impact on teacher expectancies are vast, and this field is wide open for extensive study. Some suggestion for future researchers could be:
- Expand the research field to other colleges of Bangalore University
- Comparing undergraduate and Postgraduate studies with this approach could be a desirable option.
- The impact of positive and explicit comments on written assignments could be an area for research.
- Mechanisms of expectancy transmissions in K-12 classrooms
- Changes in the impact of teacher expectancies by student grade levels to identify points in students' educational trajectories
- * The role empathy can play in mediating a relationship between expectancies and attributions to explore the possibilities.

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