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Effect of assumptions by pre-service teachers concerning family life, extracurricular involvement and socioeconomic status

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The state of Missouri wants to produce highly qualified educators in order to facilitate high performing students; because of this it is vital that pre-service teachers alter their expectation in order to maintain high expectations for all students thus lessening the achievement gap. For over twenty years researchers have demonstrated that teacher expectations have impacted student's academic performance. Tom Good states, "Teachers' high expectations of their students contributes to students achieving at or near their potential, while students receiving low expectations will not gain as much as they could have if taught differently" (1987). As pre-service teachers (students in the teacher development program taking 2000 level courses) develop as educators at the University of Missouri the knowledge of what impacts their expectations needs to be understood in order to adjust them to best meet their student's academic needs. These teachers are being placed in America's classroom and have a direct impact on student's educational performance. Lower student performance resulting from low teacher expectations may result in low test scores for students leading to lowered funding and decreased value in the district. Within this research we will be examining what formulates pre-service teacher's expectations of their students. Our research is crucial to determining how to better educate future teachers in order to establish teacher's high expectations and higher achievement from their students. In order to determine these factors we polled 368 students in an entry level teacher development course at the University of Missouri. In the past the expectations of in-service teacher's has been studied in correlation with student achievement to determine the effect upon students' performance. Past research has shown race to be a large factor in teacher expectation. For example generally African American students are thought to perform poorly, while Asian students are expected to perform highly. We will analyze University of Missouri pre-service teacher's survey responses in order to identify patterns within their reasoning for the expectation given. Surveys included mixed race variable and factors that one might infer would impact teacher expectations, such as family life, extracurricular involvement, and socio economic status of the different scenarios represented. Surveys included a control scenario with a race, gender, and SES variable.