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ORIGINS OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD YOUNG CHILDREN¹

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Several previous investigations have revealed contrasting patterns of interaction by teachers with students toward whom they hold attitudes of attachment, concern, indifference, or rejection. The present study focused on discovering the origins of these teacher attitudes by collecting first grade teachers' early impressions of students. Teachers were interviewed during the first two weeks of school, prior to readiness test administration, and their comments about students whom they later assigned to each of the four attitude groups were analyzed. The findings were quite consistent in yielding distinct profiles for children in each respective group, complementing and extending previous research by indicating the student attributes associated with the formation of these four teacher attitudes.

Silberman (1969) asked teachers to nominate one student in their class to each of four attitude groups: (a) attachment (If you could keep one student another year for the sheer joy of it, whom would you pick?); (b) indifference (If a parent were to drop in unannounced for a conference, whose child would you be least prepared to talk about?); (c) concern (If you could devote all your attention to a child who concerned you a great deal, whom would you pick?); (d) rejection (If your class was to be reduced by one child, whom would you be relieved to have removed?).

He then observed for 20 hours in each class to discover what these children were like and how their teachers interacted with them. He found the attachment students to be "model" students, high achievers who conformed to the teachers' wishes and fulfilled their personal needs. Observation of the teachers interacting with these attachment students showed some evidence of subtle favoritism, but no gross favoritism.

Concern students tended to be dependent, low-achieving students who made extensive but approved and appropriate demands upon the teachers. The teachers interacted most frequently with these students and in general behaved in ways consonant with their expressed concern about these students' achievement levels.

The indifference students did not have any particular identifying characteristics except for their low frequencies of interaction with the teachers. In observing the teachers, Silberman noted that teachers' interactions with indifference students not only were infrequent but also were briefer and less emotionally involving than those with other students.

The rejection students tended to be behavior problems who made demands that the teachers saw as illegitimate or overwhelming. Teachers had frequent contacts with these students, but a large proportion of these contacts involved intervention to control their misbehavior. Yet these students also received considerable teacher praise, as if the teachers were attempting to "make up for" the generally negative tenor of their interaction with them.

Additional research on the student characteristics and teacher-student interaction patterns involving students in Silberman's four attitude groups has been done by Jenkins (1972), Good and Brophy (1972), and Brophy and Good (1974). All of these studies generally support Silberman's results and impressions, although there are some inconsistencies. The teachers in Jenkins' study saw the attachment students as high achievers and as students with warm rather than neutral or hostile attitudes toward themselves (the teachers). Good and Brophy (1972) found the attachment students to be well-behaved high achievers. Similar findings were obtained by Brophy and Good (1974). Thus, in general, attachment students appear to be high-achieving students who conform and respond warmly to teachers. Nevertheless, none of the four studies found any grossly overt favoritism of these students, although they all suggested that the teachers favored attachment students in subtle ways that were not being picked up by the behavioral measures included.

The four studies agree in showing the concern students to be low achievers (the primary reason for teacher concern) and also suggest that these students are dependent upon teachers but express this dependency in ways that the teachers find rewarding or at least acceptable. Thus, they respond to these students with concern about their low achievement and with redoubled efforts to do something about it through more frequent contacts and provision of tutorial help and other aids to learning.

The four studies find that rejection students are mostly low achievers, but not as consistently low as the concern students. However, students in the rejection group apparently "turn off" teachers. This may be done actively through defiance or disobedience, or more subtly through failure to respond positively to the teachers' overtures. Findings regarding students are mixed. Most studies have found the pattern noticed by Silberman: evidence of a strained teacher-student relationship featuring frequent disciplinary contacts and criticism but tempered by frequent praise and other evidence of teacher attempts to "make up for" negative behavior. However, Good and Brophy (1972) found a clear-cut pattern of rejection untempered by any evidence of attempts to compensate by providing positive behavior toward rejection students.

A common thread running throughout these studies is that students in the concern and rejection groups appear to be quite similar at the gross observational level, with the exception that rejection-group students are more likely to be classroom discipline problems than concern-group students. Teachers show sharply contrasting reactions to these two types of students, however. They tend to be quite supportive and attentive to the conduct of students in the rejection group.

The four studies agree in finding students in the indifference group to be characterized primarily by low rates of interaction with the teacher. Likewise, data from some of the studies support Silberman's observations that teacher interactions with them are brief and low in emotional intensity. Whereas teachers tend to respond warmly to the attachment group, become concerned about students in the concern group, and reject or develop conflictual responses toward students in the rejection group, they respond with indifference or apathy toward students in the indifference group, often acting as if they were unaware that these students were even in the room. The student attributes that trigger this reaction (or, more properly, nonreaction) have not been identified, however.

The purpose of the present study was to further explore these four attitude groups to try to identify the student characteristics that trigger these four attitudinal responses in teachers. More particularly, this study sought to identify some of the descriptive characteristics of indifference-group students and some of the differences between concern- and rejection-group students which might explain the strongly contrasting teacher reactions to these two groups.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 28 female first-grade teachers and their students, drawn from a large urban public school system. The students were almost all from white, middle-class homes. Due to a teacher cross-over plan for desegregation purposes, 9 of the teachers were black. All teachers worked in self-contained classrooms in which they taught their children all of the basic academic subjects. Teachers working in team-teaching arrangements or in special education classes were not included in the study. The school system was selected because its children do not attend kindergarten (unless they attend private kindergartens). Thus, when the children entered the first-grade classrooms of the teachers in the study, they were unknown to the teachers and did not bring with them records containing test data or information about kindergarten performance. Therefore, except in a few cases where the teachers were neighbors of the children or where they knew the family from having taught an older sibling, the teachers and students were unfamiliar with one another before school began.

Procedure

Each teacher was seen four times, once to explain the purpose of the study and solicit her cooperation, and three times to conduct interviews in her classroom after school hours. At the first meeting, teachers were informed that they would be interviewed at three points during the year to find out what they had noticed about each of their students. It was explained that very little research information is available about the kinds of student characteristics that teachers notice and use in forming impressions about students and that the purpose of the study was to gather such information. Teachers were informed that interviews would be informal but would be tape recorded and were assured that all information would be strictly confidential. No difficulty was encountered in obtaining cooperation from teachers. They found participation in the study to be stimulating and enjoyable, and the guaranteed confidentiality apparently eliminated any hesitation that they may have had about participating or about speaking freely.

Interviews were conducted by the first author and by two middle-aged female assistants trained by her for this purpose. Interviews were conducted at three points: (a) during the first two weeks of schools, before any test data were available; (b) one to two weeks after the Metropolitan Readiness Test had been administered and scored by the teachers (about four weeks after the beginning of school); and (c) during the second and third weeks in January, at the beginning of the second semester. Interviews averaged about an hour, although they varied by teacher. For the first interview, the teacher received the following instructions:

The purpose of this interview is for you to discuss briefly each child in your class. In discussing each child, you should indicate the characteristics and actions you have noticed about each child. Do not try to limit

what you say to only one type of information-just mention anything you know or have observed about this child. You don't have to use complete sentences-you may just give some adjectives or phrases which describe the child.

Directions for the second and third interviews were as follows:

We will be discussing your students as we did the last time. Now that you have had your students for approximately a month (four months at the third interview), we are interested in what you have noticed about them. Feel free to repeat anything you said last time about a child or to add anything new you have noticed about the child. You don't have to use complete sentences-you may just give some adjectives or phrases which describe the child.

Following these instructions, the interviewer then began naming the children in the teacher's class and asked her to respond, following a prearranged randomized order of names. Once the interview began, the interviewer's primary function was to act as an interested listener and to encourage the teacher to talk comfortably. Since the interviews were tape recorded, the interviewers did not have to take down the information and could spend their time responding to the teacher and encouraging her to continue talking. Ground rules were set up for interviewers to help insure that they did not cue teachers to give certain kinds of information or begin to reinforce them for certain kinds of comments. Also, teachers were instructed to confine their responses to what they had observed about the child and to omit discussions of test scores, attendance data, or long anecdotes which were intended to exemplify or justify a general statement about the child that had just been made. The interviewer avoided making evaluative comments on the teacher's statements. Teachers were encouraged to continue talking about a given child as long as they had additional things to say. When they seemed to have exhausted their perceptions about a child, the interviewer then named the next child.

After each interview, the teachers were asked to rank their students in order according to their expected achievement levels. These data were used as part of an investigation of the student characteristics noted and used by teachers in forming impressions about students' academic potential (see Willis, 1972). Also, following the third interview, the teachers were asked to nominate up to three students to each of the four attitude groups (attachment, indifference, concern, and rejection), using the method of Silberman (1969) mentioned previously. These attitude-group nominations formed the basis for the present study, since they allowed investigation of the characteristics of students nominated to these four attitude groups.

Coding the interviews

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and then coded according to a system devised by the present authors. Coding categories had not been established prior to the interviews; they were

established after the interviews had been completed, based upon observed responses. An initial system was devised in response to a set of five interviews, and the system was then revised after it had been tried out with an additional five interviews. The revised system was then used to code all of the interviews, with intercoder agreement being 85% (number agreed divided by itself plus number disagreed). Disagreements were resolved by discussion. During initial coding and resolution of coding differences, the authors did not know whether or not the child in question had been nominated to one of the four attitude groups by his teacher, so that the results of the study could not have been biased by the author's knowledge of the teacher's general attitude toward the student.

The teacher's interview responses about each student were classified into 11 major divisions. There were 117 specific categories within these 11 major divisions, as well as a general/unclassified category for each division to handle statements which fell into that division but which did not clearly fit into one of the more molecular categories. The 11 divisions included statements concerning the following: the physical description of the child, the child's family, the child's health or physical condition, the child's social or emotional characteristics, the child's interaction with other children, the child's attitudes or motivation concerning school, the child's classroom behavior or the kinds of management problems that he presented, the child's readiness for school or readiness-related abilities, and skills, the child's oral or verbal skills, the child's work habits or ability to do classroom work, and the teacher's feelings concerning the child, the nature of their relationship or individual interactions that she had had with the child.

In addition to coding each statement within one of the categories in the system, the statement was coded for whether it was positive, neutral, or negative. Thus, the coding yielded information both about what kinds of things the teacher had noticed about the child and about whether the information was positive, neutral, or negative.

Data for the present study were taken from the first interview, done during the first two weeks of school. Thus, they reflect the teacher's early impressions of the students, based solely on contact with them in or out of class. No standardization test data were available yet.

Data Analysis

Each child was scored present or absent for each of the basic categories in the system. Thus, he had a presence-absence score for each of 117 categories. One hundred and twenty additional scores were derived through algebraic transformation of these original 128 categories, yielding 248 scores. The 120 additional scores were sum scores for each of the 11 major categories and sums of positive and negative statements within and across categories.

To assess the relationship between perceived characteristics of the students and assignment of students to the four attitude groups, a series of one-way analyses of variance was performed, in which students nominated to a given attitude group were compared with all other students of the same sex. Comparisons were made separately within sex, because there is evidence that attributes associated with sex role expectations are perceived more positively when they appear in a study of the "appropriate" sex than when they appear in a student of the opposite sex (Brophy & Good, 1974; Feshbach, 1969). All students were included in the analyses except those who were repeating the first grade. The latter were excluded because teachers had known them for an extra year and because their status as repeaters probably affected the teachers' attitudes toward them in systematic but unknown ways.

These 248 comparisons for each attitude group involved 355 boys and 311 girls. Given the large Ns, it might seem that statistically significant F values could be obtained even when group differences were minor in absolute magnitude. However, with the exception of the sum scores for the major categories and a few heavily used categories, incidence of category use was low enough to prevent many differences from reaching the .05 level of significance. In fact, category usage was often so low that a meaningful analysis could not be performed. Thus, the .05 level of statistical significance was chosen as the criterion for inclusion of a group-difference finding in this report; all group differences reported below are based on F values at or below the .05 significance level.

Results

The distributions of boys and girls in the four groups are shown in Table 1. Although the differences are not large (except in the concern group), they reaffirm the frequent findings that boys are more salient than girls (more likely to be noticed and commented upon) and more likely to be perceived negatively by teachers (Brophy & Good, 1974).

As expected, teachers' comments about children in the Attachment Group were overwhelmingly positive. Concerning the boys nominated to the attachment group, the teachers made more positive comments about their clothing, more often said that they had an immature appearance, more often said that they had a visual impairment or required glasses, less often said that they were quiet, more often assigned them as leaders or classroom helpers, more often described them as helpful with other children, more often described them as busybodies, more often stated that they knew left from right and could stay within lines on a tablet (readiness skills), more often stated that they did not draw well, more often made negative comments about their reading ability, more often stated that they volunteered information during classroom discussions, more often mentioned a perceptual problem or learning disability, more often mentioned positive classroom behavior, more often mentioned positive social behavior, and more often mentioned the student as a high-ability student. The latter per-

ceptions were confirmed by these students' significantly higher scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test. In general, boys in the attachment group appeared to be high-ability students who were well adjusted to school, conformed to the teachers' rules, and "rewarded" the teachers by being supportive of them by doing well in their school work, helping out, and volunteering information. The negative statements regarding student ability and reading process were probably relative rather than absolute, in view of the more general picture of high ability that the teachers drew in describing these boys. In the context of their total statements about these boys, these negative remarks appear to be more a matter of concern about getting the boy to maximize his potential rather than concern about getting him to meet minimal requirements. The comments about clothing suggest that these boys were generally of higher socioeconomic status than their classmates. Teacher favoritism toward attachment boys is suggested by at least one set of findings: even though these boys were perceived as busybodies, they were more often assigned as leaders or helpers than other boys were.

Teachers described girls assigned to the attachment group as larger than average, more attractive than average, having interested, cooperative parents, more likely to have a visual impairment or require glasses, more likely to have been to kindergarten, more likely to be unable to write their names, more creative and imaginative, more alert, better observers, more likely to enjoy stories, able to work independently on assignments, having higher general intellectual ability, coming from generally good families, and being high in expected achievement. Just as with the boys, the teachers' statements about high ability in the attachment group girls were borne out by significantly higher Metropolitan Readiness Test scores. In addition to these specifics, the teachers had significantly more positive comments and significantly fewer negative comments about these girls than about other girls. Like the boys, the girls in the attachment group appeared to be high-achievement students who conformed to and rewarded their teachers. Also, there again is evidence that they came from higher-social-class families and that they were perceived in a generally positive way, including physical attractiveness.

These data generally parallel previous findings suggesting that teachers hold a general positive halo effect toward children assigned to the Attachment Groups and that, even when negative qualities are perceived in these students, the teachers do not respond to them negatively as they apparently do in responding to similar traits in students in the other three groups.

Boys assigned to the concern group were especially likely to be described as being of average size, being reared by grandparents or older parents, having a speech impediment or using baby talk, being generally immature, being active and vivacious, seeking teacher

attention, being able to use and keep up with school supplies, being dependent in school work and needing help from the teacher, needing reassurance and approval, being of generally low ability, needing readiness work, having a positive attitude toward school, having generally poor health, having generally poor social-emotional development, having generally poor oral and verbal skills, having generally poor skills in the area of independent work, and having generally low abilities. The latter perception was confirmed by significantly lower Metropolitan Readiness Test scores for these boys. In addition, the teachers made significantly fewer positive comments and significantly more negative comments about these boys, although the negative comments were almost completely confined to their abilities rather than to their personalities or cooperation with the teachers.

Taken together, these data suggest a rather clear picture of the boys in the concern group. They appear to be students of low ability who are dependent upon the teachers for help and reassurance in completing their assignments. However, they are also perceived as being cooperative and compliant, so that demands they make upon the teachers are perceived as being legitimate. The teachers also perceive them as poorly adjusted in their social relationships and generally immature, again stressing their dependency upon and need for help from the teachers.

Teachers describe girls in the concern group as being more likely to be nonwhite than to be white; they mentioned the parents' occupation more frequently (often with a negative connotation); their parents were described in generally positive terms; they tended to be from large families; the size of the family was one of the problems that the teachers felt was confronting the child; the child was more likely to have a speech impediment or use baby talk, to be more dependent and quieter, to be lacking in self-confidence, to be dependent in work, and to need help from the teacher, to have a generally positive attitude toward school, and to have poorly developed verbal skills. Again, these girls had significantly lower Metropolitan Readiness Test scores than their classmates.

Even more than the boys, the girls in the concern group showed a pattern of low achievement combined with dependency upon the teacher for both emotional and academic support. The data for both boys and girls in the concern group in this study suggest that concern students are low achievers who depend on the teacher to tell them what to do continually. This dependency is expressed in inhibited, socially approved ways; concern children apparently do not present behavioral problems and are not assertive or intrusive like children in some of the other groups.

Teachers describe boys in the indifference group as more likely to be blond-haired, to have a "Blank" facial expression, to be immature, to be neat and clean, to have a working mother (which the teacher perceives as a problem), to be reared by a grandparent or substitute parents, to have a disinterested or uncooperative parent, to have a visual impairment or need glasses, to have a

speech impediment and/or speak in baby talk, to be a sociometric loner, to be anxious to please, to be in poor health, to have negative attitudes toward school, to have failed to live up to the teachers' initial expectations, and to have poor verbal skills. Also, in summative response categories about indifference boys, the teachers more often mentioned physical descriptions, more often commented negatively upon their health, more often made negative comments about their work-related behavior, and made more total negative comments about them. Despite this rather consistently negative pattern, which included several negative comments about abilities and work habits, the boys in the indifference group did not differ significantly from other boys in the Metropolitan Readiness Test.

Some of the contrasts between concern boys and the indifference boys are striking. Both groups were perceived as being of low ability (especially the concern boys), but the two groups of boys were perceived as responding to teachers in contrasting ways. Whereas the concern boys showed dependency upon the teachers, the indifference boys apparently did not respond to the teacher in ways that were rewarding to them. Even though the teachers perceived the needs of these children quite clearly and even though they rated them as anxious to please, they responded to them with indifference rather than with concern. Clues indicating possible reasons for this appear in some of the other teacher perceptions. In particular, the teachers reported that indifference boys had a "blank" facial expression (suggesting that they did not respond to teacher overtures) and that they had poor attitudes toward school (the indifference group was the only group to be so described). They were also described as having failed to meet the teachers' initial expectations for them. Apparently, however, they responded inappropriately (from the teachers' point of view, at least) to teacher overtures (blank expression, "negative" attitudes), thus conditioning the teachers to stay away from them.

The latter data are reminiscent of the findings of Yarrow, Waxler, and Scott (1971), who found that teachers returned more quickly and more frequently to a child who had given them a positive response to their previous overture than to a child who had failed to give such a positive response. Positive responses to teacher overtures are apparently experienced as rewarding by the teachers, so that children can condition teacher approach or avoidance by either producing or failing to produce, respectively, positive responses to these overtures. Apparently this phenomenon was operating in these classrooms, and it must have exerted a strong primacy effect in conditioning the teachers to avoid and become indifferent toward these boys, even though they clearly perceived their needs for help in certain areas. The teachers apparently felt that these boys wanted to be left alone and/or they disliked the teachers or school, so they began to avoid them.

The girls in the indifference group were described as more likely to be nonwhite than white, as not liking school, as easily giving up when working on assignments, as lacking in self-confidence, as not being prepared for school, as not knowing their colors or numbers, as being creative and imaginative, as being of generally low ability, as being children that the teachers did not frequently interact with, as presenting problems in their classroom behavior. Teacher perceptions of deficient readiness skills in these girls were borne out by the girls' significantly low Metropolitan Readiness Test scores. Here again, the teachers clearly perceived that these children were in need of help, but they responded with indifference rather than with concern.

Again, the apparent reason is the response of the children to the teacher. Whereas the concern group combines low ability with dependency and positive response to the teacher, the indifference group combines low ability with misbehavior in the classroom and negative attitudes toward school. The major differences between the two groups seems to be a negative response to the teacher and/or to school in general among the indifference students. When teachers encounter such attitudes and do not succeed in changing them, they tend to respond with indifference of their own. Apparently, this is not a benign indifference which occurs just because a child is nonsalient and the teacher is too busy interacting with classmates to notice him. Instead, indifference of this sort seems to be a defense mechanism to protect the teacher from continued frustration and rejection by the indifference-group students. Such unresponsive and/or sullen behavior by students during early interactions with the teachers tends to "turn off" the teachers, conditioning them to minimize their interactions with these students in the future and to develop an attitude of indifference rather than concern about their problems, even though these problems are accurately perceived.

Boys in the rejection group were described as more likely to be nonwhite than white, as coming from intact families in which both parents were living, as immature and poorly adjusted, as independent, as loud or disruptive, as being relatively inactive and not vivacious, as unlikely to be assigned as a leader or helper, as having difficulty in getting along with others, as being talkative, as not knowing likenesses and differences, as not knowing how to write their names, as not knowing left from right or how to stay within lines on tablets (readiness skills), as unable to use or keep up with school supplies, as having poor reading abilities, as needing extra help because of generally low ability, as being likely to fail or to have to be withdrawn from school, as having deteriorated in their work since the beginning of the year, as being either notably healthy or having notably poor health, as having poor verbal skills, as being physically unattractive, as presenting classroom behavior problems, as generally lacking in school readiness, as presenting problems in their behavior during

work assignments, and as being of generally low ability. Although the teachers remembered both more positive and more negative contacts with these children, they had more total negative comments about them, fewer total positive comments about them, and more total comments about them (positive and negative). Despite this extremely detailed and almost unremittingly negative picture of the rejection-group boys, including several explicit statements to the effect that they were of low ability, these boys did not differ significantly from other boys in Metropolitan Readiness Test Scores.

Just as teacher reactions to the attachment-group students suggest a generally positive halo effect, the reactions to the rejection-group boys suggest a generally negative one. The halo effect induced by their intense dislike of the rejection-group boys even caused the teachers to misjudge (underestimate) seriously their intellectual abilities, even though these teachers generally were remarkably accurate in judging student potential. (Willis, 1972).

The contrast with students in other groups is also instructive. Instead of being quiet and dependent upon the teacher like the concern students, the rejection boys are assertive and often loud and disruptive; and they present frequent classroom discipline problems. Their interpersonal problems are not confined to their interactions with the teachers, as with indifference students; they are also described as having difficulty in getting along with their classmates. Thus, the problems that these boys present to the teachers are frequent and serious enough to cause the teachers to respond with rejection rather than with concern. In this connection, it is noteworthy that, although both the concern and the rejection boys are described as in need of readiness work and extra help in general, only the rejection boys are described as likely to fail or to have to be withdrawn from school.

This implies that the teachers had positive expectations of success in their efforts to work with concern students but did not have such expectations for whatever efforts they may have been making to give help to rejection students. Also, it should be kept in mind that concern students had generally low abilities as measured by the readiness tests, while the rejection boys did not differ significantly from other boys. Apparently, boys who present sufficiently severe discipline problems create such a strong negative halo effect that teachers also attribute low abilities and lack of readiness to them, despite evidence to the contrary. This is the only group in which teacher perceptions of ability did not match readiness test data.

Apparently, the frustration and aggravation caused by these boys was sufficient to impair teacher judgement in their case. Thus, they underestimated these boys' intellectual abilities and were pessimistic regarding their chances for academic success, even though they were optimistic about the academic success of

concern-group boys who actually did have lower abilities.

Concerning the girls in the rejection group, the teachers frequently mentioned negative family patterns (broken home or poor parental cooperation), and they described the girls as being busybodies, not liking school, giving up easily, lacking self-confidence, being playful and mischievous, not being prepared for school, not being adjusted to school routines, not knowing colors and numbers, not knowing likenesses add differences, being alert and close observers, not volunteering information to the class, failing to pay good attention, being likely to fail or to have to be withdrawn from school, being able to achieve more than they were doing, having poor school attitudes, having poor school readiness, having poor work habits, and having poor general ability. Again, the teachers made significantly more negative comments, significantly fewer positive comments, and significantly more total comments about the rejection girls than about girls in the other groups. As with the boys, however, despite the teachers' repeated and detailed comments about low abilities the rejection girls did not differ significantly from their classmates on Metropolitan Readiness Test scores.

Although it shows up in somewhat different variables, the general pattern concerning rejection-group girls is quite similar to, and has the same implications, as the pattern for boys. In contrast to other girls, the rejection-group girls appeared to present more behavioral and disciplinary problems, and to be under-achievers, and in general not to "go along with the program." As with the boys, the teachers tended to rate the rejection-group girls as having low abilities (although they sometimes described them as underachievers rather than as low-ability children), even though they did not differ significantly from other girls in readiness test scores. The contrast between concern-group girls and rejection-group girls parallels the same contrast for the boys. Concern girls have low abilities but rejection girls do not, although teachers think that they do. The teachers apparently were rewarded by the concern-group girls' behavior and developed concern and the habit of spending time with them, but they were apparently put off by the behavior of the rejection students and developed an attitude of rejection toward them.

Discussion

Teacher reactions to the four types of students studied in this research are readily explainable on the basis of the behavior of the students themselves (as perceived by the teachers). The three major variables involved seem to be the students' general level of school success, the degree to which they reward teachers in their personal contacts with them, and the degree to which they conform to classroom rules. Attachment students were compliant and successful in school, and they apparently rewarded

teachers in their interactions with them. Concern students had difficulty in school but apparently were compliant and personally rewarding to the teachers, so that teachers became concerned about them and spent much time providing remedial help. The teachers' negative attitudes toward indifference and rejection children led them to underestimate their ability and learning potential. However, they did not respond with concern even when they accurately perceived the needs of these students, apparently because they were "turned off" by the students' personalities and behavior.

The Indifference students apparently responded negatively to the teachers, failing to provide a rewarding interpersonal contact pattern, so that the teachers became indifferent and gradually spent less and less time with these children, even though they perceived them as needing extra help. The rejection students not only failed to provide rewarding experiences to the teachers in their interpersonal contacts with them; they also frequently caused classroom disturbances and were general discipline problems. The teachers responded to this by rejecting the students to the point of wanting to get rid of them and by projecting a number of traits onto them, especially low abilities, which they did not, in fact, possess (at least not as a group).

Teacher perceptions were generally accurate for the first three groups, but the children of the rejection group apparently were sufficiently threatening to the teachers to impair the accuracy of their perceptions and to cause them to project inappropriate and incorrect attributes onto them. This extended even to teacher judgements of student ability, which were usually quite accurate.

All in all, the data of this study fit nicely with the findings from Feshbach's (1969) study of teacher preferences for different types of students and from previous studies which related teacher assignment of students to one of these four attitude groups to teacher-student interaction patterns (Brophy & Good, 1974; Good & Brophy, 1972; Jenkins, 1972; Silberman, 1969). They extend this line of research by providing more information about the personal qualities of the students assigned to these four groups.

The data on concern and rejection students are particularly instructive, because previous research had found them to be quite similar, raising the question of why teachers responded to one group with concern while responding to the other group with rejection. The present findings suggest that these two groups are in fact different, although their differences have not shown up clearly in the student behavior measures in-

cluded within previous observational research. Previous interaction analysis research had identified compliance versus misbehavior as one apparent difference between concern- and rejection-group students, although the findings did not suggest anything resembling the extreme difference suggested by the present findings. Perhaps actually existing extreme differences were not picked up in previous research for some reason, or perhaps teachers in the present study were exaggerating the actual differences as a defense mechanism. Probably both factors were operating to some degree.

The present study has also provided some positive descriptions of the qualities of the indifference-group students. Previous research had identified only low frequency of contact with the teacher as a predictable characteristic of this group. The present research has identified several additional characteristics which help form an explanation for the low frequencies of teacher contact with indifference-group students. The findings suggest that a measure of the degree to which these students provide teachers with rewarding responses in their interpersonal contacts with them (as in the study by Yarrow, Waxler, & Scott, 1971) would show a significant difference between the students in this group and their classmates.

Across attitude groups, a major conclusion of the research is that the particular relationship between a teacher and an individual student is crucial in affecting the teachers' attitudes toward that student, independent of such general student characteristics as achievement, race, sex, etc. It appears that children who do not reward teachers are avoided and/or rejected by them. Also, although some relationships do exist, the attitudes of teachers are for the most part independent of student achievement. Expectations are quite closely tied to student achievement, but attitudes appear to be more closely related to the personal qualities of the student and to his reaction to the teacher. Thus, a high achiever is not necessarily going to be liked nor is a low achiever necessarily going to be rejected. Depending upon the student's response to the teacher, a high achiever can just as easily be treated with indifference, and a low achiever can easily become the object of teacher concern rather than teacher rejection.

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TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS IN
THE FOUR ATTITUDE GROUPS

Distri- bution	Group							
	Attachment		Concern		Indifference		Rejection	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
n	32	32	42	22	30	23	37	25
% ^a	9.7	11.2	12.7	7.7	9.1	8.0	11.2	8.7

^a Percentage of total number of boys and girls, respectively, who were nominated to each attitude group (each teacher named as many as three children to each group.)