

Morris, Edward. 2005. "From 'Middle Class' to 'Trailer Trash': Teachers' Perceptions of White Students in a Predominately Minority School." *Sociology of Education* 78:99-121.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The author argues that academic disparities between White students depends on how teachers perceive and interpret their whiteness, an interpretation based in large part on the socioeconomic status of the students and, surprisingly, the race of the teacher.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Where students, in this paper's context, adapt their behavior to match the expectations/perceptions of them by their teachers, as if to stand true to what the teachers believed.
- Symbolic Capital: Something of value, that can come in any form whatsoever, that indirectly brings gains in a different context.
- White Privilege: the benefits of cultural resources, treatments, access, etc. that white people gain covertly from the institutions around them, creating an advantage for them.

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. White teachers in the study never described their White students as being talented or intelligent, due to how these teachers were attributing social class to the students, whereas the Black teachers were found to compliment frequently.
2. White students turned out to be disciplined differently based on who the teacher disciplining them was. White teachers disciplined White students much more frequently for actions that Black teachers otherwise ignored or let go of.
3. White teachers at this minority school perceived White students as coming from economically disadvantaged families and attributed their disadvantages to lack of resources and a lack of ambition for a better life. Black teachers seemed to think the same students were middle class.
4. Teachers were found to commonly link the students' class backgrounds with their academic performance and potential, as opposed to linking race to these characteristics.

KEY QUOTE: "Many white teachers at Matthews viewed the white students as poor and their families as unfortunate... [and] tended to overlook the white students academically and to focus more disciplinary attention on them than the African American teachers did" (114).

QUESTION: How would teachers of races other than Black and White treat the various races that were present at this minority school? In other words, what would the experience be between a teacher of some intermediary race and the minority students who attended the school in the study?