

## Sym1PaperB1: Teacher expectations in a tertiary environment: The role of gender

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### Biography

*Since completing her doctorate in educational psychology Rajshree Gopala Krishnan has been a researcher with Te Hononga Akoranga, COMET. Rajshree's doctoral studies explored teacher expectations in the tertiary context.*

### ABSTRACT

This presentation will explore whether the academic and behavioural expectations of New Zealand tertiary teaching staff were influenced by student gender. Although there has been a plethora of research in the teacher expectation field within the compulsory school sector, few studies have been conducted within the tertiary setting. One such study showed that the more that specific disciplines believed that innate ability was needed in order to succeed in that discipline, the smaller the proportion of females enrolled (Astronomy, Engineering, Computer Science, Physics, and Mathematics all below 30%). In addition, participants who believed that innate ability was necessary for that discipline also believed that women were less suitable than men to study that discipline. In the current study, teaching staff ( $N = 54$ ) expectations of student achievement and in-class behaviour were examined via exploratory vignette-based methodology. Across a range of disciplines, there were no statistically significant differences in staff academic expectations based on student gender. However, staff behavioural expectations indicated gender biases. Staff predicted female students, regardless of age, would be more anxious, insecure learners. Contradictions in perceptions of in-class behaviours considered positive for male but not female students, augmented the moderating effect of student gender on teacher expectations. Subsequently, students' ( $N=976$ , taught by these staff) perceptions of staff expectations and behaviour towards them were assessed. Students accurately perceived staff academic expectations. Although they did not influence student academic outcomes, teacher expectations did influence the class instructional and socioemotional climate and hence, could influence students' overall tertiary experience.