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*Reaching Higher: The Power of Expectations in Schooling.* Rhona  
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Rhona Weinstein, *Reaching Higher: The Power of Expectations in Schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002. \$ 39.95 hardcover.

There is considerable debate about whether and how teacher beliefs and expectancies about student ability impact attachment to and performance in school. Weinstein posits that expectancy effects in schooling have largely been misunderstood and, ultimately, underestimated. She describes three characteristics of the extant research literature that potentially obscure the power of these effects. These attributes include: a lack of an ecological lens that situates teacher and student beliefs and behaviors within wider classroom, school, and societal contexts; a tendency to ignore the ways in which individual differences, especially in terms of race, class, gender and developmental stage, can amplify or dampen these effects; and, finally, inattention to the actual experience of and voice of children in measuring these effects.

Weinstein's book is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the literature on educational expectancies and self-fulfilling prophecies conducted from both teacher and student perspectives within laboratory and classroom settings. She highlights the critical gaps in the literature; these gaps, most fundamentally, relate to questions of for whom and in what types of contexts these effects occur. She then proposes an 'ecological paradigm' relevant to conceptualizing the nature and outcomes of ability related expectancies. The two remaining sections are largely syntheses of Weinstein and her colleagues' research conducted over the last two decades. Using the ecological paradigm, she investigates differentiation within and across classrooms, within schools and across elementary, secondary and post-secondary settings. She begins by documenting, through both quantitative and qualitative data sources, the ways in which elementary aged children are acutely aware of not only their own abilities, but of their teachers' perceptions of their own and their peers' abilities as well. Rich in-depth case studies of classrooms illustrate the ways in which children learn about ability differentials through classroom-level instructional grouping and curricular coverage, teacher-directed motivational and reward

systems and strategies and relational climates including teacher-student trust.

Moving to the larger school context, Weinstein details challenges associated with implementing an intervention designed to de-track a rigidly differentiated public high school. This is contrasted with a 'best practices' example of a private elementary school which, by design, resists tendencies to sort students through offering multiple opportunities for achievement across a variety of domains. Finally, she compares university climates which alternatively select faculty stars versus those who develop faculty talent and potential. The thrust of the evidence presented suggest the embeddedness of ability-related practices and beliefs and the ways in which isomorphic processes that accentuate their impact occur across and within educational institutions.

The contribution of this text lies in its breadth and depth. Weinstein integrates knowledge ranging from developmental psychology, the sociology of education and political processes in urban school reform. In short, we see not only the potential power of educational expectancies as they are enacted within and across varying contexts over the life course, but, perhaps more importantly, the book reveals the value of applying a contextualist perspective to study the individually-based behaviors and beliefs of both teachers and students.

Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans, *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002. \$60 hardcover, \$24.95 paper cover.

The publication of *The Quiet Hand of God* reflects growing interest (and concern) in the political and social role of religious institutions. As the federal government attempts to devolve responsibility onto church-sponsored social service organizations and as local, national, and international religious political groups become more powerful and sophisticated in their influence, academics have tried to increase knowledge of how religious organizations and their social and political activities function and succeed. This book parallels other work in the study of contemporary religion, regardless of the discipline, in that the focus is empirical and not theoretical. The kind of theoretical work that