

Box 2- An example in education

One well known educational experiment involved an inspector going into a class, testing all the children and communicating to the class teacher which were the exceptional children that he or she had to look out for over the coming year. A year later the inspector returned to the schools in the trial and discovered that the children identified in the earlier tests had indeed excelled and were regarded as being exceptionally able by the teachers involved. However the names of the children communicated to the teachers were not those who had scored highly in the tests! The names given to the teachers were random names from around the middle of the ranking of the children. Their observed improvement over the year was determined by the teacher's perception of them, not due to any latent genius discovered in the tests.