

# A Synthesis of Teacher Perception Ratings for Students with Emotional And Behavioral Disorders in Different Educational Settings



Alicia A. Stewart, M.A.Ed.

## Rationale

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, 12.8% of students with EBD are serviced in alternative, special education schools (U.S. Department of Education, 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Congress, 2015).
- 19.7% of students with EBD receive services in a traditional school setting where 60% or more of their day is spent in a self-contained, special education classroom.
- Placement decisions are controversial for students with EBD due to the unique needs of the population. The law specifies that students must be educated in the least restrictive environment (IDEA, 2004); however, some argue the supports provided in an alternative, special education setting may benefit students with EBD more than a traditional setting (Lane et al. 2005).
- Although teacher perceptions are no longer used as the primary method behind placement decisions, they can play a significant role in the outcome of students (Walker 2005).
- It is unclear how teacher perceptions of students differ as a result of educational setting.

## Research Objectives

- The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher perceptions of students with EBD in different educational settings

### Research Question:

- How do teachers' perceptions of students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders differ in an isolated, alternative school environment compared to a traditional school environment?

## Method

### Inclusion Criteria:

1. Published in peer-reviewed journal and printed in English from Jan 1975 -March 2016
2. Participants include students primarily identified as EBD; co-occurring diagnoses accepted as long as EBD was present
  - Emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD)
  - Emotional handicaps (EH)
  - Emotional disturbance (ED)
3. Studies with additional participants included if disaggregated data are provided for the students identified EBD, EH, or ED (or more than 50% of the sample identified with EBD, EH, or ED).
4. Students in grades K-12
5. Measures/rating scales must focus on teacher perceptions of student, self-concept, self-esteem, self-determination, social skills, behavior, academic performance (only perception measures, not an academic measures).
5. N > 10
6. Limited to studies in the U.S. to ensure the legal definition of EBD remained consistent
7. Current teachers (if pre-service teachers included, then 50% or more must be current teachers)

## Method (cont'd)

8. Measures with known/reported psychometrics.
9. Articles must include setting description that specifies an alternative campus or a traditional campus.
10. Data must be disaggregated based on setting.
11. Mean perception ratings must be reported.
12. If more than one time point presented, only the last time point to be reported to ensure students had sufficient time in the environment; only baseline ratings were used in intervention studies.

### Search and Coding:

Articles were searched using three databases (i.e., ERIC, PsycINFO, and Education Source) using the following terms:

**Line 1:** "emotion\* dis\*" OR "emotion\* beh\* dis\*" OR EBD OR EBD OR "emotion\* handicap\*\*"

**Line 2:** "self concept" OR "self perception" OR "self efficacy" OR "self esteem" OR achievement OR performance OR "self determination" OR "social skills" OR " Interpersonal Competence"

**Line 3:** teacher

**Line 4:** rates OR rated OR rating OR assess\* OR scale OR measur\* OR evaluat\* OR report\* OR perception

**Limits:** peer reviewed, January 1975 – March 2016

Search yields: 595

- Studies were coded using a researcher-developed coding protocol.
- Studies were coded for participants, design, school setting, measures, and findings.

## Discussion

- For results, please refer to Table 1.
- Almost all studies included ratings from special education teachers. The rest were not reported, and zero general education teachers provided behavior ratings.
- The majority of studies took place in a traditional setting where students were mainstreamed in at least one general education class. Three studies took place in an alternative, special education environment, and four studies included ratings of students in both settings.
- Overall, teachers in both settings rated students with EBD in the borderline to the clinically significant range in terms of behavior, social skills, and academic competence.
- Lane et al. (2005) suggest teachers in alternative, special education environments may have an inflated perception of their students due to a lack of exposure to other students and teachers in the general education setting.
- Students in self-contained classrooms on a traditional campus were rated to have significantly higher levels of internalizing behaviors than students in the alternative, special education setting by their teachers.

Table 1. Teacher Ratings Based on School Setting

Author, year	Student Sample Size (N)	Age/Grade	School Setting	Teacher/ Rater	Perception Measure	Mean Scores in Traditional Setting	Mean Scores in Alternative Setting
Barriga et al. (2002)	58	11 to 19 yrs.; M = 15.02	AC	SPED	TRF		57.64 Withdrawn Behavior 60.76 Delinquent Behavior* 61.48 Aggressive Behavior* 58.81 Social Problems 55.66 Total
Benner et al. (2012)	10	M = 7.80 yrs.; Grades 1 to 5	T - SC	SPED	TRF	56.9 Withdrawn Behavior 63.00 Aggressive Behavior* 62.50 Social Problems* 58.50 Internalizing Behavior 62.00 Externalizing Behavior 61.60 Total*	
Costenbader & Keller (1990)	58	M = 9.17 yrs.	T	SPED	TRF	66.78 Behavioral Problems* 11.71 Social Competence	
Cumming et al. (2008)	25	M = 12.0 to 12.6 yrs.	T-SC	SPED	Conners' TRS TSSC	39.76 Total Behavior 10.60 Total Social Skills	
Gonzalez et al. (1996)	39	M = 3.90 to 10.20 yrs.; Grades 2 to 6	T-SC	NR	TRF	29.50 Aggressive Behavior*	
Lane et al. (2005a)	60	M = 10.87 yrs.; Grades K to 5; 6 to 8	T-SC and AC	SPED	SSRS-T	85.96 Social Skills (SS) 9.04 Externalizing Behavior 8.58 Internalizing Behavior	86.47 Social Skills (SS) 8.24 Externalizing Behavior 5.47 Internalizing Behavior
Lane et al. (2005b)	52 (n= 23 T- SC; n=29 AC)	M = 10.98 yrs.; Grades K to 8	T-SC and AC	SPED	WMS-TPSBSA	88.55 Academic Comp (SS) 84.41 School Adjustment (SS)* 9.83 Assertion Skills 8.24 Self-Control Skills 11.10 Cooperation Skills	91.56 Academic Comp (SS) 89.77 School Adjustment (SS) 11.00 Assertion Skills 9.21 Self-Control Skills 11.77 Cooperation Skills
					SSRS-T	7.79 Externalizing Behavior 6.83 Internalizing Behavior	7.98 Externalizing Behavior 5.49 Internalizing Behavior
Maheady et al. (1984)	24	M = 9.49 to 16.45 yrs.	T	NR	BRS	32.00 Younger Sample 24.42 Older Sample 28.21 Total	

Note. M= mean; AC= alternative campus; SPED= special education teacher; TRF=Teacher Report Form; EBD=emotional and behavioral disorders; T-SC= traditional campus - self-contained classroom; T= traditional campus not specified as self-contained or mainstreamed; Conner's TRS= Conners' Teacher Rating Scale; TSSC= Teacher/Staff Skill Screening Checklist; NR= not reported; SSRS-T= Social Skills Rating Scale-Teacher; SS= standard score; WMS-TPSBSA= Walker-McConnell Scale of Teacher and Peer Preferred Social Behavior and School Adjustment; Academic Comp= academic competence; BRS= Behavior Reporting Scale

## Limitations and Future Research

### Limitations:

•Studies used various measures; therefore, only studies with the same measures could be directly compared.

•Studies including two settings had different raters in each setting. As Lane et al. (2005) noted, this may be problematic when considering the possibility of inflated perceptions among teachers in more restrictive settings.

### Implications and Future Research:

•Future research should investigate teacher perception ratings in both settings as they relate to student outcomes in each setting. Specifically, studies should explore effects of teacher perceptions on students in each setting and whether or not these perceptions represent an accurate representation of student abilities. Moreover, are teacher perceptions in alternative, special education settings inflated as Lane et al. (2005) suggested?

\* The contents of this poster were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H325D150056. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Celia Rosenquist.

\* The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the university.