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Disparities in Behavioral Expectations for Elementary Students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders Compared to their Classmates

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Disparities in Behavioral Expectations for Elementary Students with Emotional Behavioral

Disorders Compared to their Classmates

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Chapter I: Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), a law that mandates access to free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities, outlines emotional disturbance as a condition that adversely affects a child's education in one or more areas; "learning difficulties that cannot be explained by outside factors, unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships, atypical behavior or feelings, melancholy or depressive moods, and tendencies for developing physical symptoms associated with difficulties" ("Sec. 300.8 (C)", 2018, para. 7).

Students with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD) are less likely to have academic success than their classmates (Freeman et al., 2019). Consequently, students with EBD encounter adverse school outcomes: "lower perceptions of school climate, significantly higher rates of mental health problems and peer victimization, and lower academic achievement than students without EBD" (Caldarella et al., 2019, p. 461).

The purpose of this paper is to review the literature that examines the degree of behavioral expectations that students with emotional or behavioral disorders have compared to their non-disabled peers. I chose this topic because I spent three years teaching students identified with emotional or behavioral disorders. Due to my experiences working with students with EBD, I'm interested in researching if the behavioral expectations for students with emotional behavioral disorders are similar to their non-disabled peers, or if there are significant disparities between the two.

Research Questions

Two major questions guide this literature review:

1. Are students with emotional behavioral disorders penalized for negative behavior more frequently than their peers?

2. Are expectations for students with emotional behavioral disorders similar to their non-disabled peers?

Focus of the Paper

The literature review in Chapter II contains studies ranging in dates from 2001-2022. The Academic Search Premier, SAGE Journals Online, and PsychINFO databases were used as a starting point to locate studies related to emotional/behavioral disorders and school expectations. I used an array of keywords and keyword combinations to acquire appropriate studies: *Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD), behavioral disorders, emotional disorders, school expectations, elementary education, labels, special education, expectations, teacher expectations, emotional disturbance, inclusion, disabilities, behavior, attitudes, praise, reprimand, praise-to-reprimand.*

To locate studies, I also searched for the Table of Contents of two journals: *Journal of Special Education* and *Journal of Learning Disabilities.* The main focus of this paper is to examine the disparities between students with emotional behavioral disorders and their behavioral expectations at school compared to those of their non-disabled peers.

Importance of the Topic

As a licensed special education teacher, I recognize the impact that I have on sculpting young minds and the challenges that can come with individualizing the educational experience for each student. Oftentimes, educators view students with emotional/behavioral disorders as students who cause disruption, require generous amounts of energy, are difficult to manage in a general school setting, and are overall taxing on classroom management and instruction. This frequently results in behavior intervention plans, complicated behavior management systems, or removal from the general education classroom to a more restrictive placement.

The perception of effort that EBD students require and the achievement that they reach

downplays the true potential of the individual. The expectations and responses from educators can affect a student's motivation, self-perception, and the quality of education they receive. The actions of adults in response to students with challenging behavior can have long-lasting impacts on their view of education, learning, and relational skills.

     I spent three years teaching students identified with emotional or behavioral disorders and found that students rise with high expectations. Due to my experiences working with students with EBD, I am interested in researching whether the behavioral expectations for students with emotional behavioral disorders are similar to their non-disabled peers, or if there are significant disparities between the two.

Historical Background

     The historical understanding of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) has evolved over time as our understanding of mental health and education has developed. In the early 20th century, students with EBD were often viewed as "mentally defective" or "morally deficient" and were often placed in institutions or segregated schools. The focus was on controlling their behavior rather than addressing the underlying emotional or psychological issues that were causing the behavior.

     The early 1900s is when the label of Emotional Disturbance (ED) first appeared to formally label students who were termed "incorrigible" (Wills-Jackson, 2019, p. 82). When states began establishing compulsory attendance laws, public schools became responsible for educating students with disabilities. In 1963, the focus on educational laws began to shift after President John F. Kennedy gave a speech to Congress on Mental Illness and Mental Retardation (Kennedy, 1963):

I propose a national mental health program to assist in the inauguration of a wholly new

emphasis and approach to care for the mentally ill…central to a new mental health

program is comprehensive community care." (para. 14-19)

Following President Kennedy's address, Congress enacted legislation Public Law-P.L. 88-164

(1963) adding "serious emotionally disturbed" as a disability category (Wills-Jackson, 2019, p.

82). In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), or Public Law 94-142,

was enacted by Congress to protect the rights and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities

and their families ("A history of the individuals with disabilities education act," 2022).

The growing movement towards mainstreaming and inclusion of students with

disabilities in regular education classrooms led to a greater emphasis on providing individualized

education plans (IEPs) for students with EBD, as well as providing them with appropriate

accommodations and support to help them succeed in a regular education setting. In 1990, Public

Law 94-142 was reauthorized and renamed the Individual With Disabilities Act or IDEA. IDEA

was reauthorized again in 2004, to align with the No Child Left Behind Act and included early

intervening services for children and higher standards for educators teaching special education

classes (2022).

Definition of Terms

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: a "condition in which behavioral or emotional

responses of an individual in school are so different from his/her generally accepted, age-

appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in such areas as self-

care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work

adjustment" (Lehr, 2005, para. 2).

Behavior Intervention Plan: a "proactive document written as part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that must be followed by anyone working with the student" (PACER, 2023, para 4). It includes strategies to address challenging behaviors through instruction and support.

General Education Classroom: a term that identifies a classroom composed of primarily non-disabled students. Also referred to as a "mainstream classroom" (Cook, 2001).

Special Education: "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability" ("Sec. 300.39 Special Education," n.d.).

Inclusion: the "physical placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms" (Cook, 2001, p. 203).

Behavior Specific Praise: praise that provides students with "praise statements that explicitly describe the behavior being praised" (Allday et al., 2012, p. 87)

Reprimand: statements meant to "correct misbehavior and decrease the probability or frequency of the behavior" (Caldarella et al., 2021).

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the discrepancy between behavioral expectations for students with emotional/behavioral disorders and their non-disabled peers. This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section includes studies that analyze teacher perceptions of students with emotional/behavioral disorders and the impact that has on student performance. The second section includes studies that examine teacher practices and how they reflect upon responses to behavior and the social and academic repercussions for students with EBD. This literature review looks at ten quantitative and qualitative articles from 2001 to 2022. Studies within each section will be organized in chronological order beginning with the oldest study.

Effect of Teacher Perceptions on Student Performance

Teacher perceptions can have a significant effect on student performance. Teachers' beliefs about their student's abilities and potential can influence their expectations and the types of opportunities they provide for their students (Hammer, 2011). Additionally, teachers' attitudes and behaviors can impact students' motivation, engagement, and sense of belonging in the classroom. Research studies and data on teacher perceptions and student performance can vary based on the year research was conducted, the location, and the participants' demographics. Each article analysis looks at teacher perceptions and the correlated impact it has on student performance.

Cook (2001)

Cook (2001) noted that teacher attitudes toward inclusion students impacted the type and quality of interactions teachers had with their students and that four particular areas were directly linked to impactful moments in a student's education and opportunities: attachment, concern,

indifference, and rejection. Despite an increase in students being placed within inclusive settings, the positive outcomes for students with disabilities have not been directly associated with inclusion practices (Cook, 2001, p. 203), raising the question of what impact teacher attitudes toward disabled students in inclusive settings affect efficacy and outcomes?

The data collected for this analysis was part of a more extensive study on teacher attitudes toward disabled students in inclusive settings. Participants included nine elementary schools in six Ohio school districts where large populations of included students with disabilities were present. Of the nine elementary schools, one was located in an urban setting, one in a rural setting, and the remaining schools were in suburban settings. There were seventy general education teachers of inclusive classrooms chosen for the study, 61 female and 9 male, with 84.3% white, 7.1% African American, 4.3% Hispanic, 2.9 Asian American, and 1.4% native American.

An inclusive classroom was defined as any general education classroom in which a student with an identified disability was placed for any part of a typical school day (Cook, 2001, p. 206), and a student with a disability was defined as any student formally identified as having a disability on either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan, excluding students who were serviced by speech or language only (Cook, 2001, p. 206). No co-teaching classrooms with special education and general education teachers were included in the study. Of the seventy participating classrooms, forty-one had only students with mild or hidden disabilities, three had only students with severe or obvious disabilities, and twenty-six had both. Students in these classrooms were categorized into two categories: hidden disabilities and obvious disabilities (Cook, 2001, p. 206).

Table 1 below shows the characteristics of included students with hidden versus obvious

disabilities, and the percentage of students for each category.

Table 1

Characteristics of Included Students with Hidden and Obvious Disabilities

Characteristic	*n*	% of subsample
Students with Hidden Disabilities (*n* = 173)		
Categorical designation		
Specific learning disability	143	82.7
Attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder	23	13.3
Behavior disorder	7	4.0
Fully Included	57	32.9
Percentage of day included		
Mean (*SD)*	71.3 (30.5)	
Students with Obvious Disabilities (*n* = 48)		
Categorical designation		
Mental retardation	26	54.2
Orthopedic handicap	7	14.6
Hearing impairment	4	8.3
Multiple handicaps	4	8.3
Autism	3	6.25
Visual impairment	3	6.25
Other health impairment	1	2.1
Fully Included	15	31.25
Percentage of day included		
Mean	66.2 (34.9)	

Note. Participant Subsample Demographics. From A Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes Toward

Their Included Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities. (P. 208), by Cook, B. (2001). A Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Their Included Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(4), 203-213.

Participants completed a nomination form consisting of prompts corresponding to four categories; attachment, concern, indifference, and rejection. Participants nominated three students per category and could nominate a student more than once. The category of attachment included students viewed as enjoyable to teach, "receiving more praise, less criticism, and more process questions than their classmates" (Cook, 2001, p. 204). Indifference describes students who are frequently overlooked, and who encounter brief and infrequent interactions with teachers. Concern relates to students who are given more opportunities to answer questions, and who receive frequent praise, even for unsuccessful work. Rejection refers to students who are "given up" on, typically due to behavioral, social, and attitudinal problems (Cook, 2001, p. 204).

A logical correspondence existed between teachers' descriptions of students and the attitudinal category in which they were nominated (Cook, 2001, p. 208). Test-retest reliability coefficients of 1.00, .70, 1.00, and .75 were reported for teacher nominations of included students with disabilities over two weeks in the four attitudinal categories (p. 208).

Procedures for the study included having the directions scripted to maintain consistency, and data were collected during school faculty meetings. A one-tailed chi-square analysis was used to examine the theory-based, directional hypothesis. A separate chi-square analysis was conducted for each attitudinal category since teachers could nominate students for multiple categories. Table 2 shows the nomination prompts.

Table 2

Nomination Prompts Corresponding to the Four Categories of Teacher Attitudes

Attitudinal category	Nomination prompt
Attachment	If you could keep one student another year for the sheer joy of it, whom would you pick?
Concern	If you could devote all your attention to a child who concerns you a great deal, whom would you pick?
Indifference	If a parent were to drop by for a conference, whose child would you be least prepared to talk about?
Rejection	If your class was to be reduced by one child, whom would you be relieved to have removed?

Note. Nomination Prompts. From A Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Their Included Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities. (P. 208), by Cook, B. (2001). A Comparison of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Their Included Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(4), 203-213.

Expected outcomes were determined by multiplying the total number of students with disabilities nominated in a specific category by the proportion of students with hidden or obvious disabilities in the entire sample. The data that Cook (2001, p. 209) presented supported the hypothesis that:

included students with severe and obvious disabilities are significantly over-represented among their teachers' indifference nominations and that included students with mild and hidden disabilities are significantly overrepresented among their teachers' rejection nominations. (para. 2)

No differences were found for the concern category between hidden and obvious disabilities. Teachers nominated fifty-five (31.8%) students with hidden disabilities in the rejection category,

and only eight (16.7%) of students with obvious disabilities. The findings show that students with more intensive needs are less likely to be rejected by teachers than students whose disability closely resembles that of their non-disabled peers. Atypical behaviors and performance is anticipated and expected, and prepared for.

Limitations of the study included the use of nomination data as the only representation of teacher attitudes toward a small population of students and utilizing categorical labels to group students into hidden and obvious disability categories (Cook, 2001, p. 212).

Lane et al. (2004)

Lane et al. (2004) explored elementary school teachers' expectations of student behavior based on perceptions of critical skill areas. Students are expected to enter the school system with a prerequisite of necessary skills. Students that lack these skills are "at risk for academic under-achievement, failed social relationships with peers, strained relationships with their teachers, and other negative outcomes" (Lane et al, 2004, p. 104). Research indicates that students who lack teacher-preferred behaviors are more often referred for support services. Lane et. al (2004, p.105) created three objectives to drive the study:

1. To examine the extent to which elementary teachers view student competence in the areas of assertion, self-control, and cooperation as essential for school success.
2. To identify specific skills teachers view as pivotal for success.
3. To determine whether level (primary vs intermediate vs combined), program type, (general education vs special education), or experience (novice vs experiences) affects expectations of student behaviors.

Participants included 126 teachers at four elementary schools from two districts. Table 3 below shows the demographic information for the teacher participants.

Table 3

Participant Characteristics

Variable	Total Sample	
	%	*n*
Gender		
Boys	8.87	11
Girls	91.13	113
Program Type		
General	83.33	105
Special	14.29	18
Other	2.38	3
Credential Status		
Certificated	73.02	92
Substitute/emergency	26.98	34
Grade level taught		
Primary (K-3)	62.00	78
Intermediate (4-6)	25.00	32
Combined (K-6)	13.00	16
Teaching Experience		
Novice ($<$ 5 years)	40.48	51
Experienced (5+ years)	59.52	75

Note. Participant Characteristics. From Teacher Expectations of Student Behavior. (P. 106) by

Lane, K. L., Givner, C. C., & Pierson, M. R. (2004). Teacher Expectations of Student Behavior.

The Journal of Special Education, 38(2), 104–110.

The selected teachers completed an anonymous questionnaire on their perception of critical social skills needed for general education success. Response rates ranged from 71.11% to 96.39% (Lane et al., 2004, p. 105). Each instrument was assigned a unique identification number entered by a qualified research associate. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

1. Teachers rated the importance of 30 social skills items from the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) on a three-point Likert scale covering three areas: assertion, self-control, and cooperation (Lane et al., 2004).

2. Basic background information such as gender, current grade level taught, general education vs. special education, years of teaching, and credentials.

A one-way, repeated-measures ANOVA showed significant differences among the three social skills domains, with assertion scoring lower than self-control and cooperation scores. Three one-way fixed-effects MANOVAs compared the differences in expectations between subgroups. No significance was found between primary, intermediate, combined, novice, or experienced teachers. Significance was found when comparing expectations between special educators and general education teachers, with general education teachers expecting greater cooperation.

Lane et. al (2004, p. 108) concluded that there were seven social skills identified as critical across the majority of teachers: follows directions, attends to instructions, controls temper with peers, controls temper with adults, gets along with people who are different, responds appropriately when hit, and uses free time in an acceptable way. However, general and special education teachers varied in their expectations for respect and cooperation, leading to insight for planning intervention that builds skills viewed as critical to participate in the general education

classroom. Similarly, general and special education teachers valued assertion and self-control skills equally. However, views on cooperation differed, with general education teachers viewing cooperation skills as more essential for success than special education teachers (Lane et al, 2004, p. 108).

Limitations of the study included self-reporting data to identify which student behaviors teachers viewed as essential for success in their classrooms. Additionally, teacher expectations vary across students and situations, leading to more conceptual data. Finally, the small sample size affected the ability to conduct factorial MANOVAs (Lane et al, 2004, p. 109).

Lane et al. concluded that despite limitations, and with the review of the research, their findings confirmed the potential differences in the behavioral expectations held by general and special educators, novice and experienced teachers, and primary and intermediate teachers (2004, p. 109).

Conley et al. (2014)

In 2014, Conley, Marchant, and Caldarella conducted a study comparing teacher perceptions of student behavior difficulties with research-based categories of such difficulties. The study was conducted in three stages: (1) literature review to verify research-based components of EBD, (2) email survey distribution to teachers soliciting information about problematic classroom behaviors, and (3) results in comparison with descriptions found in the literature (p. 441).

Participants consisted of 132 teachers from three school districts in the Western United States who spanned various grade levels and subject areas. An email survey was sent out to all participants to collect information on problematic behaviors within their classrooms (Conley et al., 2014). The survey included questions about the teachers' perceptions of the prevalence and

severity of different types of student behavior difficulties and their beliefs about the causes of such difficulties. The researchers then compared the teachers' responses to research-based categories of behavior difficulties, including attention problems, externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors, and social skills deficits (Conley et al., 2014).

Conley et al. (2014) coded survey responses independently into "categories using the components of EBD verified in the literature review" (p. 442). Results from the survey that pertained to multiple categories were included in all appropriate categories, with some responses being categorized in multiple areas, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Number and Percent of Teacher Responses by Category

Category	N	Percentage
Internalizing behaviors	445	22.58%
Antisocial behavior	385	19.53%
Aggression	295	14.97%
Other	237	12.02%
Academic problems	235	11.92%
Peer relationships	168	8.52%
Attention problems	138	7.00%
Disrespect	51	2.59%
Hyperactivity	17	0.86%

Note. Teacher Responses by Category. A Comparison of Teacher Perceptions and Research-Based Categories of Student Behavior Difficulties. (P. 446) by Conley, L., Marchant, M., &

Caldarella, P. (2014). A Comparison of Teacher Perceptions and Research-Based Categories of Student Behavior Difficulties. *Education*, *134*(4), 439–451.

The study results indicated that while teachers generally agreed on the prevalence of behavioral difficulties in their classrooms, there were discrepancies in their perceptions of the severity of such difficulties. In addition, the teachers' perceptions did not always align with the research-based categories of behavioral difficulties. For example, some teachers classified behavior difficulties as externalizing behaviors when they were internalizing behaviors. The study also revealed that teachers often believed behavior difficulties were caused by individual factors, such as poor parenting or a lack of motivation, rather than broader systemic issues. This finding highlights the need for teachers to understand the complex factors contributing to behavior difficulties, including cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic factors.

Limitations to this study included potential human error due to only two researchers analyzing data, limited demographic data, and the literature review, which focused on physical forms of aggression, "as did many of the teacher responses, neglecting to address recent recognition of and emphasis on relational aggression" (Conley et al., 2014, p. 449).

Ysseldyke et al. (2017)

Ysseldyke et. al (2017) look at the importance of individualizing academic growth expectations for students with EBD. Ysseldyke et al. (2017) noted there was an increasing reluctance to have scores and performances of students with emotional behavior disorders "count" in evaluations of programs and teachers because it is thought that students with disabilities "are both 'low' and 'slow'" (p. 793) and show achievement deficits compared to their general education peers. However, research suggests that academic growth as a whole for

students with disabilities is at comparable rates to their nondisabled peers (Ysseldyke et al.,

2017, p. 794).

The purpose of this study was to monitor the academic growth of students with

emotional/behavior disorders over a year. The two-year study by Ysseldyke et al. (2017, p. 795)

focused on three research questions:

1. To what extent are there differences in the academic level of performance (academic

   status) of students with EBD and a national sample of students without disabilities at each

   grade levels 3-12?

2. To what extent are there differences in the annual academic growth of students with EBD

   and a national sample of students without disabilities at each grade levels 3-12?

3. To what extent do students in elementary and secondary settings with significant EBD

   profit differently from different kinds of treatment programs?

This study included 321 students in reading and 322 students in math. The demographic

information is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Demographics for all EBD students for STAR Reading and STAR Math for the two academic

years

			Gender			Race/ethnicity					
Subject	School Year	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Mixed	Unknown
STAR Reading	2012-2013	149	78	29	42	3	40	20	42	2	42
	2013-2014	172	110	60	2	0	10	10	11	0	141
STAR Math	2012-2013	151	79	31	41	3	39	24	42	2	41

2013-2014	171	110	59	2	0	10	9	11	0	141

Note. Participant Demographics. From Academic Growth Expectations for Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders. (P. 795) by Ysseldyke, J., Scerra, C., Stickney, E., Beckler, A., Dituri, J., & Ellis, K. (2017). Academic Growth Expectations for Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders. *Psychology in the Schools, 54*(8), 792–807.

Participants were selected from the Regional Service Center, which serves students from 56 school districts with moderate to severe disabilities, from infancy to age 21, within the county (Ysseldyke et al., 2017, p. 796). Six school programs were selected, an enrollment of 863. Between these six schools, the distribution of disability categories were as follows: autism 9%, emotional disturbance 38%, hearing impairment <1%, learning disability 8%, multiple disabilities 11%, other health impairment 27%, speech or language impairment 4%, and visual impairment <1% (Ysseldyke et al., 2017). For the purpose of this study, schools were given color names to protect anonymity. All six self-contained school programs used Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).

Two assessments, STAR Reading and STAR Math, were administered to students in the fall, winter, and spring. The STAR measures are adaptive computer tests with good reported reliability. Ysseldyke et al. (2017) looked at two considerations: (1) students' status relative to others and (2) their growth in performance over an academic year relative to others (p. 797). Students' status comparison showed that the test performance of students with emotional/behavior disorders was always low relative to nationwide norms; however, considerable variability was noted for reading performance. Reading shows some students outperforming the national average (Ysseldyke et al., 2017, p. 797). This does not occur in math.

The following guiding question was considered in growth comparisons: "How much growth can be expected from students with severe EBD?" (Ysseldyke et al., 2017, p. 798). There is particular interest in the extent of growth for EBD students than their nondisabled peers. When there were significant differences in the mean student growth percentiles (SPGs), the national sample outperformed the group of students with EBD. In nearly all instances, students with EBD showed as much academic growth as is expected for nondisabled students with comparable starting scores (Ysseldyke et al., 2017, p. 801).

The national data on students with emotional/behavior disorders' academic performance is consistently deficient. The level of performance is low, but the concept that growth is slow needs to be more accurate. Students with emotional behavior disorders grow similarly to their general education peers (Ysseldyke et al., 2017, p. 804). This has implications for goal setting or for setting academic growth targets. It is no longer acceptable to assume these students are low and slow.

The research by Ysseldyke et al. (2017, p. 805) had three significant limitations:

1. The population of students came from 56 districts in one very large regional service center in one state, so the results may not generalize to other settings (805). The students were also served in self-contained settings with significant support.

2. Another limitation may be the measurement methodology used. A different picture would have emerged if a curriculum-based measurement methodology had been chosen over an adaptive computer testing measure.

3. A third limitation is the relatively small number of students enrolled in each treatment setting.

Ysseldyke et al. (2017) showed that low-level academic growth expectations for students with emotional/behavior disorders should no longer be automatically accepted because they grow at similar rates.

McGuire & Meadan (2022)

McGuire and Meadan's (2022) study aimed to investigate general educators' perceptions of social inclusion of elementary students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The researchers found that students with EBD often face significant challenges in achieving social inclusion, including peer exclusion and teacher stigmatization.

The study had two driving questions: (1) what are elementary general educators' perceptions of how students with EBD are socially included in general education settings? (2) what are elementary general educators' perceptions of facilitators and barriers to social inclusion of students with EBD? (McGuire & Meadan, 2022, p. 18). McGuire & Meadan (2022) utilized "general qualitative inquiry and conducted semi-structured" (p.18) interviews with general educators from elementary schools in Illinois. The surveys included questions on teachers' perceptions of social inclusion, challenges to inclusion, and supports needed to promote inclusion. The interviews were used to better understand teachers' experiences and perceptions of social inclusion.

Participants were chosen using predetermined inclusion criteria, and 13 female elementary teachers responded to interview requests, representing nine elementary schools in five different school districts from two regions in Illinois (McGuire & Meadan, 2022, p. 19). A questionnaire containing 17 participant demographic questions and 14 school demographic questions and an interview protocol created to obtain information from each participant was used to collect data.

Each interview began with a reading of a definition of social inclusion and asking about its alignment with the participants' understanding of social inclusion: "equal and active participation and relationships with peers and the teachers" (McGuire & Meadan, 2022, p. 19). Transcripts for the interviews were analyzed using constant comparative analysis to identify themes. A descriptive code was assigned to units of data using line-by-line coding (McGuire & Meadan, 2022, p. 19) forming the study's codebook.

Four themes appeared from the interviews: social inclusion, relationships, facilitators to social inclusion, and barriers and needs. Social inclusion was deemed essential and necessary to all 13 educators, and they wanted their students with EBD to be included in their classrooms. Relationships contained two categories: adults and peers. Adult relationships were reported to be overall positive, but peer relationships had more variability, with four educators reporting that peers left out EBD students. Facilitators of social inclusion were reported by all educators as other adults they could receive support from, such as school social workers or special education teachers. Most reported barriers and needs fell into three categories: student needs, other professionals, and knowledge and professional development (McGuire & Meadan, 2022). Challenging behavior, limited support from other professionals, and limited knowledge and professional development were concerns expressed by educators on why they do not feel prepared to socially include students with EBD in the classroom.

The study results revealed that while general educators believe in the importance of social inclusion, they often face challenges in promoting it for students with EBD. These challenges include a lack of training and support, time constraints, and a lack of resources. Additionally, the study found that teachers often have negative perceptions of students with EBD, which can contribute to their exclusion from social activities.

McGuire and Meadan (2022) addressed some limitations of the study, including few participants located in one state (Illinois), all women, and all white with one exception (p. 25). Another limitation is that one of the student's demographic data is absent in the findings. Additionally, data collection was done through interviews with general education teachers, not other professionals working with students with EBD. The final limitation of this study is that social inclusion was explicitly defined and presented to the participants when they would possibly interpret social inclusion differently than the given definition.

Table 6

Summary of Chapter II Findings

Authors	Study Design	Participants	Procedure	Findings
Cook (2001)	Quantitative	70 general education teachers, 173 students identified with hidden disabilities, 48 students with obvious disabilities.	Teachers completed nominal prompts and nominated students in each attitudinal category.	The rate at which students with hidden disabilities were nominated implies they are not receiving equal opportunities in inclusive settings.
Lane, Givner, & Pierson (2004)	Qualitative	126 elementary teachers.	Teachers completed an anonymous questionnaire on the necessary social skills for success at school.	Teachers identified 7 social skills critical for school success.
Conley, Marchant, & Calarella (2014)	Qualitative	132 teachers from various grade levels and subject areas.	Teachers completed an email survey on perceptions of student behavior, literature reviews to verify components	There were discrepancies in teacher perceptions of the severity of behavioral difficulties. They

			of EBD, and a comparison of results to research.	did not always align with research.
Ysseldyke, Scerra, Stickney, Beckler, Dituri, Ellis & (2017)	Quantitative	321 students in reading and 322 students in math, all classified as emotionally disturbed. 1 elementary, 2 middles, and 3 high schools.	STAR Reading & STAR Math given in Fall, Winter, and Spring. STAR assessments report scaled scores.	This study confirmed national data on the level/status of academic performance for students with EBD is very low compared to their non-disabled peers. There is variability in the rate at that EBD students grow in academics.
McGuire, & Meadan (2022)	Qualitative	13 Illinois elementary educations, all female.	Questionnaire and semi-structured surveys.	General educators believe in the importance of social inclusion, but they often face challenges in promoting it.

Teacher Practices and Behavior Response and Consequent Social and Academic Repercussions

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the academic and social development of their students. Their practices and behavior can have a significant impact on the learning outcomes and overall well-being of their students. Additionally, teacher practice and behavior response can have long-term impacts on students, including their motivation and sense of self-efficacy, which can affect their success in future academic and professional endeavors. Research studies and data on teacher practices and behavior response can vary based on the year research was conducted,

the targeted behavior, the location, and the participants' demographics.

Allday et al. (2012)

Allday et al. (2012) conducted a study investigating the effects of training general educators to increase behavior-specific praise on students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The authors hypothesized that increasing the use of behavior-specific praise by general educators would increase appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior among students with EBD.

The study was conducted in two rural elementary schools in the southeastern United States and one middle school in the Midwest. The participants were four general educators and seven students with EBD, grouped into three teacher-student triads (1 teacher and 2 students) and one teacher-student dyad. The researchers used a modified multiple baseline design across participants to evaluate the effects of the intervention, which included a training session on behavior-specific praise and weekly coaching sessions. Observations were recorded and later reviewed and coded using the ABC Data Pro application (Allday et al., 2012, p. 90), a tablet data collection tool.

Student measures for the study included on and off-task behaviors, and teacher measures included verbal interactions with students. Observations occurred for an average of 27 minutes, and teachers were periodically provided feedback on the observations. At the end of the study, all teachers showed an upward trend in the frequency of behavior-specific praise, and students showed an upward trend in on-task behavior. Additionally, a Spearman Rho (two-tailed) correlation was used to further show the effects of increased rates of behavior-specific praise (BSP), revealing a positive relationship between students' on-task behavior and teacher rate of BSP (Allday et al., 2012). A statistically significant relationship was found for three of the four

teacher/student(s) participants. Table 7 displays the rate of change throughout the study for

behavior-specific praise (BSP), non-behavior-specific praise (NBSP), and correction.

Table 7

Mean Rate Per Minute of BSP, NBSP, and Correction for Baseline and Posttraining

Teacher	BSP		NBSP		Overall Correction	
	Baseline	Posttraining	Baseline	Posttraining	Baseline	Posttraining
2nd Grade	.15	.43	.38	.51	.58	.33
Kindergarten	.37	.59	.53	.42	1.35	.96
1st Grade	.30	1.21	.11	.06	1.08	.74
6th Grade	.07	.52	.56	.43	.42	.40

Note. Rate of Change in BSP, NBSP, and Correction. From Training General Educators to

Increase Behavior-Specific Praise: Effects On Students With EBD (P. 94) by Allday, R.,

Hinkson-Lee, K., Hudson, T., Neilsen-Gatti, S., Kleinke, A., & Russel, C. (2012). Training

General Educators to Increase Behavior-Specific Praise: Effects On Students With EBD.

Behavioral Disorders, 37(2), 87-98.

All participating teachers increased their rate of behavior-specific praise, and three of the

four teachers replaced their non-BSP with BSP (Allday et al., 2012, p. 95). The study results

indicated that the intervention was effective in increasing the use of behavior-specific praise by

general educators, which in turn resulted in increased appropriate behavior and decreased

inappropriate behavior among students with EBD. Additionally, the study found that the effects

of the intervention were maintained during follow-up observations.

Allday et al. (2012) discussed possible limitations to the study, including the potential

influence of social facilitation on the results, lack of maintenance data on the sustainability of

gains, that two students showed overlap between baseline and posttraining rates, and lastly, the activities completed during the observations (p.96).

The findings of this study have important implications for educators and administrators. The authors suggest that training general educators to increase behavior-specific praise may be an effective and practical intervention for improving the behavior of students with EBD in general education settings. Additionally, the authors emphasize the importance of ongoing coaching and support to maintain the intervention effects. The findings suggest that increasing the use of behavior-specific praise by general educators can result in significant improvements in student behavior and highlight the importance of ongoing coaching and support to ensure the maintenance of the intervention effects.

Downs et al (2019)

Downs et al. (2019) conducted a study investigating the differential response of students at risk of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) to teacher praise and reprimands. The authors hypothesized that students at risk of EBD would have a different response to praise and reprimands than typically developing students and that using more praise and fewer reprimands would be more effective in improving behavior in this population.

Participants were selected from 18 elementary schools across Kansas, Tennessee, and Utah as part of a "3-year, multisite efficacy trial of a group contingency intervention, Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT)" (Downs et al., 2019, p.137). Classrooms were randomly assigned treatment and control conditions, and demographic information was collected from school records (Downs et al., 2019). There were 65 participating teachers, 97% female and 86% White/Caucasian. Of these participants, 45% had a master's degree, and 44% had a bachelor's degree; 18% had been teaching for 1 year (Downs et al., 2019, p.137). There were

239 participating students; 130 were identified as at-risk of EBD, and 109 as peer-comparisons. Teachers completed Stage 1 of the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders to elect students with significant behaviors and identify appropriate peer comparison students (Downs et al., 2019, p.137).

Data was collected over 4 to 6 months through direct observation of teacher and student behavior and classroom management ratings. For direct observation, student and teacher data were collected using the Multi-Option Observation System for Experimental Studies (MOOSES), a computer-based tool allowing researchers to record the frequency and duration of events (Downs et al., 2019, p.138). The classroom management rating form (CMRF) was a "nine-item rating form based partially on the Classroom Atmosphere Rating Scale, a seven-item instrument measuring classroom climate" (Downs et al., 2019, p.138).

The study's results indicated significant differences between students at risk and their peers and that students at risk of EBD responded differently to teacher praise and reprimands than typically developing students. Specifically, students at risk of EBD were more likely to engage in inappropriate behavior following a reprimand. Additionally, the study found that increasing praise and decreasing reprimands was more effective in improving behavior in students at risk of EBD than in typically developing students.

Some limitations found in the study include: statistical analyses were performed on an existing data set, which limited the study's design, generalizability, and applicable statistical methods for data analysis (Downs et al., 2019, p.144), and all observations were completed in control classrooms, where rates of praise were low.

Caldarella et al. (2019)

Caldarella et al. (2019) conducted a study to compare the behavioral response of students at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) with typically developing peers in relation to teacher praise-to-reprimand ratios. The authors hypothesized that students at risk of EBD would have a different behavioral response to different praise-to-reprimand ratios than typically developing peers.

Participants included 149 elementary school teachers across 19 elementary schools, who selected 311 students identified as at risk for EBD and 229 peers for comparison. Data were collected over a three-year period on the frequency and quality of teacher praise and reprimands, as well as the behavioral response of the students to these interactions. Groups were arranged by grade and randomized to treatment or control groups, but each group in both control and treatment identified a subject where the most behaviors were exhibited.

Teachers in the treatment group were trained on Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT) procedures, implementing the intervention as the primary classroom management system (Caldarella et al., 2019). Teachers in the control group continued to use their classroom management systems that were already in place. Data from a randomized control trial of CW-FIT was used in the attempt to increase the frequency of praise statements and thus impact Praise-to-Reprimand Ratios (PRR). Data showed that peer-comparison students had higher PRR than the at-risk students, with the praise rate nearly equal between the two groups (Caldarella et al., 2019).

The study results showed that both groups of students responded similarly to different praise-to-reprimand ratios. Specifically, a higher ratio of praise to reprimands was associated with more appropriate behavior, while a lower ratio was associated with more inappropriate

behavior in both groups of students. The results of the study also showed no effect of PRR on engagement for the peer-comparison students. Still, they showed linear relationships between increased PRR and increased engagement for at-risk students (Caldarella et al., 2019). The findings of this study have important implications for educators and administrators. The authors suggest a higher ratio of praise to reprimands may be an effective intervention for improving behavior in students at risk of EBD and typically developing peers. Additionally, the authors emphasize the importance of using positive reinforcement strategies, such as praise, to promote appropriate behavior in all students.

Limitations to this study included a disproportion between African American students designated as at risk and those selected for peer comparison (Caldarella et al., 2019, p. 463), that types of teacher praise were not identified, and that the identification process for identifying peer comparison students was not systematic (Caldarella et al., 2019).

Caldarella et al. (2021)

Caldarella et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the effects of teacher reprimands on student behavior and engagement while controlling for teacher praise. The study involved 19 elementary schools in Missouri, Tennessee, and Utah as part of a 4-year randomized control trial (Caldarella et al., 2021, p. 165) of a classroom management program called Class-Wide Function-related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT). From the 19 schools, 149 teachers were randomly selected to participate, and 311 students were identified as at-risk students.

Teachers first identified the subject they correlated with the most problematic behavior and used the Systematic Screening for Behavioral Disorders Stage 1 to elect students they considered at-risk for EBD, and then completed the Social Skills Improvement System to verify their at-risk status according to national norms (Caldarella et al., 2021, p. 165). Researchers

confirmed at-risk status through direct observation using MOOSES. Data was collected for each at-risk student every fall, with five direct observations, on five different days, for 2-3 weeks.

The results from this study show that teacher reprimands did not appear to decrease future disruptive behavior or increase future engagement for students at risk for EBD or vice versa, and do not result in long-term positive behavior change. Caldarella et al. (2021) noted that teacher reprimands were weakly predictive of future teacher reprimands after controlling for teacher praise. Correlations between teacher reprimands and student disruptions were expected to be greater but could have been affected by human error or environmental factors.

Limitations found in this study included limited sample size, other teacher behaviors that were not controlled, and weak auto-lags due to varying number of days between observations, or missing information (Caldarella et al., 2021, p. 171).

Sheaffer et al. (2021)

In 2021, Sheaffer, Majeika, Gilmour, and Wehby conducted a study aimed to investigate whether there were "differences in teacher ratings and direct observations of classroom behavior" (p. 96) between male and female students who were identified as having or at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

The researchers conducted a 2-year study and recruited participants from Tennessee, Minnesota, and Virginia. Two cohorts of students with or at-risk for EBD were identified from 30 school districts, and pairs of schools were randomly assigned to either an intervention or comparison group (Sheaffer et al., 2021, p. 99). Districts averaged racial demographics consisted of "24% White, 58% Black, 12% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% American Indian; 12% limited English proficiency; 15% received special education services; and 69% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch" (Sheaffer et al., 2021, p. 99). A sample size of 352 students

was identified through the inclusion criteria provided in the SSBD manual. Of the sample size, 22.7% were female.

Sheaffer et al. (2021) used the following measures to collect data and inform this study: The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), the Teacher's Report Form Internalizing Scale (TRF), direct assessment, and direct observation using MOOSES. Statistically significant, moderate correlations were found between dependent variables of negative talk, aggression, and disengagement (Sheaffer et al., 2021, p. 101).

Multiple statistically significant differences were found between male and female students. Teachers rated female students −5.28 points below male students in social skills on average, gave higher average ratings in problem behavior to females compared with males, and lower ratings in academic skills (Sheaffer et al., 2021, p. 102). However, teachers rated female and male students similarly on internalizing behavior.

In this study, teachers rated females as having "poorer social skills, lower academic competence, and worse behavior than their male counterparts" (Sheaffer et al., 2021, p. 103), showing that teachers viewed males and females with similar problem behaviors differently. The study results suggest that there may be a gender bias in how teachers perceive and rate the behavior of male and female students with or at-risk for EBD. This bias may be influenced by societal gender stereotypes that view males as more aggressive and females as more emotional. As a result, male students may be more likely to be disciplined or labeled as "problem" students, while female students may be overlooked or their needs may be dismissed.

Limitations to this study include that the majority of the sample was male, teacher bias which may affect ratings, and that observations and teacher ratings were not completed at the same time (Sheaffer et al., 2021).

Table 8

Summary of Chapter II Findings (continued)

Authors	Study Design	Participants	Procedure	Findings
Allday, Hinkson-Lee, Hudson, Neilson-Gatti, Kleinke, & Russel (2012)	Quantitative	1 teacher-student dyad, three teacher-student triads, 2 elementary school and 1 middle school.	Training on behavior-specific praise. Modified multiple baseline design, student measures: on-task & off-task behavior, collected using ABC Data Pro application on an iPod touch. Spearman Rho (two tailed) correlation was used further to show the effects of increased rates of behavior-specific praise.	Rates for behavior-specific praise increased for all four teachers. Each student exhibited gains in their on-task behavior. A positive relationship was suggested between increased BSP rates and on-task behavior. All teachers reduced the rate of corrections following the training.
Downs, Caldarella, Larsen, Charlton, Wills, Kamps, Wehby & (2019)	Quantitative	65 elementary teachers, 130 students at risk of EBD, 109 students as peer-comparisons	Direct observations, teacher behavior, and classroom management ratings.	Consider who to praise over how to praise. Students identified at risk appeared to be more sensitive to praise and reprimands.
Caldarella, Larsen, Williams, Wills, & Wehlby & (2019)	Quantitative	19 elementary schools; 149 Teachers, 311 students identified at-risk for EBD, 229 peers for comparison.	Students' classes were randomly assigned. Teachers in the treatment condition group were trained on CW-FIT procedures	As the teacher praise-to-reprimand ratio increases, so does student engagement.

			and implemented the intervention, and teachers in the control classrooms continued their previous routine.	
Caldarella, Larsen, Williams, Wills, & Wehlby & (2021)	Qualitative	149 teachers, 19 elementary schools, 311 students considered at-risk.	Teachers randomly selected to participate, SSBD and SSIS used to identify at-risk students, MOOSES for observation.	Teacher reprimands did not appear to decrease future disruptive behavior or increase future engagement.
Sheaffer, Majeika, Gilmour, Wehby & (2021)	Quantitative	Two cohorts of students with or at risk of EBD, 352 students, 22.7% female.	SSRS rating for student behavior, WJ-III Letter recognition for academic competence, MOOSES for observation of student behavior.	Statistically significant differences between female and male students of teaching rating outcomes.

Chapter III: Summary of Findings

The purpose of this paper was to examine the degree of behavioral expectations that students with emotional or behavioral disorders have compared to their non-disabled peers. If there was a disparity, I wanted to understand the impact that had on those students and if that impacted their educational outcomes. Chapter 1 included background information and the rationale for the research. Chapter II was a review of the research literature. In this chapter, I will share my findings, recommendations, and implications for research.

Conclusions

I reviewed a total of ten studies related to disparities in expectations for students with emotional/behavioral disorders compared to their non-disabled peers. Five of these studies included a central focus on teacher perceptions and student performance. These studies included Cook (2001), Lane et al. (2004), Conley et al. (2014), Ysseldyke et al (2017), and McGuire & Meadan (2022). Then I looked at an additional five studies with a central focus on teaching practices and behavior response and the related social and academic repercussions. These studies included Allday et al. (2012), Downs et al. (2019), Caldarella et al. (2019), Caldarella et al. (2021), and Sheaffer et al. (2021).

Perception

Five studies addressed teacher perceptions and the impact that has on students' success, teacher attitudes toward those students, and academic success. Cook (2001) and Conley et al. (2014), both investigated teacher perceptions of students with EBD. Cook (2001) examined teachers' attitudes toward their students with mild and severe disabilities. The study found that teachers had more negative attitudes toward students with severe disabilities than those with mild disabilities. Cook (2001) specifically compares attitudes toward students with mild and severe

disabilities, while Conley et al. (2014) compare teacher perceptions to research-based categories of behavioral difficulties.

Lane et al. (2004) explored the impact of teacher expectations on student behavior. The study found that teachers with high expectations of their students had students who demonstrated better behavior. Meanwhile, McGuire and Meadan (2022) and Ysseldyke et al. (2017) focused more broadly on academic expectations for students with EBD, with McGuire and Meadan (2022) investigating perceptions of social inclusion and Ysseldyke et al. (2017) examining academic growth expectations.

Teacher Practice

Five studies examined teacher practices and responses to behavior and the social and academic repercussions, Allday et al. (2012) and Caldarella et al. (2019) both examined the impact of teacher behavior on the behavior of students with EBD, but with different focuses. Allday et al. focused on training general educators to increase behavior-specific praise and its effects on students with EBD. Caldarella et al., on the other hand, investigated the differences in the behavioral response of students with EBD and typically developing peers to different teacher praise-to-reprimand ratios. Both studies found that increasing positive teacher feedback had a positive impact on student behavior. Downs et al. (2019) also examined the differential response of students with EBD to teacher praise and reprimands, finding that students at risk of EBD were more responsive to positive teacher feedback than negative feedback.

One similarity between Allday et al. (2012) and Downs et al. (2019) was that they both investigate the effects of teacher behavior (praise and reprimands) on student behavior, specifically for students with EBD. Similarly, Caldarella et al. (2019) and Sheaffer et al. (2021)

both examined the behavior of students with EBD in the classroom and compared it to that of typically developing peers or to teacher expectations.

McGuire and Meadan (2022) examined general educators' perceptions on the social inclusion of elementary students with EBD. The study found that general educators value inclusion but face challenges implementing inclusive practices. Sheaffer et al. (2021) investigated the classroom behavior of students with or at risk of EBD and found that student gender affected teacher ratings but not direct observations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should conduct larger, more diverse longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of training general educators to increase behavior-specific praise on the academic and social outcomes of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). This could help to better understand how sustained changes in teacher behavior can lead to positive student outcomes over time, and address limitations related to small sample sizes over a short period of time. Further investigation on the impact of teacher praise-to-reprimand ratios on the behavior of students at risk for EBD compared with typically developing peers should also be addressed. Research could explore the extent to which these ratios predict positive outcomes for students, and whether they have differential effects based on students' individual needs.

Furthermore, future research should investigate the differences between teacher perceptions and research-based categories of student behavior difficulties. Research could examine the extent to which teacher perceptions align with evidence-based models of EBD, and explore the factors that may contribute to discrepancies between the two. Limitations related to subjective data and human error can be addressed by conducting research to better understand the attitudes of general educators toward their included students with mild and severe disabilities.

This could help to identify potential barriers to inclusion and inform strategies for supporting teachers in providing high-quality instruction to all students.

Additionally, future research should investigate the potential role of student gender in shaping teacher ratings of classroom behavior for students with or at risk of EBD. Research could examine the extent to which gender bias influences teacher ratings and their interactions with students with EBD and explore strategies for promoting more equitable assessments of student behavior.

Implications for Practice

As a special education teacher, I understand the impact we have to shape young minds. I have worked closely with students with EBD and have seen the progress they can make when they are given high expectations, opportunities to grow, and positive environments. It is in our best interest as teachers to provide students with as many chances as possible and be open to change always. As schools return to a new normal post-pandemic, more and more students are being classified in the at-risk or EBD category. In school, behaviors and interventions are drastically changing and education needs to as well.

Setting the same expectations and limits for students with emotional and behavioral disorders puts them at a disadvantage because they are scrutinized. Students with significant behaviors typically require more adult support and have eyes on them more frequently. I believe that children are inherently intelligent and intuitive and that they completely understand when teachers or support staff are watching them. I can only imagine what it must feel like to be under constant watch while trying to learn difficult content and complex social skills. That is why understanding that students with problematic behavior deserve grace and patience is so

important. Learning has no limits, it knows no age, and has no boundaries. All students have value, potential, and ability, and it is our job to foster that environment.

Summary

The articles provide insights into different aspects of teaching students with EBD, such as the impact of teacher behavior, teacher attitudes, teacher expectations, and the instructional context on student behavior and academic growth. The findings suggest that positive teacher feedback and high teacher expectations can positively impact the behavior of students with EBD and that those conditions are not always readily present. When compared with their non-disabled peers, students with emotional and behavioral disorders are less likely to be provided positive approaches without explicit instruction and training for teachers.

These studies also suggest that teacher praise and reprimands play a critical role in student's behavior and academic success with EBD. Moreover, general educators' attitudes and expectations toward these students can significantly affect their educational outcomes. Teachers must be trained to use behavior-specific praise and effective classroom management strategies to support students with EBD. Teacher training programs that focus on increasing positive reinforcement and reducing negative reinforcement can help support students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Educators should be provided with the necessary training to address the unique needs of students with EBD in their classrooms.

Additionally, creating an inclusive classroom environment that values and celebrates diversity can contribute to EBD students' social and emotional well-being. More research is needed to investigate effective ways of supporting students with EBD in inclusive classrooms, including evidence-based interventions and strategies to promote academic and social success.

These findings show that there is a need for more inclusive practices to be implemented to ensure that students with EBD receive the necessary support to reach their academic potential.

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