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A Comparison of the Academic Progress of Students with EBD and Students with LD

File number :
CS-PC-11e

Bibliographic reference :

Anderson, J.A., Kutash, K., & Duchnowski, A.J. (2001). A Comparison of the Academic Progress of Students with EBD and Students with LD. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 9(2), 106-115.

Abstract :

Study Objectives

This American study compared the academic progress between students with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) and students with learning difficulties (LD). The authors defined emotional and behavioural problems as being an inability to learn that could not be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors. These disorders translated into an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships, depression, or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears. As for learning difficulties, the authors defined these problems as being a disorder in one or more processes involved in comprehension or use of language, leading to an inability to listen, think, speak, read, spell, write or perform mathematical calculations.

The main objectives of this research were: (1) to study over time differences in the academic progress of students with EBD and students with LD by examining changes in scores obtained in standardized math and reading tests between kindergarten or first grade and fifth or sixth grades; and (2) to study over time the relationship between academic achievement and a series of factors potentially related to academic achievement: school attendance, grade repetition in kindergarten or first grade, school mobility, behaviour incidents and type of special education (full-time or part-time placement).

Methodology

The sample consisted of 103 students (22 female and 81 male students) selected from a population participating in a large research project conducted in the south-eastern part of the U.S. A cohort of students was followed from kindergarten (average age of 5.82 years) to age thirteen. This sample was divided into two sub-groups: students with EBD (42) and students with LD (61). These sub-groups exhibited similar characteristics in gender, age, race, IQ and (low)family income.

Main Results and Conclusion

Students with LD made significant progress in average scores obtained in reading over the years. As for students with EBD, few changes were observed in average scores obtained between the beginning and the end of primary school, although these scores were significantly higher at the beginning of primary school compared to the scores obtained by students with LD.

In conclusion, the authors came up with three findings on the relationship between academic achievement and certain variables of interest. First, grade repetition appeared to be associated with poor academic achievement over time. Secondly, students with LD who participated in this study received on average fewer special education services on a full-time basis and demonstrated an improvement in math as well as reading scores over time. Certain variables such as school attendance, disciplinary incidents and school mobility have shown that there was no significant correlation with academic progress.

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Key Words :

Behavioural Disorders, Emotional Disorders, Learning Difficulties, Special Education, Academic Progress, Grade Repetition, Mathematics, Reading, Longitudinal Study, Quantitative Analysis, Preschool, Kindergarten, Primary School, Elementary

School

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United States