

# Variables Influencing the Behavior Management Practices Implemented by High School Teachers of Students with Behavioral Difficulties



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## Introduction

- Students with emotional and behavioral difficulties (EBD) are recognized as the most difficult to integrate into regular classes (Hornby & Evans, 2014).
- Their integration represents a particular challenge for teachers, especially at the high school level (Baker, 2005) and for novice teachers (State, Kern, Strarosta, & Mukherjee, 2011).
- Several American studies have demonstrated a gap between evidence-based practices to prevent and manage EBD and those implemented by teachers in the classroom (Gable, Tonelson, Sheth, Wilson, & Park, 2012; State, Harrison, Kern, & Lewis, 2017).

## Objectives

Among high school teachers :

- Examine the frequency of implementation of practices by participants and identify those that are most or least used;
- Examine the influence of personal and contextual variables on each category of practice;
- Explore the effects of these variables on proactive and reactive practice dimensions by controlling their covariance or concomitance.

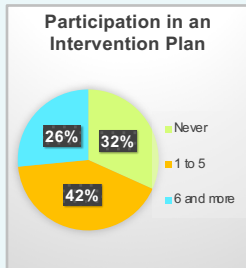
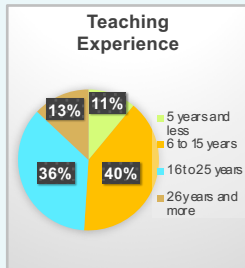
## Methods

### Participants and Procedures

- N = 903 high school teachers (70.7 % female, 29.3 % male).
- 23.6 % from special education; 76.3 % from general education.
- Recruited by email and responded to an online survey.

### Measures

- Socio-demographic questionnaire (N = 17 items);
- Management Practices for Behavioral Difficulties Inventory (Nadeau *et al.*, 2018)
  - Seven subscales (N = 68 items) and two dimensions (Proactive Practices or Reactive Practices).
  - Five point Likert-type scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often).



## Results

### Frequency of Use of Practices

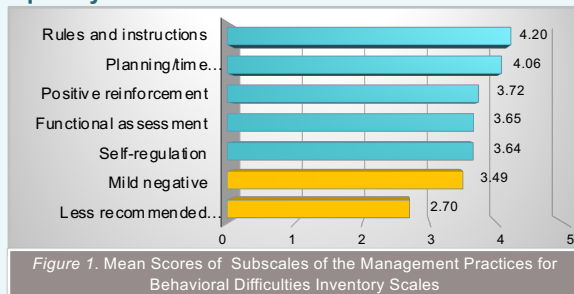


Figure 1. Mean Scores of Subscales of the Management Practices for Behavioral Difficulties Inventory Scales

- According to the paired t-tests, all means are significantly different from each other.
- Proactive practices (in blue) are more frequently implemented than the reactive one (in yellow).
- Among proactive practices, self-regulation practices are the least implemented.
- Less recommended punitive practices are the least implemented.

## Influence of Personal and Contextual Variables on practice implementation

### Personal Variables

(See Table 1.)

#### Gender

- Significant differences only for proactive practices.
- Female teachers' implement > male teachers'

#### Teaching experience

- Post hoc revealed only significant difference for proactive practices.
- Experienced teachers' implement (16-25 years and 26 and more) > novice teachers' (5 years and less)

#### EBD initial training

- No significant difference.

#### EBD inservice training

- Post hoc revealed no significant difference.

### Contextual Variables

(See Table 1.)

#### Sector

- Significant difference only for proactive practices.
- Teachers' in special education implement > teachers' in general education.

#### Number of EBD in the classroom

- Teachers with no EBD students implement more frequently proactive strategies than the others.
- Teachers with 5 or more EBD students more frequently implement reactive practices.

#### Participation in individualized intervention plan

- Teachers who have participated in at least one individualized intervention plan more frequently implement proactive strategies than teachers who have never participated.

Table 1

ANCOVA Results and Multiple Comparisons for Practice Dimensions by Personal and Contextual Variables

	Proactive practices			Reactive practices		
	ddl	F	$\eta^2$	ddl	F	$\eta^2$
Gender	1	17.06***	.02	1	.03	.00
Teaching experience	3	3.81**	.01	3	2.64*	.01
EBD initial training	3	1.72	.00	3	1.20	.00
EBD inservice training	3	2.77*	.01	3	1.30	.00
Sector	1	16.53***	.01	1	0.15	.00
EBD students in classroom	2	6.57***	.01	2	6.05**	.01
Participation in individualized intervention plan	2	20.58***	.04	2	.99	.00
Reactive practices	1	180.19***	.17	-	-	-
Proactive practices	-	-	-	1	180.19***	.17
Error	880	-	-	880	-	-
Total	896	-	-	896	-	-
R <sup>2</sup>		.31			.21	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>		.29			.20	

Note. \*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01 \*p < .05.

## Discussion

- Results indicate that teachers select more often proactive practices related to giving rules and instructions, planning and time management and giving positive reinforcement than those related to self-regulation of EBD students.
  - Other studies revealed that teachers more frequently implement practices addressed to the entire class than individualized practices such as self-regulation (Gable *et al.*, 2012; State *et al.*, 2017) judged by teachers as time consuming (State *et al.*, 2017).
- As recommended, teachers implemented proactive strategies more frequently than reactive strategies.
  - Less recommended punitive practices are nevertheless still implemented frequently.
  - Teachers more frequently implement reactive strategies when their classes include more than five EBD students.
- Female teachers more frequently implement proactive practices than male teachers.
  - Congruent with other studies which reveal that female teachers are more motivated than male teachers to implement best practices and use them more often (Schieffe, 2017).
- Novice teachers less frequently implemented proactive practices.
  - Difficulties for these young teachers in establishing classroom management strategies conducive to learning (State *et al.*, 2011).
- Training has almost no influence on implemented practices.
  - As Gable *et al.* (2012) emphasized simply exposing teachers to different practices is not enough; guided practice and the presence of frequent feedback often proves necessary.
- Participation in individualized intervention has a positive influence on the implementation of proactive practices; it is also the variable whose effect is the largest.
  - A form of coaching by professionals to better understand the needs of students and choose the best interventions.

## Conclusion

- Rather positive portrayal of reported practices being implemented by secondary school teachers, recommended practices being implemented more frequently.
- Results suggest a need for training institutions and school boards to provide added resourcing and support for their teacher education programs in regards to EBD students.
  - Better training in self-regulation practices and avoidance of less recommended ones.
- Importance to provide additional support to younger teachers, through various training and coaching practices such as mentoring, professional counselling and implementation of professional learning communities.
- Special education teachers may play a role in coaching teachers in general education.

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