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ROUND TABLE AERA 2018

PRACTICING TEACHERS' ATTRIBUTIONS FOR BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS WITH LD AND ADHD

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Background Information for the Study:

- ADHD and LD are two neurodevelopmental disorders that comprise the largest groups of students who require special educational supports.
- It is important that teachers not only understand the challenges that these students face, but also feel efficacious in supporting their learning.
- Teacher self-efficacy is one's perceived ability to successfully accomplish teaching related tasks which can lead to various positive outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction).
- Teachers make causal attributions for student outcomes and these attributions can influence teachers own emotional and behavioural outcomes and future expectations for students.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory examines casual attributions (i.e., explanations) individuals make for situational outcomes and the impact they have on emotions and future behaviour. According to Weiner (1985), all attributions for an outcome can be classified in terms of three dimensions:

Causality

The individual's perception of the location of a cause as either internal or external to oneself.



Stability

How stable or unstable over time an individual perceives a cause to be.



Controllability

Whether a person perceives they have influence over the cause of an outcome.



We asked two specific research questions:

- (1) Do practicing teachers attribute different levels of controllability, locus and stability to student behaviour based on diagnoses of ADHD or LD?
- (2) How are teachers' attributions related to their sense of self-efficacy?



Research Methods

- 151 teachers completed our questionnaire.
- Sample was predominately female (77%) and of Caucasian (75%) background.
- Teachers ranged in age from 22 to 65 ($M = 35.18$), identified having a range of years teaching experience (1 to 41, $M = 9.26$).
- Questions related to self-efficacy and attributions for students with ADHD / LD.

To what extent do you feel
the student's diagnosis is a
part of them?

Causality

To what extent do you feel
the student can change
their difficulties?

Stability

To what extent do you feel
the student can control
their difficulties?

Controllability

Results

- Teachers reported higher scores for students with LD than students with ADHD for stability, suggesting that teachers believe students with LD are more able to change their difficulties (i.e., less stable)
- Step-wise regressions were performed (for ADHD and LD separately), predicting teacher self-efficacy
 - Step 1: gender, age, teaching level, years of experience
 - Step 2: causality, stability, and controllability



Students with ADHD

The model explained **12.7%** of the variance $F(7, 127) = 2.50, p = .02$.

However, only controllability emerged as significantly related to teacher self-efficacy.
($\beta = .30, p = .005$).

Students with LD

The model explained **13.9%** of the variance $F(7, 125) = 2.71, p = .01$.

Controllability and locus of causality emerged as significantly related to teacher self-efficacy
($\beta = .34, p = .001$ and $\beta = .24, p = .009$, respectively).

Discussion and Educational Significance

- Our results provide important information and can be used for teacher training and development to support teachers' self-efficacy when working with students with ADHD and LD.
- Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of the variance was unaccounted for in our regression analyses, highlighting a need for further investigation.
- Teacher training may do well to include a component that addresses teacher attributions for various student behaviours (e.g., attributional retraining).

