THE EFFECT OF SEX ROLE BIAS ON THE REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FOR LEARNING AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to determine whether sex role bias is a significant factor in teachers' referral of children for learning and behavioural disorders.

Thirty-four male and thirty-four female teachers representing seven grade levels from kindergarten to grade six were utilized as subjects. Half of the subjects of each gender received a questionnaire listing eight hypothetical behavioural topographies, four male and four female. Subjects were instructed to suggest diagnostic labels and placement settings for each topography from options provided.

This procedure was replicated with the remaining half of the subjects utilizing a similar questionnaire, differing only in the gender of each behavioural topography.

The hypotheses were tested by split-plot design. Computations were performed using SPSS-X (Procedure MANOVA).

Achievement proved to significantly affect placement, higher achievers receiving less restrictive placement settings. Disruptiveness proved to be an equalizer or "leveler" which altered teachers' placement decisions depending on the achievement level of the topography.

Although no difference was noted in the placement of topographies by male teachers, female teachers suggested

significantly more restrictive placement settings for female topographies than male topographies. These results seem to indicate a definite sex role bias in the opposite direction anticipated and only on the part of the female teachers. The significance of these results was discussed in terms of in vivo applicability.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

In recent years, various studies have alluded to the possibility of sex role biases in the referral and assessment of children suspected of having learning and behavioural disorders (Bentzen, 1966; Fagot and Littman, 1976; Lambert and Sandoval, 1980). The predominance of males diagnosed as learning disordered varies from three to one to as high as eleven to one (see, for example, Hyde, 1975). The Diagnostic and Remedial Unit of the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, notes a four to one ratio of male to female referrals, a statistically significant difference (Bognar and Martin, 1980).

Although neurological and developmental explanations have been presented to account for the fact that significantly more males than females are referred for assessment of these disorders, the current study proposes an additional explanation of this male-female differential.

The present study is designed to determine whether or

not teachers refer boys to more restrictive settings than girls, whether they label boys and girls differently, and whether male and female teachers differ in the degree to which they manifest sex role biases when referring children for assessment for learning and behavioural disorders. Although there is no sizeable body of literature indicating that male and female teachers differ significantly on any dimension, the few studies which have noticed differences have concluded that these differences tend to be complementary, resulting in a positive contribution to classroom life (Good, Sikes and Brophy, 1974; Lee and Wolinsky, 1973)

The primary variables considered when a child is a candidate for referral are achievement and disruptiveness (Hyde, 1975; Leitz and Gregory, 1978). Thus, these variables were controlled in this study.

1.2 Rationale

Sex role bias is becoming an increasingly problematic concern in our society (Berk and Lewis, 1977; Diamond, 1977; Sternglanz and Serbin, 1974). Public attention has been typically drawn to the plight of females as victims of this bias. Males, however, are subject to the injustices of sex role bias in certain areas as well.

One such context in which males may be at a disadvantage as a result of their sex role socialization is in the classroom (see, for example, Palardy, 1969). Specifically, there seems to be a significant difference between boys and girls in the rate of diagnostic referrals.

In a review of the literature it was discovered that traditional explanations such as neuropsychological deficits and developmental lag (Bentzen, 1966) do not appear to adequately explain why more boys than girls are referred for assessment of learning and behavioural disorders in an elementary school context.

Primarily, this study is designed to determine whether or not elementary teachers recommend that males be placed in more restrictive settings than females regardless of the level of achievement or disruptiveness exhibited by the child. That is, although boys may be referred more frequently because they do, in reality, tend to exhibit behaviours incompatible with the expectations of the schools, the differential in the restrictiveness of placement may reflect a sex role bias if this study can demonstrate that boys and girls receive differential treatment even when they exhibit the same levels of disruptiveness and achievement.

Recent studies (Lambert and Sandoval, 1980; Ryckman, 1981) have questioned traditional explanations for this

phenomenon, finding that girls are almost as likely as boys to have learning problems. Other studies (Caplan and Kinsbourne, 1974; Mindingall and Welsh, 1980) suggest that girls, as a result of stereotyped sex role socialization, have learned how to utilize the option of pleasing their teacher as a response to failure and thus are more likely to avoid identification as having a learning problem.

In consideration of these findings, the present study is proposed. Given recent empirical evidence, it may be suggested that current referral processes may be subconsciously weighed such that more boys than girls will be referred for assessment. This hypothesis is based upon two factors. Empirical evidence seems to indicate that:

1. girls may be more successful than boys at avoiding identification as having learning or behavioural problems, and
2. teachers seem to expect that more boys than girls will have these sorts of problems regardless of the accuracy of these expectations (Lambert and Sandoval, 1980; Martin, 1972).

This study will use an interview format to ascertain whether this is, in fact, the case with regard to a selected sample of elementary teachers from the Avalon Consolidated School Board. If so, it seems logical that sex role bias may be a confounding factor in the referral process.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Sex role identity in children is formulated by many contributing factors. Parents, school, peer group and other influences all play an important part in the sex role socialization of a child. Parental influences on sex role have been documented as early as the first day of a child's life (Rubin, Provenzano and Luria, 1974).

Fagot (1974) observed, in a study of two year olds, that boys received less guidance (both in the form of positive and negative interactions) than girls. This seems to suggest that boys are under fewer constraints to conform in the early childhood home environment, while girls are under more pressure to conform in the same developmental stage. A different aspect of this same phenomenon is reported by Sears (1965), who found that girls' aggression is primarily verbal and prosocial (emphasizing discipline and order) and boys' aggression is physical and initially antisocial.

This developmental background would appear to less adequately prepare boys for the more rigid, institutional

environment of the school than girls. That is, when children reach the elementary level, girls are rewarded for passivity, neatness, docility, obedience and following instructions, both at home and in the school environment. Consequently, girls tend to avoid conflict with their teachers. Boys, however, are reinforced for the opposite kinds of behaviour by parents and peers, thus creating considerable dissonance between boys and their school environment. Even female academic superiority, which continues through high school, seems to reflect the ability of girls to give teachers what they want (Lester, Dudek and Muir, 1972).

Guttentag and Bray (1976) found that teachers want male students to be independent, assertive and unemotional, and approve of girls who are submissive, dependent, unassertive, emotional and concerned about their appearance. Similarly, Sears and Feldman (1966) suggest that while boys may get more disapproval, girls are either ignored or rewarded for conformity and obedience.

Bentzen (1966) was one of the first researchers to question the traditional neuropsychologically defined developmental differential between males and females. In addition to the explanation that the male organism is neuropsychologically more vulnerable than the female, and thus more prone to learning and behavioural disorders,

Bentzen suggests that the sex differential in the ratio of males to females diagnosed as learning disabled may also be attributed to the fact that males generally mature more slowly than females of the same chronological age.

Two of the basic determinants of referral for assessment of learning, and behavioural disorders are high disruptiveness and low achievement (Cruickshank et al., 1961; Fernald, 1943; McCarthy and Paraskevpoulos, 1969) and since males exhibit both characteristics to a greater extent than females, they tend to be referred more often. Disruptiveness seems to be the most significant factor contributing to the male-female differential in referral rates, as girls are almost as likely as boys to have serious discrepancies between ability and achievement (Lambert and Sandoval, 1980).

Ross (1976) notes that children who are hyperactive, the primary symptom of which is an abnormally high activity level, are much more likely to be identified as learning disabled. Thus, since boys seem to be more assertive, impulsive, independent, and have a generally higher activity level than girls, probably derived from cultural, as well as genetic, determinants (Mindingall and Welsh, 1980; Mischel, 1966), they may tend to be referred more frequently than their female counterparts. Davis and Slobodian (1967) point out that boys seem to possess the same capacity for learning

as girls, although classroom restrictions on mobility probably encourages distractibility and restlessness among boys more often than girls, due to their higher general activity level. Another factor, seemingly an artifact of their sex-role socialization, is the fact that males tend to be motivated by achievement needs, while females seem to be motivated more by affiliative needs (Block, 1973; McClelland et al., 1953).

These observations seem to indicate that not only are males more persistent in the face of challenge and negative feedback, as evidenced by Minuchin (1966), but also that females are more susceptible to the wishes of others; in this case, their teachers.

All of these studies seem to support the hypothesis that females are less likely to exhibit deviant or distracting behaviour in the classroom. Thus, females may often remain relatively "invisible" in the teachers' search for children with special problems since their behaviour tends to be less disruptive.

Possibly as a result of the fact that girls cause fewer "problems" in the classroom, teachers seem to have developed a bias against boys in general, manifested in various ways.

Teacher expectation with regard to pupil-role has been well documented. Studies by Feshbach (1969) and Levitin and Chananie (1972) indicate that teachers conceptualize

their "ideal student" as orderly, conforming and dependent. Definite sex-role expectations were noted as well. Sex-typed behaviours, such as control, caution and conformity in females and independence, challenge and flexibility in males were found to be more acceptable to the teacher when displayed by the appropriate sex.

Teachers also tend to express concern for low-achieving girls, while rejecting low-achieving boys (Good and Brophy, 1972). Additionally, studies by McCandless and Evans (1973) and Etaugh et al. (1975) note that teachers overwhelmingly reinforce feminine behaviours over masculine ones.

Further evidence which documents sex role bias in favour of female students can be found in studies by Meyer and Thompson (1956), Davidson and Lang (1960), McNeil (1964) and Davis and Slobodian (1967), which indicate a definite teacher preference for girls over boys on numerous factors, primarily teacher attitude toward children during reading instruction.

Other relevant studies provide evidence that this bias is translated into action. Jackson and Lahaderne (1967) note that while 80% of prohibitory responses of sixth-grade teachers are directed toward males, there is little significant difference in the amount of managerial and instructional responses they receive. Similary, Fagot and Peterson (1969) found that nursery school teachers

reinforced female-typed behaviour almost exclusively in both boys and girls.

Both Lippett and Gold (1959) and Martin (1972) found that the specific type of boy who elicits negative responses is characterized by a low level of classroom status, or is identified as a behaviour problem. Martin's study also indicates that although problem boys are singled out for negative feedback, problem girls do not receive more attention than the regular population of girls, suggesting that the typical profile of the problem girl is not characterized by behaviours which attract teacher attention. This observation seems to lend further credence to the hypothesis that problem girls are generally less disruptive in the classroom than their male counterparts.

At this point, it seems appropriate to note that since the great majority of North American elementary teachers are female (NEA Research Division, 1971, 1972), the comparative lack of a situational role-model for boys may contribute to their lower level of desirable classroom behaviour. This differential is especially significant in light of studies by Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963), Madsen (1968), Friedman and Bowers (1971) and Portuges and Feshbach (1972) which suggest that children from kindergarten to grade four tend not to imitate opposite-sex teachers. Therefore, it seems likely that since female teachers far

outnumber male teachers, that boys tend to lack a viable model for appropriate behaviour, or the "preferred pupil-role."

Finally, Lee and Gropper (1974) argue that both schools and society generally present girls with little or no incentive to resist their tendency to accommodate, since they tend to be rewarded for the behaviours inherent in their socially reinforced sex role. Thus, they tend to maintain the prefetred pupil-role of the well-mannered student. Boys, conversely, seem to lack effective role-models to teach them appropriate patterns of accommodative responses. The end result of this mutually unsatisfactory situation seems to be that while boys tend to develop their personal resources to a greater extent than girls, this responsibility seems to be a significantly debilitating source of social stress. Females, on the other hand, are encouraged to rely upon readily available same-sex models and have to deal with much less stress, perhaps at the cost of insufficient personal challenge.

Attributing the differential in male to female referral rates to neuropsychological or maturational deficits in males may be an erroneous attempt to deal with problems which are largely related to a discrepancy between sex-role expectations and school-related expectations. It may also be suggested that a lack of discrepancy between sex-role

expectations and school-related expectations for females leads to neglect of the problems which they may be experiencing, as well as reinforcing and perpetuating an unobtrusive and compliant role.

In summary, the case for sex role bias in the referral of children for assessment of a learning disability seems to be a valid one. The current study proposes to determine the extent to which this bias, as an independent source of variation, contributes to the placement of males in more restrictive settings than females in local elementary schools, ranging from kindergarten to grade six.

2.1 Research Hypotheses

This study is designed to test the following hypotheses:

When presented with a set of case profiles denoted as either male or female, holding the variables of achievement and disruptiveness constant and presenting them individually to teachers for assessment:

1. the teachers will tend to assign males to more restrictive settings than females,
2. male teachers will tend to recommend less restrictive educational placement for male students than will female teachers,

3. male and female teachers will label the case profiles differently.

A secondary research question regarding differential diagnostic labeling of the case profiles presented is considered later in this thesis but is inappropriate for valid statistical analysis.

2.2 Significance of the Study

It was anticipated that this study would determine if sex role bias is a significant factor in the referral and assessment of children suspected of suffering from a learning disorder. While many studies have alluded to the possibility of sex role bias in the referral and assessment of these children, there is a paucity of specific studies which deal with this concern. If it had been possible to empirically demonstrate the reality of sex role bias in the referral process, perhaps diagnosticians and teachers would subsequently be sensitized to the extent to which this bias is a factor in the present assessment process.

Additionally, it is important that both diagnosticians and teachers are impressed with the impact which their sex role biases can have with regard to the children with whom they work.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

Due primarily to procedural limitations in the sampling process, the validity of this study was restricted to the kindergarten to grade six population.

The results and conclusions reached, however, should provide a basis for extrapolation to other small urban Canadian populations, and especially to more rural populations, where sex role stereotyping may be expected to be more pronounced.

For ethical reasons, the subjects responded to simulated behavioural topographies. Consequently, a certain degree of extrapolation may be necessary when relating the results of this study to in vivo populations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects

The subjects comprising the sample utilized in this study consisted of sixty-eight teachers from the Avalon Consolidated School Board, Newfoundland, Canada. Five male and five female teachers were randomly selected from each grade (kindergarten through grade six). The subjects were predominantly married, middle-class Caucasians; mean reported age was 32.4 years, mean number of years teaching was 10.3. All teachers were requested to participate in the study by mail and were to contact their principal if they were willing to be a part of the sample.

Teachers were told only that the study was part of a Master's thesis in Educational Psychology, that administrations of the instrument would be conducted in a group setting when possible and that participation would involve a commitment of approximately one half hour.

All teachers contacted responded positively.

3.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in the present study consisted of a list of eight behavioural topographies. Each was a description of a hypothetical child, although the subjects were informed that each topography had been drawn from the case files of actual students enrolled in elementary schools in the Avalon Consolidated School Board.

The topographies were constructed so as to vary by gender, achievement level and disruptiveness, thus ensuring that each subject was exposed to descriptions of:

a. a male high achiever, high disrupter,

b. a female high achiever, high disrupter,

c. a male high achiever, low disrupter,

d. a female high achiever, low disrupter,

e. a male low achiever, high disrupter,

f. a female low achiever, high disrupter,

g. a male low achiever, low disrupter,

h. a female low achiever, low disrupter.

3.3 Procedure

A list of eight topographies was presented to each subject, seventeen males and seventeen females, receiving

Form A. Accompanying each list were explicit directions and instructions to ensure that each subject responded correctly (Appendix A). This procedure was repeated utilizing a Form B, with the gender of each of the topographies reversed in order to provide a replication of the experiment (Appendix B). Thus, a total of 68 subjects were involved in the study; half were presented with one form, the other half were presented with a similar form with only the gender of the individual topographies reversed.

For each topography, the subject:

- assigned a diagnostic label to the child described, chosen from a list of ten labels (Appendix A),
- recommended placement in an educational setting which seemed appropriate for that particular student (Appendix A).

Deno (1973) has suggested a "continuum of special education services" or the "cascade of services," a list of ten educational settings in which exceptional children may be placed, depending on their educational needs. The present study utilized seven of these options, selected to reflect the availability of local services. The options were listed with the least restrictive setting as number 1, and the most restrictive as number 7.

The term "restrictive" refers to a provision of U.S. Public Law PL 94-142 (U.S. Public Law, 1975), which stipulates that handicapped children be educated in "the

least restrictive environment." This means that children who have a physical or mental disability are to be educated with nondisabled children whenever possible, in as nearly normal an environment as possible.

All data collection was conducted by the author at the subject's place of employment during regular working hours, in as distraction-free a room as possible. Standardized instructions were verbally reviewed with the subjects, who then responded utilizing the paper and pencil instrument (Appendix A). Subjects were assured that the ratings they assigned to the topographies would be strictly confidential. Specifically, they were informed that neither their principal nor any member of the Avalon Consolidated School Board would have access to their answers.

This procedure was repeated utilizing a Form B, with the gender of each of the topographies reversed, in order to provide a replication of the experiment (Appendix B).

3.4 Validation

Validation of the behavioural topographies, the diagnostic labels and the seven educational settings (Appendices C, D) was conducted utilizing a graduate class of students enrolled in the Masters of Education (Guidance and Counselling)

program at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

Ten graduate students were presented with the initial draft of the behavioural topographies and were asked to designate each one male or female and to assign it to one of the following four categories: high disruptive/low achievement, high disruptive/high achievement, low disruptive/low achievement, low disruptive/high achievement. There was agreement on the assignment of all but two topographies and following minor modifications in these two there was complete agreement. There was also agreement on the appropriateness and comprehensiveness of the diagnostic labels and educational settings being proposed for use in this study.

3.5 Data Analysis

The hypotheses were tested utilizing a split-plot design with one between-subjects factor (namely, teacher sex) and three within-subjects factors (namely, achievement, disruptiveness, and topography sex). Computations were performed using SPSS-X (procedure MANOVA). The main ANOVA table, Table 4-2, was confirmed using SAS PROC ANOVA.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1 Presentation of Results

This chapter presents the results of statistical analyses of the data obtained from this study. The statistical technique utilized on the hypotheses was a split-plot design. The secondary research question regarding the labeling of the behavioral topographies did not prove to be open to current methods of statistical analysis and was therefore disregarded.

4.2 Statement of Results

Table 4-1 illustrates the descriptive statistics generated by the raw data obtained from the research instruments. Specifically, it presents the number and percentages of placement setting decisions by male and female teachers.

Table 4-1

Number per Placement Setting by Topography, Form, Teacher Sex

Topography	Form*	Teacher Sex	Placement Setting						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	A	Male	7	6	2	2	0	0	0
		Female	4	8	5	0	0	0	0
	B	Male	6	4	6	0	1	0	0
		Female	10	3	3	1	0	0	0
2	A	Male	0	4	10	3	0	0	0
		Female	2	3	7	3	1	0	1
	B	Male	1	5	6	3	1	1	0
		Female	0	2	10	3	1	1	0
3	A	Male	4	3	6	4	0	0	0
		Female	1	7	6	3	0	0	0
	B	Male	4	7	4	2	0	0	0
		Female	2	6	6	2	1	0	0
4	A	Male	0	1	3	9	4	0	0
		Female	1	1	3	10	2	0	0
	B	Male	1	1	4	8	3	0	0
		Female	0	0	4	9	4	0	0
5	A	Male	1	4	7	3	2	0	0
		Female	0	5	6	5	1	0	0
	B	Male	1	3	2	7	4	0	0
		Female	0	4	5	6	2	0	0
6	A	Male	1	1	14	1	0	0	0
		Female	3	3	11	0	0	0	0
	B	Male	3	2	11	0	1	0	0
		Female	1	9	5	2	0	0	0

Table 4-1: Continued

Topography	Form*	Teacher Sex	Placement Setting						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	A	Male	0	2	5	3	5	1	1
		Female	1	0	2	2	7	5	0
	B	Male	0	2	2	5	0	7	1
		Female	0	2	5	4	4	2	0
8	A	Male	3	2	2	7	3	0	0
		Female	1	5	2	7	1	1	0
	B	Male	4	2	2	5	1	3	0
		Female	4	1	4	7	1	0	0

*Form A alternates female/male commencing with Topography 1 and Form B alternates male/female commencing with Topography 1.

4.3 Analysis of Results

Neither of the primary hypotheses were supported by the data.

The secondary research question, that the subjects will also tend to label boys and girls differently when achievement and disruptiveness were controlled, did not appear to be able to be validly analysed based on the data generated from the test instrument.

Achievement and disruptiveness, the two variables which have been cited in the literature as primary determinants of placement, were analysed as to their importance in the referral process. Consistent with research findings, achievement was a statistically significant determinant of placement, $F = 234.35$, $p < .000$. Similarly, disruptiveness was another significant determinant, $F = 7.97$, $p < .006$. The interaction between these two variables was also statistically significant, $F = 71.70$, $p < .000$. Achievement and disruptiveness are also presented in Table 4-2 and Figure 4-1.

Teacher sex and student sex also produced a statistically significant interaction, $F = 5.70$, $p < .02$.

Although there was no significant difference between the way that male and female teachers placed students in general, a further breakdown of students by gender clearly

indicated that female teachers suggested significantly more restrictive placement settings for female students than male students, $F = .12$, $p < .006$.

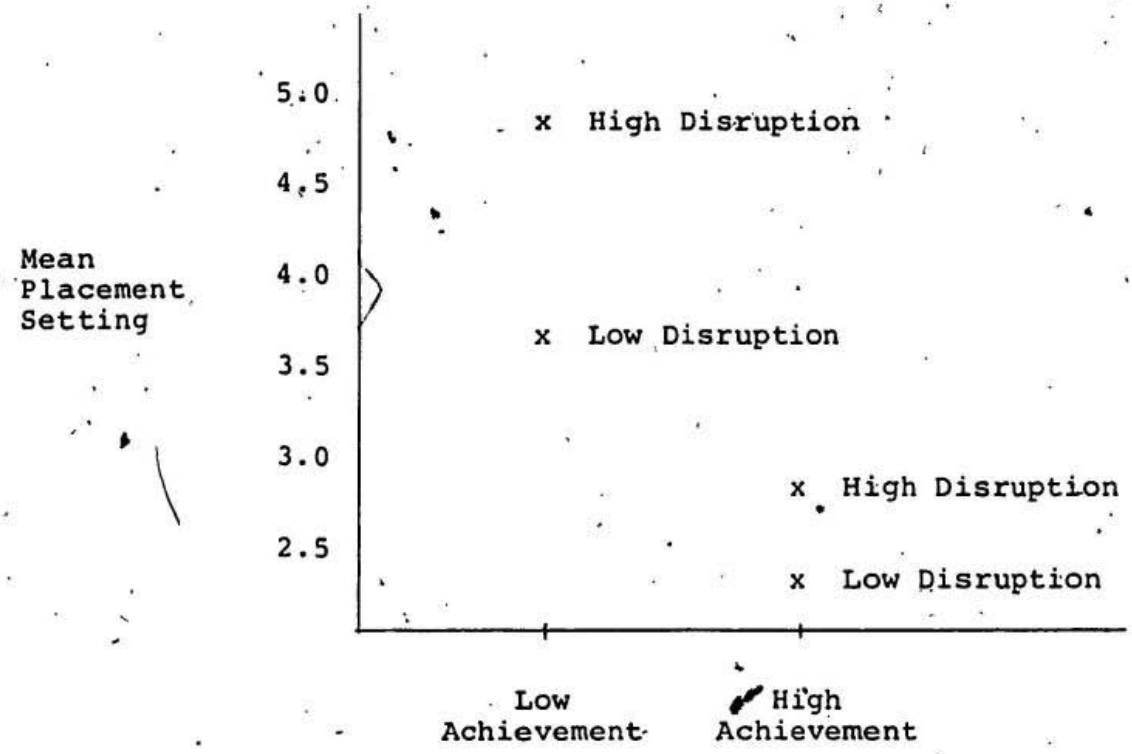

Figure 4-1: Placement of Low and High Disrupters by Low and High Achievers

Table 4-2

Analysis of Variance for Each of Teacher Sex (C), Level of Achievement (B), Student Sex (D), and Level of Disruptiveness (F)

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
Between subjects	180.4026	67	-	-	-
C	.09007	1	.09007	.03297	.856
S(G)	180.3125	66	.273201	-	-
Within subjects	1067.875	476	-	-	-
B	377.2224	1	377.2224	234.3460	.000***
CB	.66360	1	.66360	.41226	.523
B x S(G)	106.2390	66	1.60968	-	-
D	1.76654	1	1.76654	2.70289	.105
CD	3.72243	1	3.72243	5.69547	.020*
D x S(G)	43.13603	66	.65358	-	-
F	7.76654	1	7.76654	7.97033	.006***
CF	1.54596	1	1.54596	1.58652	.212
F x S(G)	64.31250	66	.97443	-	-
BD	2.00184	1	2.00184	1.05843	.307
CBD	2.79596	1	2.79596	1.47831	.228
BD x S(G)	124.8272	66	1.89132	-	-
BF	88.16360	1	88.16360	71.70357	.000***
CBF	.31066	1	.31066	.25266	.617

Table 4-2: Continued

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
BF x S(G)	81.15074	66	1.22956	-	-
DF	.31066	1	.31066	.35720	.552
CDF	.41360	1	.41360	.47557	.493
DF x S(G)	57.40074	66	.86971	-	-
BDF	.41360	1	.41360	.26777	.607
CBDF	1.76654	1	1.76654	1.14368	.289
BDF x S(G)	101.9449	66	1.54462	-	-
TOTAL	1248.278	543	-	-	-

* = .05
** = .01
*** = .001

Note from Table 4-2 that the BF and CD interactions are significant. Table 4-3 shows the breakdown of these interactions into simple main effects.

Table 4-3

ANOVA Table: Simple Main Effects

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	SIG.
Between D at C1	.18015	1	.18015	.27563	.601
Between D at C2	5.30882	1	5.30882	8.12273	.006**
Within cell	43.13603	66	.65358	-	-
Between F at B1	74.13235	1	74.13235	67.27	.000***
Between F at B2	21.79779	1	21.79779	19.78	.000***
Within cell	145.4632	132	1.10199	-	-
Between B at F1	415.0588	1	415.0588	292.37	.000***
Between B at F2	50.32721	1	50.32721	35.45	.000***
Within cell	187.3887	132		-	-

* = .05
** = .01
*** = .001

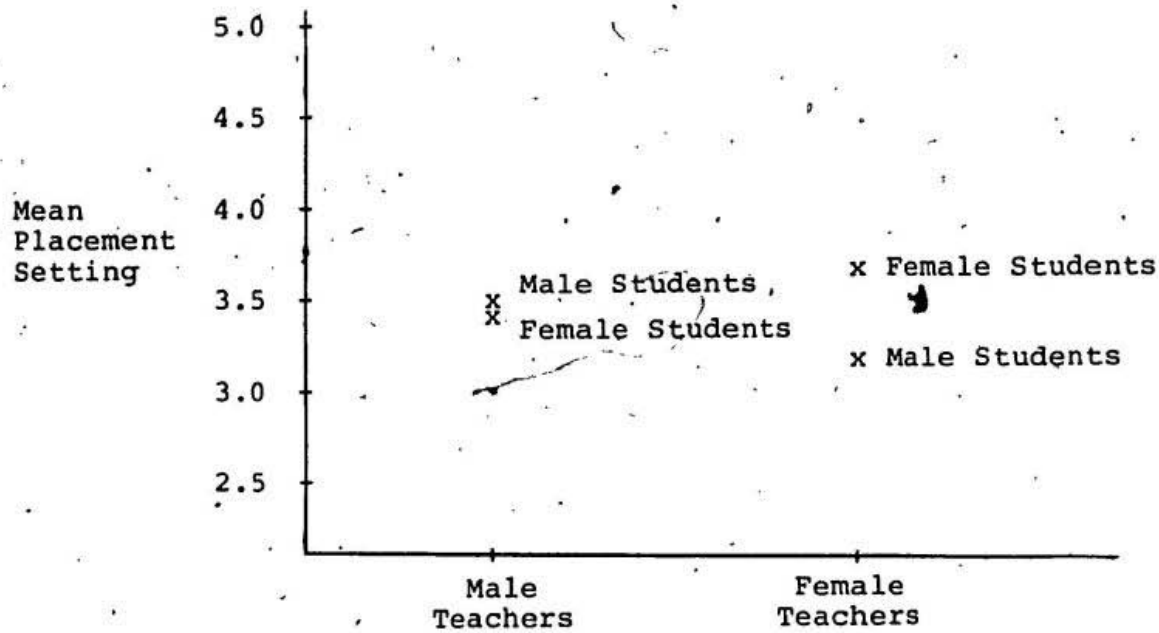

Figure 4-2: Placement of Male and Female Students by Male and Female Teachers

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The two original hypotheses posed in this study were not supported by the data; males were not generally assigned to more restrictive settings than females, and male teachers did not tend to recommend less restrictive settings for male students than did female teachers.

The secondary research question, regarding differential labeling of male and female students, was inappropriate for statistical analysis due to the fact that there were two statistically significant interactions found in the analysis.

Congruent with prior research (Hyde, 1975; Leitz and Gregory, 1978), achievement and disruptiveness do seem to be primary variables in the diagnosis of children referred for assessment. Specifically, these factors were significant determinants of placement. That is, topographies which reflected low achievement generally received more restrictive placement settings than did topographies which indicated that the child was a high achiever. However, the effect of the level of disruption on the suggested placement setting seems to indicate a tendency for disruption to act as a

a leveler or "equalizer," making teachers less certain as to which placement setting would be most appropriate for a particular child. Thus, although children who were classified as low achievers were always placed in a more restrictive placement setting than those regarded as high achievers, low achievers were placed less restrictively if they were high disrupters and high achievers were placed more restrictively if they were high disrupters. It seems, therefore, that teachers may give highly disruptive low achievers the "benefit of the doubt," perhaps feeling that these childrens' low levels of achievement are related (at least in part) to their disruptive nature. High achievers, on the other hand, may be seen as having no justification for disruptive behavior and thus are placed more restrictively than high achievers who are not causing disruption in the classroom. Within the context of sex role bias, a significant interaction was noted between students and female teachers: female teachers tended to recommend settings for female students which were much more restrictive than for male students. This tendency appears to be unsupported in the literature although one might speculate that, given male and female students with equivalent levels of achievement and disruptiveness, the females might tend to be discriminated against because females have traditionally

demonstrated accommodative, non-disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Thus, a disruptive female may be more visible than an equally disruptive male. This supposition is supported by the fact that disruptiveness appears to be the most significant factor affecting student referral (Lambert and Sandoval, 1980).

Why this differential is in evidence only with the recommendations by female teachers may be due, in part, to the low ratio of male teachers employed at kindergarten to grade six levels. This, however, is only speculation and cannot be supported by empirical evidence. Also, the ages and grades of the hypothetical children described in the behavioural topographies were not controlled. Since the only criteria for appropriate topographies were perceived achievement and disruptiveness, these factors should, perhaps, have been controlled when the topographies were generated.

Thus, while a sex role bias has been shown to exist in teachers' suggested placement decisions, it is in the opposite direction anticipated and can only clearly be shown to be evident with regard to female teachers.

Referring to the rational for this study and the review of the literature presented, it might be suggested that the results of this study may indicate that even though

achievement and disruptiveness were held constant, there may be other contributing factors affecting teachers' referral of their students, such as student sex, teacher sex, age, etc. Cumulatively, such factors may result in a higher number of males being referred for assessment than females, despite the apparent tendency of female teachers to recommend female students for more restrictive environments than they recommend for male students.

Additionally, the reader should bear in mind that this study utilized equal male/female ratios in the presentation of the topographies to the subjects, a behavioural equality that is not, as noted earlier in this paper, representative of actual levels of male/female achievement and disruptiveness found in the typical elementary classroom.

Perhaps, due to the more socially and institutionally acceptable behaviour of female students, teachers tend to look upon females less favourably than males given sufficiently low levels of achievement and high levels of disruptiveness. In such a situation, females would be more conspicuous due to their normally higher levels of achievement and lower levels of disruptiveness compared to male students. This possibility should be explored in future research.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A
FORM A

Directions

Teachers must deal with a wide variety of problems arising from the many different kinds of children with which they work. The following are brief descriptions of children who have been referred for assessment of a possible learning, behavioral or emotional disorder in the Avalon Consolidated School Board. For each student, you are to:

1. indicate, from the first list below, the diagnostic label which you feel best suits the child. You may suggest a diagnostic label of your own if you do not feel that a particular child is typified by any of the labels given.
2. indicate, from the second list below, what you feel would be the best educational setting at this time.

You would actually need more information before labeling or placing any of these students, but please make your best judgements based on the information provided. Please assume

that all of the placement settings are available locally and are adequately staffed; also assume that a child may move to another placement setting if the one which you choose becomes inappropriate after re-evaluation.

Thus, if you feel that the description of a child seems to suggest a learning disability, and, that part-time special class would be the best placement for the child at this time, you would indicate this in the spaces provided after each description.

Please work quickly, giving your "best guess" for each child. No action will be taken which affects these children based upon your responses.

Instructions

- Choose a diagnostic label for each student from the list below (or suggest a label of your own):

1. learning disabled
2. emotionally disturbed
3. hyperactive
4. behavior disorder
5. emotionally disturbed
6. severely emotionally disturbed
7. culturally disadvantaged

8. mental retardation

9. hearing-handicapped

10. multihandicapped

Place each child in one of the seven placement settings listed below, indicating your choice by number:

1. Regular Classroom- with some teacher-initiated intervention.

2. Consultation- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher (or parent) whenever needed.

3. Consultation and Direct Services- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher and provide short-term direct services to the student.

4. Resource Room- regular classroom with resource room services (special education teacher providing supplemental services and instruction) provided on a continuing basis in which the student can participate for as much as two hours each day.

5. Part-time Special Class- student enrolled in a special class for the majority of each day, but enters regular classroom for certain subjects.

6. Full-time Special Class- student assigned to a self-contained special class on a full-time basis.

7. Not- student placed at a special school or hospital program, treatment center, etc. because he or she cannot reasonably be handled within the context of regular or special public school education.

Your age:

Your sex:

Number of years teaching:

Grade you presently teach:

1. Jill is a seven year old in grade two. Academically, she ranks in the top ten per cent of her class. Dan interacts well with her peers, and is reported to be both a polite child and a generally diligent worker by her teacher. However, Jill often misunderstands verbal instruction, and frequently seems to be in a world of her own while doing her work. Jill also dislikes participating in group activities of a verbal nature.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

2. Tom continually disrupts his fifth grade class. He seems to be angry much of the time and often bullies smaller children. Although he is of average potential, he has little interest in his studies, and will almost certainly have to repeat fifth grade.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

3. Barbara is a ten year old in grade five. Her potential is well above average and her grades are generally excellent with the exception of an average mark in Social Studies, a subject which she considers "a waste of time". She rarely associates with her own classmates, preferring to mingle with the junior high school children instead. Barbara rarely pays attention in class, preferring to sleep or read science fiction novels. Classroom participation usually consists of interrupting both teachers and students with sarcastic comments. Barbara has accumulated more detentions for being late than any other child in the school, even though she lives less than one hundred yards from the building.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

4. Ray is a soft spoken nine year old in grade two. He has trouble understanding even simple directions and works very slowly. He usually cannot do assigned work. Ray interacts well with his friends, however, and all teacher reports on behavior seem to be very positive.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

5. Mary, aged eleven, is a two-time repeater with above average potential. She has great difficulty remembering material presented in a visual manner and, in spite of a great deal of remedial reading instruction, remains a non-reader. Mary does, however, behave in class and has a cheerful and compliant personality. Her teacher reports that "if it wasn't for her learning problems, I would never have to speak to her."

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

6. Dan is an eleven year old in grade six. His marks have been consistently high, and he is well liked by his classmates. Until recently he participated actively in classroom discussions, but lately he has become more and more withdrawn. His classmates report that he has been giving away many of his possessions, and that he is participating less in playground activity than he used to. Most recently, his teacher found him crying uncontrollably in the washroom although he denied that anything was wrong.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

7. Elizabeth, age eight, doesn't seem to acquire new skills as quickly as most, often needing to have instructions repeated several times. She gives up easily and requires a lot of personal attention. Elizabeth frequently has temper tantrums and has to be removed from the classroom for short periods of time. Her classmates seem to constantly make her a scapegoat.

Diagnostic Label:

Placement Setting:

8. Frank is a five year old in kindergarten. His attention span is very limited, and he must be watched constantly to ensure that he does not leave his seat and wander around. Frank's reading level is, however, two years ahead of his classmates'. When he does receive sufficient individual attention, he exhibits similarly superior levels in his other work as well. He seems to resent this attention, however, and is constantly distracting other children from their work by talking, fidgeting, throwing small objects, etc. He interacts well with other children outside of class, but his distracting behavior in the classroom setting is beginning to cause his popularity to wane.

Diagnostic Label:

Placement Setting:

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

Form B

Directions

Teachers must deal with a wide variety of problems arising from the many different kinds of children with which they work. The following are brief descriptions of children who have been referred for assessment of a possible learning, behavioral or emotional disorder in the Avalon Consolidated School Board. For each student, you are to:

1. indicate, from the first list below, the diagnostic label which you feel best suits the child. You may suggest a diagnostic label of your own if you do not feel that a particular child is typified by any of the labels given.

2. indicate, from the secoond list below, what you feel would be the best educational setting at this time.

You would actually need more information before labeling or placing any of these students, but please make your best judgements based on the information provided. Please assume

that all of the placement settings are available locally and are adequately staffed; also assume that a child may move to another placement setting if the one which you choose becomes inappropriate after re-evaluation. Thus, if you feel that the description of a child seems to suggest a learning disability, and that part-time special class would be the best placement for the child at this time, you would indicate this in the spaces provided after each description. Please work quickly, giving your "best guess" for each child. No action will be taken which affects these children based upon your responses.

Instructions

- Choose a diagnostic label for each student from the list below (or suggest a label of your own):

1. learning disabled
2. emotionally disturbed
3. hyperactive
4. behavior disorder
5. emotionally disturbed
6. severely emotionally disturbed
7. culturally disadvantaged
8. mental retardation

9. hearing-handicapped

10. multihandicapped

Place each child in one of the seven placement settings listed below, indicating your choice by number:

1. Regular Classroom- with some teacher-initiated intervention.

2. Consultation- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher (or parent) whenever needed.

3. Consultation and Direct Services- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher and provide short-term direct services to the student.

4. Resource Room- regular classroom with resource room services (special education teacher providing supplemental services and instruction) provided on a continuing basis in which the student can participate for as much as two hours each day.

5. Part-time Special Class- student enrolled in a special class for the majority of each day, but enters regular classroom for certain subjects.

6. Full-time Special Class- student assigned to a self-contained special class on a full-time basis.

7. Not- student placed at a special school or hospital program, treatment center, etc. because he or she cannot reasonably be handled within the context of regular or special public school education.

Your age:

Your sex:

Number of years teaching:

Grade you presently teach:

1. Dan is a seven year old in grade two. Academically, he ranks in the top ten per cent of his class. Dan interacts well with his peers, and is reported to be both a polite child and a generally diligent worker by his teacher. However, Dan often misunderstands verbal instruction, and frequently seems to be in a world of his own while doing his work. Dan also dislikes participating in group activities of a verbal nature.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

2. Mary continually disrupts her fifth grade class. She seems to be angry much of the time and often bullies smaller children. Although she is of average potential, she has little interest in her studies, and will almost certainly have to repeat fifth grade.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

3. Frank is a ten year old in grade five. His potential is well above average and his grades are generally excellent with the exception of an average mark in Social Studies, a subject which he considers "a waste of time". He rarely associates with his own classmates, preferring to mingle with the junior high school children instead. Frank rarely pays attention in class, preferring to sleep or read science fiction novels. Classroom participation usually consists of interupting both teachers and students with sarcastic comments. Frank has accumulated more detentions for being late than any other child in the school, even though he lives less than one hundred yards from the building.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

4. Jill is a soft spoken nine year old in grade two. She has trouble understanding even simple directions and works very slowly. She usually cannot do assigned work. Jill interacts well with her friends, however, and all teacher reports on behavior seem to be very positive.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

5. Ray, aged eleven, is a two-time repeater with above average potential. He has great difficulty remembering material presented in a visual manner and, in spite of a great deal of remedial reading instruction, remains a non-reader. Ray does, however, behave in class and has a cheerful and compliant personality. His teacher reports that "if it wasn't for his learning problems, I would never have to speak to him."

Diagnostic Label:

Placement Setting:

6. Elizabeth is an eleven year old in grade six. Her marks have been consistently high, and she is well liked by her classmates. Until recently she participated actively in classroom discussions, but lately she has become more and more withdrawn. Her classmates report that she has been giving away many of her possessions, and that she is participating less in playground activity than she used to. Most recently, her teacher found her crying uncontrollably in the washroom although she denied that anything was wrong.

Diagnostic Label:

Placement Setting:

7. Tom, age eight, doesn't seem to acquire new skills as quickly as most, often needing to have instructions repeated several times. He gives up easily and requires a lot of personal attention. Tom frequently has temper tantrums and has to be removed from the classroom for short periods of time. His classmates seem to constantly make him a scapegoat.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

8. Barbara is a five year old in kindergarten. Her attention span is very limited, and she must be watched constantly to ensure that she does not leave her seat and wander around. Barbara's reading level is, however, two years ahead of her classmates'. When she does receive sufficient individual attention, she exhibits similarly superior levels in her other work as well. She seems to resent this attention, however, and is constantly distracting other children from their work by talking, fidgeting, throwing small objects, etc. She interacts well with other children outside of class, but her distracting behavior in the classroom setting is beginning to cause her popularity to wane.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Validation 1

- Please classify each of these children into one of the following catagories, indicating your choice by number.

Catagories

1. Low disruptiveness, low achievement.
2. Low disruptiveness, high achievement.
3. High disruptiveness, low achievement.
4. High disruptiveness, high achievement.

- Can you suggest an example of a label which might apply to each child? Please indicate your suggestion after each child in the space provided.

1. Dan is a seven year old in grade two. Academically, he ranks in the top ten per cent of his class. Dan interacts well with his peers, and is reported to be both a polite child and a generally diligent worker by his teacher. However, Dan often misunderstands verbal instruction, and frequently seems to be in a world of his own while doing his work. Dan also dislikes participating in group activities of a verbal nature.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

2. Elizabeth is an eleven year old in grade six. Her marks have been consistently high, and she is well liked by her classmates. Until recently she participated actively in classroom discussions, but lately she has become more and more withdrawn. Her classmates report that she has been giving away many of her possessions, and that she is participating less in playground activity than she used to. Most recently, her teacher found her crying uncontrollably in the washroom although she denied that anything was wrong.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

3. Ray, aged eleven, is a two-time repeater with above average potential. He has great difficulty remembering material presented in a visual manner and, in spite of a great deal of remedial reading instruction, remains a non-reader. Ray does, however, behave in class and has a cheerful and compliant personality. His teacher reports that "if it wasn't for his learning problems, I would never have to speak to him."

   Category::

   Suggested diagnostic label:

4. Jill is a soft spoken nine year old in grade two. She has trouble understanding even simple directions and works very slowly. She usually cannot do assigned work. Jill interacts well with her friends, however, and all teacher reports on behavior seem to be very positive.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

5. Mary continually disrupts her fifth grade class. She seems to be angry much of the time and often bullies smaller children. Although she is of average potential, she has little interest in her studies, and will almost certainly have to repeat fifth grade.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

6. Tom, age eight, doesn't seem to acquire new skills as quickly as most, often needing to have instructions repeated several times. He gives up easily and requires a lot of personal attention. Tom frequently has temper tantrums and has to be removed from the classroom for short periods of time. His classmates seem to constantly make him a scapegoat.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

7. Frank is a ten year old in grade five. His potential is well above average and his grades are generally excellent with the exception of an average mark in Social Studies, a subject which he considers "a waste of time". He rarely associates with his own classmates, preferring to mingle with the junior high school children instead. Frank rarely pays attention in class, preferring to sleep or read science fiction novels. Classroom participation usually consists of interupting both teachers and students with sarcastic comments. Frank has accumulated more detentions for being late than any other child in the school, even though he lives less than one hundred yards from the building.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

8. Barbara is a five year old in kindergarten. Her attention span is very limited, and she must be watched constantly to ensure that she does not leave her seat and wander around. Barbara's reading level is, however, two years ahead of her classmates'. When she does receive sufficient individual attention, she exhibits similarly superior levels in her other work as well. She seems to resent this attention, however, and is constantly distracting other children from their work by talking, fidgeting, throwing small objects, etc. She interacts well with other children outside of class, but her distracting behavior in the classroom setting is beginning to cause her popularity to wane.

   Category:

   Suggested diagnostic label:

APPENDIX D

Appendix D

Validation 2

Directions

Teachers must deal with a wide variety of problems arising from the many different kinds of children with which they work. The following are brief descriptions of children who have been referred for assessment of a possible learning, behavioral or emotional disorder in the Avalon Consolidated School Board. For each student, you are to:

1. indicate, from the first list below, the diagnostic label which you feel best suits the child. You may suggest a diagnostic label of your own if you do not feel that a particular child is typified by any of the labels given.
2. indicate, from the second list below, what you feel would be the best educational setting at this time.
3. indicate, from the third list below, the category which you feel best suits the child.

You would actually need more information before labeling or

placing any of these students, but please make your best judgements based on the information provided. Please assume that all of the placement settings are available locally and are adequately staffed; also assume that a child may move to another placement setting if the one which you choose becomes inappropriate after re-evaluation. Thus, if you feel that the description of a child seems to suggest a learning disability, that part-time special class would be the best placement for the child at this time, and that he is a high disrupter, low achiever, you would indicate this in the spaces provided after each description. Please work quickly, giving your "best guess" for each child. No action will be taken which affects these children based upon your responses.

Instructions

Choose a diagnostic label for each student from the list below (or suggest a label of your own), indicating your choice by number:

1. gifted
2. learning disabled
3. behavior disorder

4. emotionally disturbed
5. severely emotionally disturbed
6. culturally disadvantaged
7. mental retardation
8. hearing-handicapped
9. speech-handicapped
10. multihandicapped

Place each student in one of the seven programs listed below, indicating your choice by number:

1. Regular Classroom- with some teacher-initiated intervention.
2. Consultation- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher (or parent) whenever needed.
3. Consultation and Direct Services- regular classroom with specialists available in the school to consult with teacher and provide short-term direct services to the student.
4. Resource Room- regular classroom with resource room services (special education teacher providing supplemental services and instruction) provided on a continuing basis in which the student can participate for as much as two hours each day.
5. Part-time Special Class- student enrolled in a special class for the majority of each day, but enters regular classroom for certain subjects.
6. Full-time Special Class- student assigned to a self-contained special class on a full-time basis.

7. Not- student placed at a special school or hospital program, treatment center, etc. because he or she cannot reasonably be handled within the context of regular or special public school education.

Place each child into one of the following categories, indicating your choice by number:

1. Low disruptiveness, low achievement.
2. Low disruptiveness, high achievement.
3. High disruptiveness, low achievement.
4. High disruptiveness, high achievement.

Your age:

Your sex:

Grade which you presently teach:

1. Dan is a seven year old in grade two. Academically, he ranks in the top ten per cent of his class. Dan interacts well with his peers, and is reported to be both a polite child and a generally diligent worker by his teacher. However, Dan occasionally misunderstands verbal instruction, and sometimes seems to be in a world of his own while doing his work. Dan also dislikes participating in group activities of a verbal nature, although he excels in and enjoys individual projects.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

2. Elizabeth is an eleven year old in grade six. Her marks are consistently high, and she is well liked by her classmates. Until recently she participated actively in classroom discussions, but lately she has become more and more withdrawn. Her classmates report that she has been giving away many of her possessions, and that she is participating less in playground activity than she used to. Most recently, her teacher found her crying uncontrollably in the washroom although she denied that anything was wrong.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

3. Ray, aged eleven, is a two-time repeater with above average potential. He has great difficulty remembering material presented in a visual manner and, in spite of a great deal of remedial reading instruction, remains a non-reader. Ray does, however, behave in class and has a cheerful and compliant personality. His teacher reports that "if it wasn't for his learning problems, I would never have to speak to him."

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

4. Jill is a soft spoken nine year old in grade two. She has trouble understanding even simple directions and works very slowly. She usually cannot do assigned work. Jill interacts well with her friends, however, and all teacher reports on behavior seem to be very positive.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

5. Mary continually disrupts her fifth grade class. She seems to be angry much of the time and often bullies smaller children. Although she is of average potential, she has little interest in her studies, and will almost certainly have to repeat fifth grade.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

6. Tom, age eight, doesn't seem to acquire new skills as quickly as most, often needing to have instructions repeated several times. He gives up easily and requires a lot of personal attention. Tom frequently has temper tantrums and has to be removed from the classroom for short periods of time. His classmates seem to constantly make him a scapegoat.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

7. Frank is a ten year old in grade five. His potential is well above average and his grades are generally excellent with the exception of a "B" in Social Studies, a subject which he considers "a waste of time". Classroom participation usually consists of interrupting both teachers and students with sarcastic comments, except on rare occasions when discussions focus on areas which seem to be of particular interest to him. Despite the fact that he is a high achiever, Frank has accumulated more detentions for being late than any other child in the school, even though he lives less than one hundred yards from the building.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category:

8. Barbara is a five year old in kindergarten. Barbara's reading level is three years ahead of her classmates', and she achieves higher grades than any other child in her class. However, she constantly distracts other children from their work by talking, fidgeting, throwing small objects, etc. She interacts well with other children outside of class, but her distracting behavior in the classroom setting is beginning to cause her popularity to wane.

   Diagnostic Label:

   Placement Setting:

   Category: