

## ABSTRACT

**DISSERTATION:** Implicit and Explicit Attitudes of Educators toward the *Emotional Disturbance* Label

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**PAGES:** 153

This study examined implicit and explicit attitudes of teachers toward the Emotional Disturbance (ED) label, the strength of association between implicit and explicit ratings, and the variance in attitudes between different types of teachers or among teachers in different settings. Ninety-eight teachers (52 regular education and 46 special education teachers), from a mix of urban and rural school districts in central Indiana, completed three computer-based attitudinal measures: an implicit association test (IAT), a Social Distance Scale (SDS), and the Scale of Attitudes toward Disabled Persons (SADP). Results indicated that teachers possess a significant preference for the category of Learning Disability (LD) compared to ED, and the correspondence between implicit and explicit attitudes toward those two labels was strong. This data supports the notion that the ED label is perceived far too negatively by educators to serve as an effective category of services for children with serious mental health issues.