According to the Italian educational system, students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBDs) are included in mainstream education and attend schools with other students. Along with learning difficulties, in the EBDs groups is common to observe disorders also in interpersonal and social interactions. Marras & Kutnick (1999) have found that students who experience emotional and behavioral difficulties (EBDs) are not properly identified; and, unfortunately, this results with a general lack of appropriate intervention programs and uncorrected explanation of causes leading to such behaviours.

When teachers are exposed to EBDs students their physical and emotional occupational resources depleted with a consequent general loss of satisfaction, impulsive feedbacks and feelings of anger and guilt (Van der Wolf & Everaert, 2003). In those cases, teacher stress (and burnout) represents empirical phenomena frequently associated with subsequent problems of health, retention of teachers and early retirement (Van der Wolf & Everaert, 2003).

This paper explores the representation of Italian in-service primary teachers (N = 518) describing the most challenging behaviors they deal with during their working time in a mixed-method framework. Data were gathered by using the Italian version of the Challenging Student Standard Questionnaire (CSSQ) (Addimando, 2010) and analyzed with statistical analysis of textual data. The questionnaire adopted the six-dimensional model of Brophy (1996) to classify six different ‘cluster’ of behaviors: against the grain, full of activity/easily distractible, weak student, easily upset, excessive perfectionism, aggressive/hostile. Such quantitative data has been used to categorized teachers’ answers to the first open ended question of the CSSQ (“Describe the behavior of the student you find most challenging in your class”) by applying plain frequency count and multiple correspondence analysis. The main results revealed some good overlaps between closed ended questions (items of the questionnaire) and the ideas “spontaneously” expressed by the teachers. The characteristics of the behaviors defining quantitative factors resembled the distribution of adjectives provided by teachers when describing similar behaviors in open ended questions. The correspondence analysis organized the textual corpus along two axes. The first dimension aligned behaviors ranging from neuroticism to learning difficulties and can be labeled as perception of willingfulness. Following the quantitative model from weak students to aggressive/hostile and against the grain , passing through excessive perfectionism, easily upset and full of activity/easily distractible.
The second dimension presented a very dense semantic cluster of behavior only at one end of the axis, thus this can be labeled *Disturbance of the teaching process*. This appears reasonable result given the fact that the question asked to describe a behavior capable of eliciting a sense of disturb of teaching processes.

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