

A Comparison Between M.Ed. and M.A.T. Students and Their Perceptions of At-Risk Students

By Stephanie Torlina

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Education

May 2017

Graduate Programs in Education  
Goucher College

## Table of Contents

List of Figures	i
List of Tables	ii
Abstract	iii
I. Introduction	1
Overview	1
Statement of Problem	2
Hypothesis	2
Operational Definitions	3
II. Review of the Literature	4
Defeated and Discouraged Learners	4
The Four Definitions why Students are At-Risk	5
Interventions	9
Conclusion	12
III. Methods	13
Design	13
Participants	13
Instrument	13
Procedure	13
IV. Results	14
V. Discussion	17
Implications of the Results	17
Threats to the Validity	18

Connections to Previous Studies	18
Implications for Future Research	18
Conclusion	19
References	20
Appendix A	23

## **List of Figures**

- |                                                                           |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Comparison between the type of student and who can be at-risk          | 14 |
| 2. Comparison between the type of student and at-risk family income level | 15 |

## **List of Tables**

- |                                                                                           |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Comparison between the type of student and criterion on identifying an at-risk student | 16 |
| 2. Comparison between type of student and the impact of at-risk identification            | 16 |

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the perception of an at-risk student differed when comparing the perspectives of M.Ed. and M.A.T. students. The measurement tool was a pen and paper questionnaire. This descriptive study involved comparing the respondent's answers concerning at-risk children from their developmental years through youth. The questionnaire resulted in perceptions being mostly the same aside from some differences concerning criterion in identifying at-risk children and the impact of at-risk identification. Research in the area of at-risk students should continue given that defeat and discouragement still exists in schools.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

Students who are potentially at-risk have had their development disrupted at some point in their life. At-risk is intended to reflect a temporary situation for the student. Risk factors are multi-faceted and include a variety of situations and conditions.

There are four definitions taken into consideration when identifying students at-risk. The first are characteristics of the individual. For instance, the student might have a physical or learning disability or mental illness that might prevent them being engaged academically. Second are environmental factors such as home life, the community and the schools. Third, the student fails to meet state or school standards for achievement. The last definition is the student is unable to assume adult roles, which could mean the ability to multi-task or be punctual for work.

At-risk students are widespread and their identification varies due to how at-risk is perceived. It is important to understand there are misconceptions regarding at-risk identification. Poverty is one disruptive factor; however, Rafferty and Griffin (2010) clarify that “. . . because poverty is associated with a multitude of risks (environmental, biological, psychosocial), it is one of the major environmental factors associated with developmental outcomes in young children” (p.146). A single risk factor does not necessarily result in a negative outcome.

According to Sagor and Cox (2004), there is a category of at-risk youth that was termed “defeated and discouraged learners” by teacher and educational consultant, Conrath. It is estimated by some that the defeated and discouraged learners represent eighty percent of the at-risk population. Discouraged learners do not associate effort and achievement. They see the

world around them as a place where they have little control; thus, success would be seen as luck and accomplishment seen a result of easy work.

The perceptions of the teachers matter. Hall et al. (2009) suggests that intellect provides children the capacity to cope with adverse situations. Traumatic stressors can cripple a child's ability to problem-solve; however, if positive role models and good cognitive development are sustained then a child's development will likely withstand adversity.

This researcher's interest stems from teachers and schools continued work of addressing the needs of all students. This includes potentially identifying at-risk factors, applying strategies and interventions, and assisting in diminishing student hindrances to allow for success.

It is important to identify children at-risk. For instance, Dowdy, Doane, Eklund and Dever (2011) report that there is approximately a ten-year treatment delay of mental disorders beginning in childhood. Therefore, it becomes problematic when symptoms of risk develop into disorders and thus are more challenging to treat. The likelihood of negative outcomes for children with emotional and behavioral problems is high because unfortunately many are not identified in time for appropriate interventions to mitigate their risk factors.

Since at-riskness varies for all children, so should interventions. "Self-efficacy may, like expectations for student success, be higher under conditions of perceived administrative and parent support" (Stipek, 2012, p.593).

### **Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the perception of an at-risk student differed when comparing the perspectives of M.Ed. and M.A.T. students.

### **Operational Definitions**

Students who are potentially at-risk have had their development disrupted at some point

in their life. When identifying students at-risk, the following are taken into consideration: individual characteristics, environmental factors, the inability to meet state and school standards for achievement, and not being able to assume adult roles later in life. The design sample groups were M.Ed. and M.A.T. graduate students at a private liberal arts college in suburban Maryland. The M.Ed. students were further defined as advanced teachers and M.A.T. students were further defined as beginning teachers. Perceptions between the M.Ed. and M.A.T. students were compared following the distribution of a pen and paper questionnaire.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

At-risk students exhibit various characteristics and patterns of behavior. One student can be perceived as at-risk and yet the very same student can be perceived as not at-risk due to differing perceptions and definitions of an at-risk student. The identification of at-risk students varies from schools to other societal institutions.

Some experts on the at-risk problem convey only the needs of children from poverty-stricken homes or abusive homes. Other experts solely focus on the needs of the handicapped. Yet, others are concerned that there isn't enough being done to assist the gifted to adequately develop their talents.

At-risk students may generally be perceived as students who are not experiencing success in school and are potential dropouts. They are low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem. Typically at-risk students are from low socioeconomic families. They tend not to participate in school activities and rarely identify with school. Absenteeism, truancy and disciplinary problems are common. Their peer relationships are usually problematic. Family problems, drug addictions, pregnancies, and other problems frequently prevent them from participating successfully in school. As the at-risk students experience failure and fall behind their peers, school is then portrayed as a negative environment that reinforces their low self-esteem.

#### **Defeated and Discouraged Learners**

According to Sagor and Cox (2004), there is a category of at-risk youth that was termed "defeated and discouraged learners" by teacher and educational consultant, Conrath. It is estimated by some that the defeated and discouraged learners represent eighty percent of the at-

risk population. Simplified, the most common characteristics of the defeated and discouraged learners are, low self-confidence and thus avoiders of adults and school, which starts in the early school years. They do not have a long-term, positive outlook and are generally distrustful of adults and adult institutions. By the time the discouraged learners reach middle school they perceive themselves as “dumb” and believe themselves incapable of learning new skills.

Although the parents of the discouraged learners do not generally approve of their children’s peer relationships, they are often adequate. There are defeated and discouraged learners that come from well-educated parents and the reasons why are generally unknown. The defeated and discouraged learners also come from fragile homes, whereby the parents often share similar characteristics of their children. Discouraged learners are often perceived as disruptive students as they have little patience with traditional instruction. They prefer and retain instruction with practical applications to which they can relate. Last, discouraged learners do not associate effort and achievement. They see the world around them as a place where they have little control; thus, success would be seen as luck and accomplishment seen a result of easy work. Consequently, it is difficult to discern why the defeated and discouraged learner is so challenging to help.

### **The Four Definitions why Students are At-Risk**

In identifying potential students at-risk, there are four definitions. The definitions are: 1) Characteristics of the individual; 2) Environmental factors; 3) Not meeting standards, and 4) Not able to assume adult roles later in life if current behaviors continue.

Definition number one (characteristics of the individual) pertains to what the child is born with such as learning disabilities, mental illness, and physical conditions or limitations. Zentall and Lee (2012) note that more than eighty percent of students that are identified with learning disabilities have reading disabilities which may further cause the at-risk student to be less

engaged academically. Reading disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD] are the top two disorders among students. Interestingly, Dowdy et al. (2011) report that there is approximately a ten-year treatment delay of mental disorders beginning in childhood. Therefore, it becomes problematic when symptoms of risk develop into disorders and thus are more challenging to treat. The likelihood of negative outcomes for children with emotional and behavioral problems is high because unfortunately many are not identified.

Copeland, Shanahan, Costello and Angold (2009) researched psychiatrically predictive configurations of psychosocial risk factors. Their conclusion is that certain risk configurations were specifically associated with psychiatric disorders. Children face psychosocial and physical conditions that lead to their psychopathology development. For example, a group of children may associate poverty with parental unemployment and a single parent family, whereas a different group of children may associate poverty with parental crime and mental illness.

Definition number two (environmental factors) may relate for example to home life, family size, the community or schools. Importantly, it is hard to predict which students will be negatively affected in school due to their environment. Sagor (1996) expresses resiliency as inherent characteristics that allow individuals to overcome adversity. Hall et al. (2009) suggests that intellect provides children the capacity to cope with adverse situations. Traumatic stressors can cripple a child's ability to problem-solve; however, if positive role models and good cognitive development are sustained then a child's development will likely withstand adversity.

High poverty schools are more likely to employ less qualified teachers, which consequently results in high turnover potentially creating an unstable school environment (Benner, Nelson, Sanders & Ralston, 2012).

According to the Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE] Early Learning Years Technical Team Report (2012), there are factors that disrupt a child's development, potentially placing them at-risk. The factors within the home and family include:

Parental indifference or neglect; Psychological and verbal abuse; Absence of routine; homelessness; Arbitrary rules with harsh punishments; Limited parent-child interaction; Overprotection; Home climates that do not value or involve children in the culture of literacy and learning; Parents who are chronically and seriously ill; Inappropriate adult models; and poverty. (p. 7)

Poverty is one disruptive factor; however, Rafferty and Griffin (2010) clarify that “. . . because poverty is associated with a multitude of risks (environmental, biological, psychosocial), it is one of the major environmental factors associated with developmental outcomes in young children” (p.146). Yet, regarding social disadvantage on a child's development, Hall et al. (2009) discover one of the findings of social risk with the greatest impacts came from a lack of stimulating learning activities that parents attempted with their children rather than from indicators of disadvantage or inequality.

Young children are totally dependent on others and living in poverty can greatly affect their basic needs. According to the MSDE Early Learning Years Technical Team Report (2012), health care factors that disrupt a child's development may be a lack of prenatal care, difficulty obtaining quality, comprehensive child health care and struggling with accessing family outreach programs.

Factors that disrupt a child's development in care and preschool programs according to the MSDE Early Learning Years Technical Team Report (2012) are as follows:

Focus on specific aspects of development; insensitive and unresponsive adults; lack of

nurturing, warmth, respect and affection; Absence of verbal interaction and involvement; Sterile environment with few toys, educational materials or equipment; inadequate planning and scheduling, few opportunities for first-hand involvement with materials and peers; excessive teacher-directed instruction; lack of parent involvement and support; High caregiver-child ratio; Lack of supervision and staff unknowledgeable about child development; unsafe physical environment; Lack of developmentally appropriate curriculum; and lack of accountability. (p.16)

The effects of the type of childcare may reflect the degree of family risk. Nonmaternal care in the preschool years could be a risk factor for children from supportive home environments as the maternal care may be better than the nonmaternal care; thus depriving the child of care from a resourceful parent. Also, preschoolers from high-income families who entered daycare their first year of life had lower reading recognition scores. Additionally, infants who experience nonmaternal care coupled with insensitive and nonresponsive mothers were more likely than not, to be insecurely attached, thus potentially at risk for disruptive behavior in preschool (Côté et al., 2008).

Definition number three (Not meeting standards) is simply that the student is not meeting the state or school standards for achievement. A couple of examples are school grades and state standardized tests. According to the MSDE In the Middle Technical Team Report (2012), the middle school at-risk students are typically identified as below grade level. The at-risk middle school students generally have attendance and behavioral problems related to their school failure. Interestingly, the report reflects that the perception of many middle schools is that they are simply a transition into high school and do not appropriately reinforce early adolescent development, which may result with students at-risk for school failure.

Definition number four (Not able to assume adult roles later in life if current behaviors continue) relates to the inability to multi-task or be on time for work. Other examples include, social intelligence and accountability for one's actions. The MSDE In the Middle Technical Team Report (2012) accordingly cites:

When middle learning year's students exhibit patterns of inappropriate behavior in school attendance, social behavior, school engagement, and/or academic achievement, they should be identified as at risk of not acquiring the skills they need to become productive members of society. (p.16)

The MSDE Bridge to the Future Technical Team Report (2012) states that the indicators for high school students at risk are those lacking in prerequisite knowledge to achieve graduation requirements and skills to succeed in an adult life. Behaviors that high school, at-risk students may exhibit are, fluctuating attendance, failing coursework, being disruptive, a lack of engagement in activities, drug and alcohol use, becoming a young mother, and initiating suicide.

### **Interventions**

At-riskness varies for all children as should interventions. According to Sagor and Cox (2004), there are dominant theories of at-riskness. The first theory is based on clinical pathology, which has a medical model and an environmental deficit perspective. The medical model would suggest there is a pathological cause for why the student is at-risk, either psychological or physiological. Interventions that fall under the medical model are counseling, school psychologists, and special education. The environmental deficit perspective suggests that the students' interactions with their immediate environment was such that it influenced and caused the student to become at-risk. Examples of interventions under this model involve school social workers who attempt to provide and encourage a more positive and appropriate

environment for the at-risk student. Institutional pathology is the second theory, which is based on the view that institutions have a significant role in the development of children's identity.

School and family are the two institutions that have the greatest impact on children.

Interventions are then directed toward improving or modifying the imperfect institution.

Lagana-Riordan et al. (2011) explored the perceptions of at-risk students attending a solution focused alternative school when compared to their experiences at former traditional schools. The student's perceived that their lack of achievement at the traditional schools was mainly due to poor teacher relationships. The students felt that most of their teachers were uncaring, thus the lack of individual attention. They also mentioned large class sizes, overcrowded schools and a focus on standardized testing as other contributing factors to their unsuccessful experiences. There were also other students who felt judged and labeled by their teachers in the traditional schools.

The cognitive dissonance theory gives insight as to why it is so challenging to conquer the at-risk status. Cognitive consonance operates to reinforce the at-risk behavior. There are three factors to the cognitive dissonance cycle: behavior, attitude and role. Initiating an intervention to attempt to change the behavior first will likely cause the student stress as the cycle is off balance. However, once the behavior is changed, the attitude should change along with a new positive role for the student. Thus, cognitive dissonance can more likely than not change the at-risk status of a student.

Benner, Nelson, Sanders and Ralston (2012) examined the effect of a behavior intervention for primary aged special education students with externalizing behavior disorders. They found that treatment responsiveness was related to the general socioeconomic level of schools and that the effects of treatment were influenced by the baseline level of problem

behavior.

Strong teacher-student relationships benefit student development. The presence of teacher support may encourage a student's enjoyment of school and assist students from being discouraged when their class is disrupted by other students with externalizing problems. Positive student-teacher relationships help to promote school engagement and achievement. Academically at-risk students may be more dependent on quality teacher-student relationships than their more academically capable classmates. Findings suggest that quality teacher-student relationships help to decrease academically at-risk students from school failure (Hughes, 2011).

Self-efficacy is important on perceptions of academic achievement. Hughes (2011) reviewed prospective studies that documented that improved perceptions of academic competence were predicted when elementary school aged children perceived positive peer relationships at school. Students' motivation to learn can be affected by teacher self-efficacy. Stipek (2012) supports that identifying factors that influence teacher self-efficacy are necessary because student academic achievement is connected to teacher self-efficacy. For instance, students who have low academic skills can be challenging to teach and some teachers have the belief that they do not have the capacity to overcome their low academic skills. Therefore, if teachers teach students who are stereotyped as such, low teacher-self efficacy may develop. Conversely, teachers with high self-efficacy tend to help students deal with their academic challenges and failures without judgment.

In support of teachers, "self-efficacy may, like expectations for student success, be higher under conditions of perceived administrative and parent support" (Stipek, 2012, p.593).

## **Conclusion**

All children at-risk have their development disrupted. Quality home learning experiences may help to diminish development disruptions and assist in closing the gap for school readiness, which in turn should decrease the number of young children identified as at-risk for academic achievement and potential negative behaviors.

There are misconceptions regarding at-risk identification. A common perception of at-risk students are children who live in poverty, when studies actually suggest that some students do well in school despite living in poverty, high crime areas, and attend schools that lack resources.

Risk factors are multi-faceted and include a variety of situations and conditions. A single risk factor does not necessarily elicit a negative outcome. There are biological, psychological, social and environmental forces that may affect at-risk children during their developmental periods.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

#### **Design**

This descriptive study surveyed M.Ed. and M.A.T. students and their perceptions of at-risk students. The responses from the questionnaire were reviewed. The perceptions of the two groups of teachers in the M.Ed. and M.A.T. graduate programs were then compared.

#### **Participants**

There were a total of 26 graduate students who responded to the questionnaire. Both female (73%) and male (27%) students participated. The M.Ed. (58%) and M.A.T. (42%) graduate students were from two class sections of a core course requirement of a private, liberal arts college in suburban Maryland.

#### **Instrument**

The instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 15 questions (see Appendix A). Since the questionnaire was created by the researcher on perceptions of M.Ed. and M.A.T. students as to what they perceived to be at-risk indicators for children, no reliability or validity testing was conducted.

#### **Procedure**

This was a pen and paper questionnaire that was distributed and collected in class and took 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire included basic questions such as the number of years teaching, whether a M.A.T. or M.Ed. student, their teaching interest in the county, city or rural areas, and multiple choice questions that best described the respondent's answers when asked about at-risk students and possible indicators. No respondent identifiers were obtained.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

There were a total of 26 graduate students who participated in the pen and paper questionnaire. Of the respondents, 35% had less than three years of teaching experience, 20% had between three and five years, 30% had more than five years, while 15% had no teaching experience. A majority (69%) of the students' teaching experiences were in counties, while 12% were in cities and 4% in rural areas. The main result inferred from the questionnaire was that the respondents had knowledge of who could potentially be identified as at-risk. The majority of the M.Ed. (93%) and M.A.T. (82%) students indicated they believed the basis for why students are identified as at-risk is due to having their development disrupted at some point in their lives (Figure 1). All of the M.Ed. (100%) and 73% of the M.A.T. graduate students believed that at-risk students can come from any family regardless of socioeconomic status (Figure 2).

Figure 1  
*Comparison between the type of student and who can be at-risk*

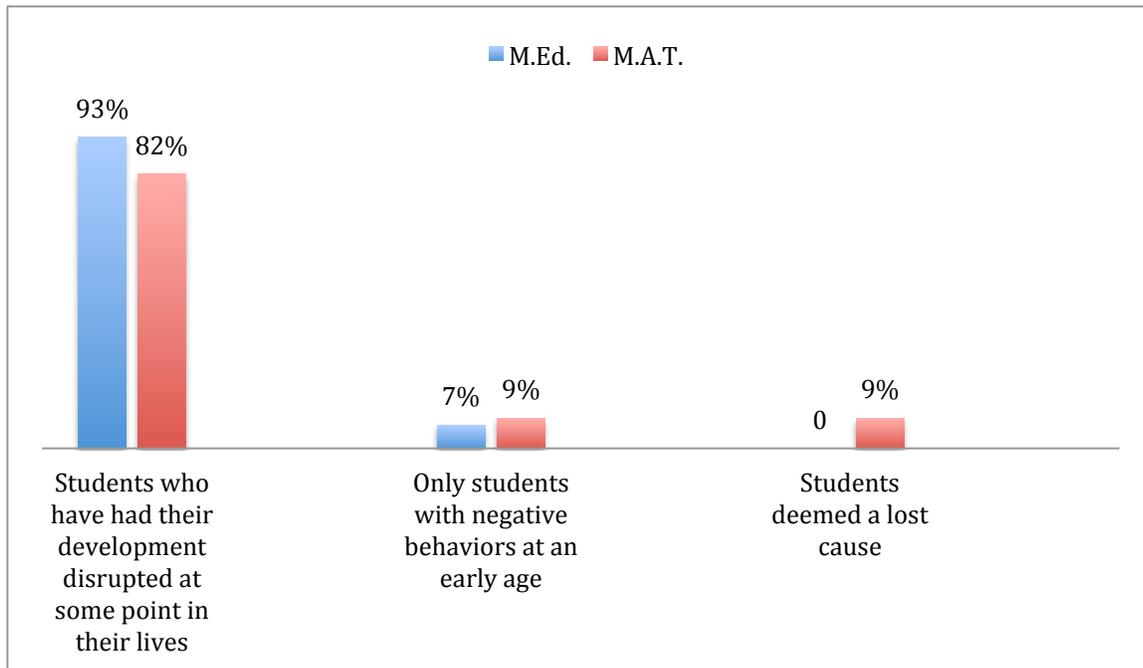
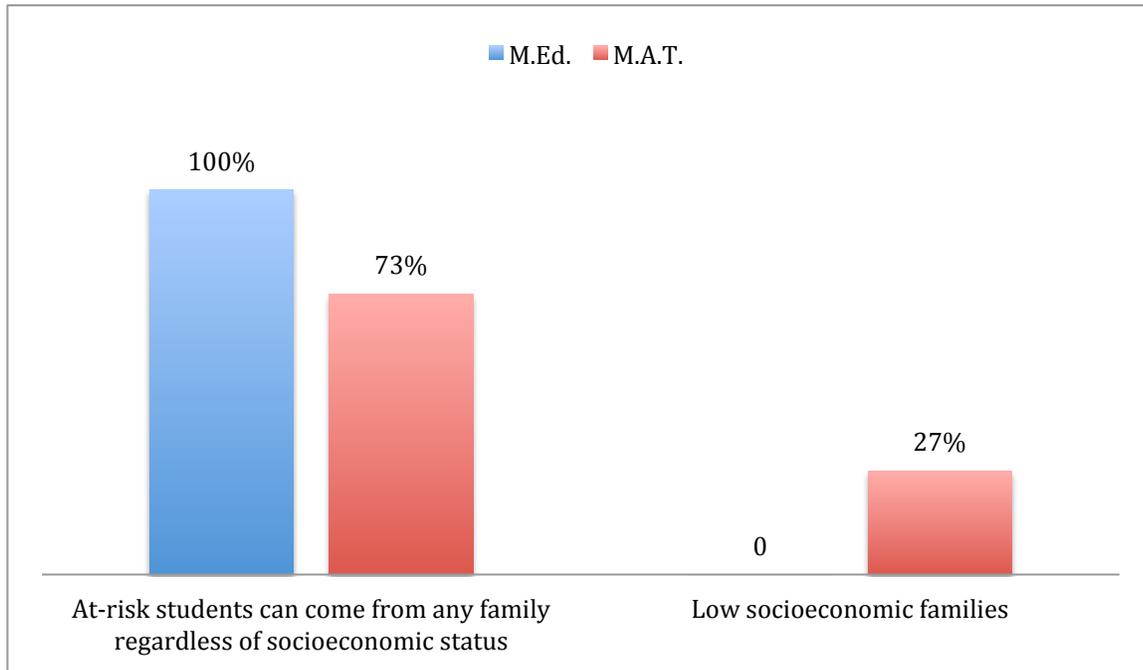


Figure 2  
*Comparison between the type of student and at-risk family income level*



The respondents all chose the same answer in two of the fifteen questions. The first was that infants could potentially exhibit at-risk behavior if their basic needs were not met. The second was that recognition of progress was an example of a strategy used to positively impact an at-risk student.

When the respondents were asked to identify potential at-risk behavior in middle school students, 100% of M.Ed. students responded peer pressures, while 4% of M.A.T. students said technology. Regarding gifted and talented students potentially being at risk, 93% of M.Ed. students agreed they could be at-risk if their talent was not being adequately developed, while 4% of the M.A.T. students said the students could potentially be at risk if their peers were not as smart.

All of the M.Ed. (100%) respondents and 82% of the M.A.T. students said the primary purpose in identifying students at-risk was to alleviate any obstacle that could hinder their

success, while 18% of M.A.T. students said the purpose was to document school records. All of the M.Ed. (100%) respondents and 91% of the M.A.T. students indicated that at-risk youth interventions should be provided by schools, peers, and communities, while 4% of the M.A.T. students said peers and communities should provide the interventions.

There were two questions that showed the widest gap selection between the perceptions of M.Ed. and M.A.T. students. First, 100% of the M.Ed. respondents thought a lack of attendance/truancy was a primary criterion in identifying an at-risk student. In contrast, only 55% of the M.A.T. respondents had the same perception (Table 1). Second, 67% of the M.Ed. respondents indicated that identifying students at-risk can potentially have both a positive and negative impact, while only 27% of the M.A.T. respondents agreed (Table 2).

Table 1:  
*Comparison between the type of student and criterion identifying an at-risk student*

	<b>M.Ed.</b>	<b>M.A.T.</b>
<b>Lack of attendance/truancy</b>	100%	55%
<b>Being poor</b>	0	27%
<b>Having a physical handicap</b>	0	18%

Table 2:  
*Comparison between type of student and the impact of at-risk identification*

	<b>M.Ed.</b>	<b>M.A.T.</b>
<b>Negative impact</b>	7%	0
<b>Positive impact</b>	27%	73%
<b>Positive and negative impact</b>	67%	27%

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Implications of the Results

The research question whether M.A.T. students would have differing perceptions of at-risk students than those of the M.Ed. students varied somewhat when the responses from the questionnaire were compared.

The results showed that a majority (89%) of the combined M.Ed. and M.A.T. students were aware that if a student was identified as at-risk, sometime in the student's life they experienced a disruption in their development. For example, poverty is one disruptive factor, however, Rafferty and Griffin (2010) clarify that "...because poverty is associated with a multitude of risks (environmental, biological, psychosocial), it is one of the major environmental factors associated with developmental outcomes in young children" (p.146). Yet, regarding social disadvantage on a child's development, Hall et al. (2009) discover one of the findings of social risk with the greatest impacts came from a lack of stimulating learning activities that parents attempted with their children rather than from indicators of disadvantage or inequality.

Interestingly, although a majority (89%) of the combined M.Ed. and M.A.T. students said that at-risk students come from any family regardless of socioeconomic status, only a few M.A.T. respondents suggested that at-risk students come from low socioeconomic families. According to Sagor and Cox (2004), the defeated and discouraged learners that are estimated to be 80% of the at-risk population, not only come from well-educated parents and the reasons are generally unknown, but they also come from fragile homes, whereby the parents often share similar characteristics of their children.

Overall, 89% to 100% of the total respondents, selected the same answers to questions

about who and what type of student is generally identified as potentially at-risk. The same percentage range of respondents also answered similarly to ‘what if’ questions that could potentially identify students at-risk. Additionally, the same percentage range of respondents recognized and answered a strategy that may provide a positive impact to at-risk students along with who should be responsible for providing at-risk youth interventions.

### **Threats to the Validity**

The threats to validity included a differential selection and no randomizing of the population. This impacted the study because the participants were selected from a class of Masters teachers and not randomly selected from a school with teachers. This descriptive study was not meant to provide directional conclusions.

### **Connections to Previous Studies**

“A Survey of Perceptions of At-Risk Students by Florida Secondary School Band Directors” by Shelby Chipman (2004) is a prior study that discusses the perceptions of at-risk students. In her dissertation, an extensive population was surveyed and there was validation and pre-testing unlike this researcher’s study. Additionally, the dissertation studied the perceptions of the school band directors whereas this researcher studied the perceptions of M.A.T. and M.Ed. students. Two similarities between the current study and Chipman’s study were writing about at-risk students and utilizing a survey questionnaire. Overall, the most similar acknowledgement in both studies was that a student may be potentially at-risk due to more than just one factor.

### **Implications for Future Research**

An implication for future research could be a precursor to quantitative studies. A larger population would be necessary in order for the researcher to make inferences of the larger group. All students deserve to feel and reach success as a student and today this goal is still a work in

progress.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the perceptions of M.Ed. and M.A.T. students with regard to whether identifying students at-risk could potentially be negative, positive or both were varying as was a primary criterion in identifying an at-risk student. The identification of at-risk students can differ from graduate students to teachers to schools based on experiences, observations, reading and learning. Importantly, the M.Ed. and M.A.T. students recognized that students identified as at-risk have had their development disrupted at some point in their lives and at-risk students come from all types of families regardless of their socioeconomic status.

## References

- Benner, G., Nelson, J., Sanders, E., & Ralston, N. (2012). Behavior intervention for students with externalizing behavior problems: Primary-level standard protocol. *Council for Exceptional Children, 78*(2), 181-198.
- Chipman, S. (2004). *A survey of perceptions of at-risk students by Florida secondary school band directors* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations. (Paper 3810).
- Copeland, W., Shanahan, L., Costello, E., & Angold, A. (2009). Configurations of common childhood psychosocial risk factors. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 50*(4), 451-459. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02005.x.
- Côté S., Borge, A., Geoffroy, M., Rutter, M., & Tremblay, R. (2008). Nonmaternal care in infancy and emotional/behavioral difficulties at 4 years old: Moderation by family risk characteristics. *Developmental Psychology, 44*(1), 155-168.  
doi:10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.155.
- Dowdy, E., Doane, K., Eklund, K., & Dever, B. (2011). A comparison of teacher nomination and screening to identify behavioral and emotional risk within a sample of underrepresented students. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 21*(2), 127-137.  
doi:10.1177/1063426611417627.
- Hall, J., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Batchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2009). The role of preschool quality in promoting resilience in the cognitive development of young children. *Oxford Review of Education, 35*(3), 331-352. doi:10.1080/03054980902934613.

- Hughes, J. (2011, September). Longitudinal effects of teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student relationship qualities on academic adjustment. *The Elementary School Journal*, *112*(1), 38-60.
- Lagana-Riordan, C., Aguilar, J., Franklin, C., Streeter, C., Kim, J., Tripodi, S., & Hopson, L. (2011). At-risk students' perceptions of traditional schools and a solution-focused public alternative school. *Preventing School Failure*. *55*(3), 105-114.  
doi: 10.1080/10459880903472843.
- Maryland State Department of Education. (2012). *Young children living in risky circumstances*. Technical Team Report. Baltimore, MD.
- Maryland State Department of Education. (2012). *In the middle*. Technical Team Report. Baltimore, MD.
- Maryland State Department of Education. (2012). *Bridge to the future*. Technical Team Report. Baltimore, MD.
- Rafferty, Y., & Griffin, K. (2010, June). Parenting behaviours among low-income mothers of preschool age children in the USA: Implications for parenting programmes. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, *18*(2), 143-157.  
doi:10.1080/09669760.2010.494428.
- Sagor, R. (1996, September). Building resiliency in students. *Educational Leadership*, *54*(1), 38-43.
- Sagor, R., & Cox, J. (2004). *At-risk students: Reaching and teaching them* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (Richard H. Adin Freelance Editorial Services, Eds.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Stipek, D. (2012, June). Context matters: Effects of student characteristics and perceived administrative and parental support on teacher self-efficacy. *The Elementary School Journal*, 112(4), 590-606.

Zentall, S., & Lee, J. (2012). A reading motivation intervention with differential outcomes for students at risk for reading disabilities, ADHD, and typical comparisons: “Clever is and clever does”. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 35(4), 248-259.

doi: 10.1177/0731948712438556.

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

1. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ student at Goucher College. Circle one.

M.Ed.          M.A.T.

2. I have \_\_\_\_\_ years as a classroom teacher. Circle one.

Less than 3 years      3 - 5years      More than 5 years

3. The area of the state I have taught in or am teaching in is \_\_\_\_\_. Circle one.

City          County          Rural          None

4. If I answered none above, then the area I desire or will teach in is \_\_\_\_\_. Circle one.

City          County          Rural

5. I am \_\_\_\_\_. Circle one.

Male          Female

In the following statements, please circle the letter that best reflects your opinion.

6. Students who are identified as at-risk are:

- A. Students who are deemed a lost cause
- B. Only those students with negative behaviors at an early age
- C. Students who at some point have their development disrupted

7. Identifying students at-risk can potentially have a:

- A. Negative impact
- B. Positive impact
- C. Positive and negative impact

8. At-risk students come from:

- A. Low socioeconomic families
- B. High income families
- C. All types of families regardless of income level

9. Infants could potentially exhibit at-risk behavior if:
- A. Basic needs are not met.
  - B. They are over fed.
  - C. They are exposed to stimulating activities.
10. Gifted students could be at-risk if:
- A. They are too silly in class
  - B. Their talent is not being adequately developed
  - C. Their peers are not as smart
11. Middle school students can be pushed toward at-risk behavior from:
- A. Mentors
  - B. Peer Pressures
  - C. Technology
12. The primary purpose in identifying students at-risk is:
- A. To document school records
  - B. To share with teachers, but do nothing
  - C. To alleviate any obstacle that hinders success
13. A primary criterion in identifying an at-risk student is:
- A. Lack of attendance/truancy
  - B. Being poor
  - C. Having a physical handicap
14. One example of a strategy used to positively impact an at-risk student is:
- A. Recognition of progress
  - B. Point out their mistakes
  - C. Be more strict with the student
15. At-risk youth interventions should be provided by:
- A. Peers and communities
  - B. Schools
  - C. Schools, peers and communities
  - D. No interventions should be provided

