

2021 Small Island States Report / Get to know / Teachers / Student difficulties perceived by the teacher / Comparison to student-reported difficulties

Comparison to student-reported difficulties

Table TT2.6 contrasts teacher and student responses to four similar items. Note that, while the items explored the same difficulties, they were worded differently and were on different scales. Teachers were asked to assign each issue to a series of five experience buckets, while students were asked to indicate how often they were experiencing the same issues on a four-point scale. The scales, therefore, are different, which complicates comparison. However, they are sufficiently similar to allow exploration of common and divergent perceptions across student and teacher respondents.

Table TT2.6

Percentages of students experiencing particular difficulties as reported by students and identified by teachers

Student Difficulties	%	Difference	%	Teacher Difficulties
Year 4				
Concentrating and focusing your attention	23%		42%	Difficulty focusing attention and concentrating
Controlling your behaviour	27%		41%	Behavioural difficulties
Hungry	31%		13%	Hunger
Tired	30%		21%	Lack of sleep
Year 6				
Concentrating and focusing your attention	20%		40%	Difficulty focusing attention and concentrating
Controlling your behaviour	22%		39%	Behavioural difficulties
Hungry	34%		13%	Hunger
Tired	36%		18%	Lack of sleep

Percentages of students experiencing particular difficulties as reported by students and identified by teachers

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

On average, teachers in Small Island States reported larger proportions of students experiencing behavioural issues and attention issues than students reported themselves, and much smaller proportions of hunger and tiredness than students reported themselves.

What does this mean?

Teachers observed a substantial minority of their students experiencing difficulties in their learning. Of these, teachers identify behavioural and cognitive difficulties as the most common.

Teachers' responses cannot be directly compared to students' responses in similar areas but when looked at together, it is clear that there is a range of behavioural and physiological difficulties experienced by a substantial minority of students. Teachers tended to report higher proportions of behavioural and cognitive difficulties and lower proportions of physiological difficulties than the students reported themselves.

It may be that students and teachers have different perspectives on what constitutes behavioural issues, and students may be less likely to recognise their behaviours as problematic. It may also mean that teachers are less able to identify physiological difficulties in their students.