The Relationship of Teacher Efficacy, Teacher Experience, and Teacher Grade Level Within the Implementation Process of Behavioral Interventions

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHER EFFICACY, TEACHER EXPERIENCE, AND
TEACHER GRADE LEVEL WITHIN THE
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education
The University of Mississippi

by

IRENE WALTON TURNAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teacher efficacy, years of teaching experience, and grade level taught in three school districts in north Mississippi. The study used a mixed method research design that included a QUAN qual process for data analysis. As part of the design, quantitative data collection was the priority method for the study followed by qualitative data collection to continue to explore the results from the quantitative section.

For the quantitative portion of the study, participants included 123 elementary, middle, and high school teachers who completed the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale to measure teacher efficacy. For the qualitative portion of the study, participants in the study included six principals who completed interviews to clarify information obtained from the quantitative section of the study which evaluated teacher efficacy from the leadership perspective.

The data analysis for the study included a 2-way ANOVA. Analysis results showed that there was no significant difference between teacher efficacy, years of teaching experience, and grade level taught. In addition, there was no significant interaction between the two independent variables, years of teaching experience and grade levels taught. The study did reveal, however, significance approaching in the area of grade level taught. Further analysis indicated that the difference in teacher efficacy scores for elementary and high school teachers was approaching significance. As a result, the qualitative portion of the study was followed by completing interviews with elementary and high school principals to explore this finding in more detail.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to two of the most important people in my life and my two biggest supporters: my loving and wonderful husband, Cravin, and my precious daughter Ashley. I am blessed to have their unconditional love and support.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my family, which includes my mother, two sisters and seven brothers. I thank my mother for showing me every day how to be strong despite enormous challenges and my sisters and brothers for being my family and my friends.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all of my fellow educators and friends who fight the battle with me every day to provide a quality education to the children we serve. I hope this dissertation serves as an example of the many difficult but rewarding tasks we can complete if we keep our eyes on what is most important.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am able only through him that strengthens me.

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I would like to give special thanks to the members who agreed to serve on my dissertation committee. Each member gave me a special type of support that, when combined, provided everything I needed to complete this journey. I would like to thank Dr. Lori Wolff who provided essential statistical support and feedback as well as a lot of patience. She brought clarity when I had none. I will never forget her patience and continued support. I would also like to thank Dr. Dennis Bunch for providing a balance of specific feedback and continuous encouragement with a clear understanding of the K-12 issues involved in the study. His assistance was invaluable. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Susan McClelland for providing critical and timely feedback and helping me to see this project through to the end.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Student behavior is one of the greatest challenges facing educators today, and it is one of the factors having the most impact on student achievement (Geiger, 2000; Marzano, 2003; Rose & Gallup, 2001; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). The types of problem behavior exhibited by many students in traditional classrooms have escalated from minor incidences like talking and chewing gum to major infractions like defiance, disrespect, and other disruptive behaviors that interfere with instruction and the learning environment (O’Neill, 1994). Most traditional discipline models, designed around low incidences of problem behavior and based on a one-size-fits-all method for students, have proven ineffective for major behavior infractions (Buck, Polloway, Kirkpatrick, Patton, & Fad, 2000). For example, two traditional discipline models, the Redl and Wattenburg Discipline Model and the Kounin Discipline Model, focus more on group behavior management than addressing the needs of students needing additional behavior support (Charles, 2002; Hendrickson, Gable, Conroy, Fox, & Smith, 1999). More importantly, the need for behavioral interventions has become so important the state of Mississippi has developed policies mandating classroom teachers and school teams to conduct tiered interventions when students do not respond to traditional strategies used in schoolwide plans (Mississippi Department of Education [MDE], 2010). Classroom teachers must have knowledge of diverse behavioral interventions and demonstrate willingness to implement them.

Statement of the Problem

Classroom teachers deliver instruction to students who exhibit a wide range of behavior
(Myers & Holland, 2000). Traditional discipline methods, based on schoolwide applications, are having little impact for some students on deterring subsequent problem behavior or replacing problem behavior with acceptable behavior. In fact, many models used in classrooms today address inappropriate behavior only after the student has misbehaved (Christensen, Young, & Marchant, 2007; Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007). For example, the Assertive Discipline Model, one of the most widely used behavior management models in schools today, addresses the behavior only after inappropriate behavior has taken place (Canter, 1988). In the Assertive Discipline Model, a student is given a number of consequences increasing in severity each time inappropriate behavior is demonstrated. It is important to note the same consequences are used for all students, regardless of the misbehavior.

Behavior and classroom management continue to have a major impact in the educational environment and on student achievement (Sugai, 1990). In the educational arena, schools have moved from the teacher arbitrarily administering disciplinary consequences to schoolwide models and safety plans to manage student behavior (Colvin & Kameenui, 1993; Crimmins & Farrell, 2006; Demartin-Scully, Bray, & Keble, 2000). However, research shows schoolwide discipline plans are not effective for a small percentage of students. Today, the behavior management framework in schools requires supplemental strategies in addition to schoolwide plans to assist teachers with managing student behavior and staying in compliance with state mandates. Sugai suggests traditional strategies yield only short-term results, and in many cases, reinforce the problem behavior. Furthermore, many students who demonstrate problem behavior are not responsive to traditional behavior management techniques. In fact, research suggests that for up to 20% of students in the average general education classroom, schoolwide discipline plans are not effective (Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior [IVBD], 1999). In
addition, individual behavior plans will be necessary for the small percentage of students do not respond to schoolwide discipline models (George, White, & Schlaffer, 2007). Individual behavior plans with specific interventions will allow teachers to meet the unique behavioral needs of students and provide an environment that is conducive to all students’ learning.

Teacher efficacy plays a significant role in the implementation process for behavior interventions. Teacher efficacy is the teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). When a teacher believes she can be successful at a task, the teacher is more likely to attempt the task. Teaching efficacy represents the teacher's belief that he or she can overcome factors external to the teacher, such as the students’ home environment, and a teacher's belief he or she can personally affect changes in students (Tournaki & Podell, 2005). This is very important when implementing behavioral interventions. The teacher must believe his or her actions can make a difference in the behavior intervention process. Attitude possesses both cognitive and emotional components (Fazio & Roskes, 1994). Specifically, attitude can be defined as a consistent tendency to react in a particular way, often positively or negatively, toward any matter. Additionally, attitudes are important to educational psychology because they strongly influence social thought and the way an individual thinks about and processes social information. According to Eggen and Kauchak (2001), positive teachers’ attitudes are fundamental to effective teaching and to implementing strategies and processes. The teacher must be willing to attempt the strategy and give the strategy an opportunity to be successful. Furthermore, teachers’ attitudes and beliefs are known to influence their management strategies in the classroom (Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989;
Nader, 1984; Smith, 2000; Winter, 1995). Teachers’ attitudes will play a major role in the
effective implementation of behavioral interventions.

Teachers have always managed student behavior. In the past, student infractions that
were most often corrected in the general education setting included behaviors like talking,
chewing gum, running in the halls, making noise, and getting out of line (O’Neill, 1994). These
behaviors were minor and caused little disruption to classroom instruction. Today, the impact of
severe student behaviors like defiance, disrespectfulness, and rudeness appear on a daily basis
(Higgins, Williams, & McLaughlin, 2001). In addition, teachers are responsible for educating a
more diverse group of students. Special needs students, students coming from homes with
societal issues that impact learning like poverty and teenage parents, and students with attention
deficit problems are just some of the students educated in the general classroom setting (Stahr,
Cushing, Lane, & Fox, 2006). Despite the increased severity of the behaviors and the greater
variation in the types of students educated in the general setting, teachers are still using
traditional methods of behavior management as those developed by Kounin (1970) and Redl and
Wattenburg (1959) designed for less severe infractions methods that may be antiquated and
ineffective today. Faced with a more diverse group of students than ever before, teachers must
find a way to effectively instruct every child while maintaining an environment conducive to
learning.

Classroom teachers must be able to address a variety of discipline problems and
implement effective behavior interventions if they are going to maintain an environment
conducive to learning. Outdated methods of dealing with student behavior combined with a lack
of effective training through systematic staff development have left the classroom teacher
without needed strategies to properly deal with individual student misbehavior and help the
student replace inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior that serves the same purpose (Hendrickson et al., 1999). Furthermore, implementing effective behavior interventions are a requirement of the state of Mississippi as part of the Teacher Support Team (TST) and Response to Intervention Process (RTI) (MDE, 2010). Classroom teachers must believe they have the ability to effectively implement behavior interventions for students who do not respond to schoolwide plans, and they must be willing to implement interventions in a timely manner.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to investigate the relationship between the years of teaching experience, grade levels, and teacher efficacy in three school districts located in rural educational settings in Mississippi. The independent variables are years of teaching experience and grade levels taught, and the dependent variable is teacher efficacy. For the independent variable years of teaching experience, the study included teachers with less than five years of teaching experience and teachers with five or more years of teaching experience. Research suggests that experienced teachers are those with at least five years of experience (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain 1998). The benefits of experience, however, appear to level off after five years, and studies suggest that there are no noticeable differences, for example, in the effectiveness of a teacher with five years of experience versus a teacher with 10 years of experience (Darling-Hammond, 1998). For the independent variable grade levels taught, elementary grade levels included grades kindergarten through fifth; middle school grade levels included grades sixth through eighth; and high school grade levels included grades nine through twelve.

The modified version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, developed by Tschannen-Morgan and Hoy (2001), was used in the study. The survey collected data about the role
efficacy plays in the implementation process for behavior interventions. The first section of the survey involves teacher efficacy measures in the areas of student engagement. The second section of the survey measures if the teacher can effectively instruct students. The third section of the survey involves classroom management and measures if the teacher believes he or she can make a difference with behavior problems that occur in the classroom on a daily basis. The final section of the survey is a modification to the original survey and focuses on the teacher’s beliefs regarding implementing behavioral interventions.

An integrative approach of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used as part of this mixed method study. The research design included a QUAN → qual process for data analysis. As part of the design, quantitative data collection was the priority method for the study, followed by qualitative data collection to continue to explore the results from the quantitative section (Creswell, 2008). The quantitative data was obtained from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. Once the results of the survey were analyzed, the qualitative data in the study was used to align and explore information found in the quantitative portion of the study. The qualitative portion of the study was completed by conducting principal interviews related to teacher efficacy and implementing the behavior intervention process. The findings from both methods were synthesized in order to present information in a manner consistent with the design.

The study included three school districts in Mississippi. All districts in the study were located in rural settings in north Mississippi. For the purpose of this study, rural education districts were defined as districts that received Title VI Rural Education funding through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE, 2010).

**Hypotheses in the Study:**

The following null hypotheses were used to guide the quantitative section of the study:
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by years of teaching experience (less than five years and five years or more) in rural school districts in north Mississippi.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by grade level [elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high (9-12)] in rural school districts in north Mississippi.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant interaction between years of experience and grade levels for teachers in rural schools in north Mississippi.

The following research questions were used to guide the qualitative section of the study:

1. How was the behavior intervention process established and how is it implemented?
2. What influence does teacher efficacy have on the implementation process for behavior interventions?
3. What does your school do to enhance teacher efficacy toward implementing behavioral interventions?

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to the study. One limitation of the study is the researcher completed the study in only three school districts in north Mississippi. The schools in the study are located in the Mississippi Delta, a highly impoverished area that consistently faces issues related to teacher quality. District size was another limitation of the study. The districts involved in the study range from 891 to 1,319 students. The results may not generalize to other populations.

Significance of the Study

The role of teacher efficacy in the implementation of the behavioral interventions is essential with the diverse population found in classrooms today and the increase in disruptive behaviors occurring. Teachers’ beliefs that they can effectively implement behavior
interventions and their willingness to implement the interventions will play a major role in the classroom teacher implementing the intervention, meeting the needs of students so they can remain in the classroom, and meeting the requirements of the Teacher Support Team and Response to Intervention Process which are requirements for all schools in the state of Mississippi (MDE, 2010).

Summary of the Study

Implementing behavioral interventions for students that do not respond to schoolwide interventions is required by all schools in Mississippi as part of the Teacher Support Team. The intervention process, Response to Intervention (RTI), is crucial for maintaining a classroom conducive to learning (MDE, 2010). Teacher efficacy, the teacher’s belief he or she can perform the task, will play a major role in the implementation process. This study investigated the relationship between years of experience, grade level, and teacher efficacy. The interaction between the two independent variables, years of teaching experience and grade levels also will be examined.

Organization of the Study

There are five chapters in this study on the impact of teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level upon the implementation of the behavioral intervention process. Chapter I includes an introduction of the study. This chapter explains the need for the study and outlines the major points and concepts. Chapter II provides a thorough review of the relevant literature. The chapter provides the reader with background information on research in traditional models for addressing student behavior, the need for new approaches for dealing with student behavior on a more individualized basis, and the importance of early intervention. Chapter III discusses the methods and procedures used to conduct the study. The research design used for the study,
participants involved in the study, instruments used to gather the data in the study as well as a breakdown of the procedures completed as part of the study are outlined for the reader. Chapter IV includes an analysis, summary, and discussion of findings from the study. The research questions designed to organize and guide the study are addressed in this chapter as well as major points emphasized by the researcher. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the research, addresses the conclusion of the study, and makes recommendations for further research implications. These perspectives ascertain suggestions for subsequent steps in order to continue research on this important topic.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of related literature relevant to this study. The first section provides a review of the foundation of behavior analysis and management. The second section discusses traditional school discipline models related to behavior management used in the educational setting. The third section focuses on the essential components of an effective individual behavior management plan using functional behavior management strategies and behavior interventions developed with those strategies. The fourth section describes the concept of efficacy and reviews the literature on the impact of teacher efficacy on the educational setting, and the final section provides an overview of rural and small town educational settings and the challenges they currently face.

The History of Behavior Management

The trends in behavior analysis and management have continued to develop and change over the last century (Kazdin, 1980). At one time, it was believed that little could be done to impact inappropriate behavior. Traditionally, abnormal behaviors studied in psychology and psychiatry were believed to be a result of underlying processes stemming from disease and were treated from a medical standpoint (Craighead, Kazvin, & Mahoney, 1981). Specifically, biological and physiological causes were generally considered the main reasons for unacceptable behaviors. However, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century would uncover a new way of looking at the causes and treatment of maladaptive behaviors, rejecting the traditional approaches (Kazdin). Behavior could be treated and an
impact could be made to improve inappropriate behavior. A different method, known today as behavior modification, would emphasize conceptual and methodological advances and would be characterized by objective research methods and experimentation (Craighead et al.). Prior to these advances and behavior modification as we know it today was the work of two men who would help lay the foundation for modern behavior analysis, Edward L. Thorndike and Ivan P. Pavlov (Fantino & Logan, 1979; Kazdin). These two men would have an enormous impact on the field of behavioral analysis.

Edward L. Thorndike, a prominent American psychologist, was one of the first individuals to make a significant contribution in the field of behavior analysis by conducting an experiment using a group of cats near the end of the nineteenth century (Fantino & Logan, 1979). Thorndike placed the cats in boxes that would have to be unlatched before they could reach food placed outside the boxes. Thorndike discovered that continuous attempts by the cats to get food began with many unrelated responses to reach the food but was eventually narrowed down to the response that was most effective in obtaining the food (Wielkiewicz, 1986). In addition, the more experiments were conducted, the number of trials decreased to the correct response at a faster rate. Thorndike theorized that learning took place by connecting responses to various stimulus conditions (Kazdin, 1980). Furthermore, when satisfaction followed responses made by the cats, the response was more likely to recur in the same situation. However, when the response was followed by dissatisfaction, the response was less likely to recur in the same situation. Thorndike referred to this discovery as the Law of Effect which suggests that the probability of a response can be changed based on strengthening or weakening the relationship between the stimulus and the response; simply stated, Thorndike found that behavior is affected in a predictable manner by its consequences (Kazdin; Wielkiewicz). Thorndike’s work is
relevant to this study because it formed the basis of modern principles of child behavior management and behavior management strategies used today (Wielkiewicz).

Ivan P. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, is also credited with having a great impact on the field of behavior analysis around the same time as Thorndike (Kazdin, 1980). The experiments completed by Thorndike helped change the way behavior management was approached. Pavlov discovered the process of classical-conditioning, which is still prevalent in behavior management today (Axelrod & Hall, 1999). Basically, classical conditioning is the process by which a neutral stimulus acquires the ability to solicit a response. Pavlov’s research is significant because he used a bell, an object that originally could not elicit a response from a group of dogs, to eventually elicit salivation. The bell alone did not elicit salivation. However, when food was given to the dogs immediately following the ringing of the bell, the dogs eventually began to salivate just by hearing the sound of the bell (Axelrod & Hall). Thus, Pavlov’s work showed respondent behaviors, or involuntary behaviors, can be elicited just by the presence of a stimulus that has been paired with a certain event. Axelrod and Hall suggest that examples of respondent behaviors occur in the classroom everyday; stimuli like continuous degradation and criticism from a teacher may elicit strong emotional responses from students, causing them to become sick or nervous in the presence of the teacher or upon entering the doors of the school.

Understanding how stimuli affect student behavior is key to developing interventions. Pavlov’s famous study involving classical conditioning is relevant to behavior management because it promoted the objective and observable aspects of behavior analysis (Lewis-Palmer, 1986). By observing the behavior and stimuli impacting the behavior, a more specific and individualized plan can be developed to improve the behavior.
Behavior modification in America began with John B. Watson in 1912 (Fantino & Logan, 1979; Kazdin, 1980; Lewis-Palmer, 1986). Watson focused on evidence and how the stimulus and response research could be used to have the greatest impact on behavior. Watson’s emphasis on methodology and scientific approach to the study of behavior is the reason he is known as the founder of behavior modification (Craighead et al., 1981). Prior to Watson, the observation and monitoring of specific behavior was completed differently. Watson is credited with the movement toward objectivism, which focuses on stimuli and responses and reliance upon objective evidence, but it would be another psychologist, B. F. Skinner, who would bridge the work of both Pavlov and Thorndike to form the most widely used behavior management theories used in education today (Kazdin; Lewis-Palmer). Skinner’s theories emphasized the ideas that behavior could be impacted before it occurs.

B. F. Skinner, an American psychologist, expanded upon the research conducted by Pavlov and Thorndike by providing research on two types of conditioning, Pavlov’s classical conditioning and what Skinner would refer to as operant conditioning (Lewis-Palmer, 1986). Operant conditioning differed greatly from classical conditioning in how it impacted behaviors that could be controlled. Skinner first differentiated between respondent behavior and operant behavior (Axelrod & Hall, 1999). According to Skinner, respondent behaviors are behaviors that are reflexive or involuntary. Examples of respondent behaviors are perspiring in the presence of heat and salivating in the presence of food. On the contrary, operant behaviors are voluntary behaviors. Some examples of operant behaviors are a student raising his hand or a person working on a computer (Axelrod & Hall). The cause of both types of behavior is some type of stimulus or change in the environment. Specifically, respondent behaviors are controlled by stimuli that precede the behavior and are known as unconditional stimuli, whereas operant
behaviors are controlled by stimuli that follow the behavior and are known as consequent stimuli or consequences. Respondent or classical conditioning focuses on responses elicited, or automatically given, by a stimulus while operant conditioning focuses on responses emitted in the presence of a given stimulus (Lewis-Palmer). As a result, if stimulus could be manipulated, behavior could be predicted, including positive behavior. Operant conditioning is concerned with the process by which the consequences of behavior changes the future rate of the behavior based on the Thorndike’s theory: if the consequences are pleasant, the behavior will occur more frequently in the future; if the consequences are not pleasant, the behavior will occur less frequently in the future (Axelrod & Hall; Fantino & Logan, 1979; Kazdin, 1980). Skinner’s concepts changed the approach to behavior management from a focus on negative behavior to a focus on positive behavior.

B. F. Skinner is known as the modern founder of behavior analysis and is considered to be one of the greatest psychologists of all time because of the contributions he has made to behavior management in schools and other areas (Axelrod & Hall, 1999; Carr, 1997; Charles, 2002). Skinner’s contributions include a focus on a positive response to behavior as opposed to traditional responses that were often punitive. Skinner (2002) focused on how learning was affected by stimulus presented after an act was performed and found that certain stimuli caused the organism to repeat and act more frequently. These stimuli reinforce behavior. Moreover, if a person provided reinforcers in a systematic way, called reinforcement, that person could shape behavior in a desired manner.

B. F. Skinner’s fundamental work is relevant to teachers as a means of controlling and motivating student behavior, but Skinner never actually wrote about behavior in the educational setting. Many people have extended his work to adapt his ideas to the classroom (Charles,
Modifying behavior by focusing on specific behavior and offering positive consequences was a key turning point for teachers on handling misbehavior in the classroom. Behavior modification, a technique many teachers consider to be one of their most valuable tools for improving both learning and behavior of their students, is a result of additional work and modifications of Skinner’s work in behaviorism (Frith, 1985). Prior to Skinner’s work, most inappropriate behavior occurring in the classroom was handled by punishing the student or removing the student from the classroom.

**Traditional School Discipline Models**

Traditional models of discipline exist today that help educators to mold and shape the way behavior is managed in today’s schools and educational settings (Morris, 2002). For the purpose of this study, eight traditional discipline models will be examined: the Redl and Wattenberg Model; the Kounin Model; the Neo-Skinnerian Model; the Jones Model; the Canter Model; the Dreikurs Model; the Glasser Discipline Model; and the Cooperative Discipline Model. The models discussed in this section incorporate the techniques and approaches that are the standard in classrooms today (Albert, 1989; Charles, 2002; Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007; Morris). Most behavior management activities or programs presently used in schools today are based on the models described or a combination of the models.

**The Redl and Wattenberg Model.** The Redl and Wattenberg Discipline Model was developed by Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg and focused on management of the group in the classroom setting (Charles, 2002). According to Charles, Redl and Wattenberg believed that an individual’s behavior changes when in a group and that groups have psychological forces that influence individual behavior. The group, according to Redl and Wattenberg (1959), has key students including the group leader, the clown, the instigators, and the scapegoat that all play a
major role in the environment of the classroom. Further, for a teacher to be effective in
managing the behaviors of the classroom, the dynamics of the group must be taken into
consideration. The influence of the group can have a powerful impact; one disruptive student in
the classroom may allow the group the opportunity to become disruptive thereby causing a
“ripple effect”, which enables the total classroom environment to disrupt (Morris, 2002, p. 8).
Redl and Wattenberg’s model helped teachers to work with group behavior and provided specific
interventions for managing the behavior.

Redl and Wattenberg (1959) suggest that teachers utilize influence techniques to manage
the aspects of the group that may not be beneficial to the classroom environment. The first type
of influence techniques include techniques that help students control their own behavior like
sending signals, moving closer to the student misbehaving, showing interest in the student’s
work, utilizing appropriate humor, and ignoring behavior if it is not disruptive to the classroom
or instruction. A second type of influence techniques recommended in the model includes
situational assistance which involves teacher generated techniques like restricting the schedule or
routines and removing a student from a particular situation. Appraising reality, a third type of
influence technique suggested by Redl and Wattenberg includes helping students identify the
deeper causes for their misbehavior and the consequences that may result. Finally, the Pain-
Pleasure Principle, a fourth type of technique recommended in the model, is based on positive
consequences (pleasure) and unpleasant consequences (pain) for student behavior. The model
also recommends that the teacher utilize a general diagnostic approach to dealing with discipline.
Examples of diagnostic activities include forming a primary hunch of the cause when discipline
problems first occur, gathering of obvious facts involved in the problem as well as hidden factors
the teacher may have observed, and remaining flexible while determining if one step or
A combination of steps will be required to quickly dissolve the discipline problem and restore the instructional environment (Charles, 2002; Morris, 2002; Redl & Wattenberg). The Redl and Wattenberg Discipline Model made significant contributions to the management of behavior in the classroom setting by enlightening educators on the importance of the group, recommending techniques for dealing with the group factor in the classroom, and by offering the first systematic model for dealing with managing behavior in the classroom (Charles, 2002).

**The Kounin Model.** The Kounin Discipline Model, developed by Jacob Kounin, also emphasizes group management techniques for dealing with disruptive students and stresses the influence that one student’s behavior has on other students’ behavior in the classroom (Charles, 2002; Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007). Kounin’s emphasis on group behavior helps educators to understand how issues like peer pressure and low self-esteem in students encourage them to misbehave in the classroom. In addition to techniques to manage the behavior of the group, effective lesson management techniques are also an essential component of the Kounin Model (Morris, 2002). According to Kounin (1970), teacher behavior has a significant impact on student behavior, and by using certain remarks called desists to manage one student’s behavior, the teacher also can manage the behavior of other students observing in the classroom. Kounin gives the teacher specific recommendations to manage student and group behavior.

Kounin’s Discipline Model offers a number of techniques to help teachers manage behavior in the classroom (Englander, 1986). The following techniques include what Kounin calls withitness, or the ability of the teacher to continuously monitor activities in the classroom; overlapping, the ability to deal with two or more issues at the same time without it interfering with instructional activities; and movement management, the ability to structure lessons in a way to minimize opportunities for students to misbehave (Charles, 2002; Englander; Kounin, 1970).
The management of the lesson is another emphasis in the Kounin Discipline Model. Kounin suggests a number of techniques like continuously monitoring and communicating to students their progress and consistently pacing lessons so that students can move from one lesson to another smoothly while remaining focused and on task (Morris, 2002). Similar to Redl and Wattenberg’s model, Kounin strongly believed that teachers must have the ability to manage the behavior of various subgroups as well as manage the behavior of individuals to be effective in the classroom, and his ideas on both behavior and lesson management are incorporated into discipline models used in most educational settings today (Charles).

**The Neo-Skinnerian Model.** The Neo-Skinnerian Model is based on the ideas developed by B. F. Skinner (Charles, 2002). Skinner’s work is based on the theory that behavior is learned through consequences (Sabatino, Sabatino, & Mann, 1983). If a student experiences positive consequences, they are more likely to exhibit the behavior again. In addition, Skinner believed that behavior is shaped by a systematic system of reinforcement which is the key component of the Neo-Skinnerian Model (Morris, 2002). Skinner himself never developed a discipline model for the educational setting, but the Neo-Skinnerian Model of Discipline takes the ideas developed by Skinner along with new ideas of other psychologists and adapts them to the management of behavior in the classroom setting (Kerr & Nelson, 1997). The model encouraged educators to start looking at behavior as something that could be impacted and changed the way behavior management was conducted in the school setting.

The Neo-Skinnerian Model of Discipline focuses on several techniques that are the foundation for classroom management in most schools and classrooms today. The main focus of the model is that behavior is learned by consequences that occur immediately following the behavior (Kerr & Nelson, 1997). Specifically, a behavior is strengthened when followed by
consequences that reinforce the behavior and weakened when not followed by reinforcement or followed by punishment. Also, constant reinforcement is required for new learning while intermittent reinforcement is required for behavior that has reached the desired level (Charles, 2002; Skinner, 2002). The main focus of the model is that behavior can be taught and learned just as any other skill.

**The Dreikurs Model.** The Dreikurs Model of Discipline was developed by Rudolf Dreikurs, a medical doctor who immigrated to the United States from Vienna, Austria (Charles, 2002; Morris, 2002). The Dreikurs Model of Discipline focuses on redirecting the goals students display when they misbehave and attempt to gain recognition. According to Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper (1971), the goal is the reason behind all human action, and students, in attempt to gain satisfaction and recognition, often develop mistaken goals to deal with the environment as they perceive it. By teaching students how to develop positive and specific goals and recognizing students when they accomplish goals, an educator can redirect inappropriate behavior.

Dreikurs et al. (1971) assert that there are four goals related to the misbehavior of students in the classroom: (a) attention, which involves an attempt to gain acceptance and attention from others whether it is positive or negative; (b) power, which involves an attempt to upset the teacher or adult by involving them in a power struggle by resisting or defying instruction; (c) revenge, which involves retaliation on the part of the student and attempts to feel significant by hurting the teacher or others; and (d) deficiencies which involved total apathy on the part of the student and the desire by the student to be left alone. In the deficiency goal, the student has given up and refuses to try because of continuous failure. Dreikurs et al. believe that these goals are expressed sequentially; if attention does not work, the students move to the power
goal, revenge, then deficiencies (Charles, 2002). Dreikurs et al. help teachers to identify the goal of the student and work students to reach meet their needs in a positive way.

The Dreikurs Discipline Model recommends techniques to help the classroom teacher deal with misbehavior in the classroom (Charles, 2002; Dreikurs et al., 1971). One technique suggested in the model is utilizing the diagnostic approach. In this technique, the teacher learns to identify the immediate goals the student is seeking by observing the behavior of the child and the consequences that follow the behavior. Basically, how the teacher responds is often an indicator of the expectations of the student and the goal that the student is seeking (Charles). Another technique suggested by the Dreikurs’ model involves the teacher helping students to develop an awareness of their goals and the reasons for their behavior. This awareness is referred to as the recognition reflex and is the beginning of the student understanding the behavior and the opportunity for change to occur (Dreikurs et al.). Encouragement is another technique stressed by the Dreikurs model. Encouragement, according to Dreikurs, contributes to an environment of respect for everyone in the classroom and makes students feel accepted and valued members of the group. In short, encouragement, when administered correctly, provides the recognition students desire in a way that help students to become self-motivated (Charles; Dinkmeyer & Dreikurs, 1979). Once students become self-motivated, they are more likely to continue the positive behavior and set positive goals.

The Dreikurs Model also emphasizes the behavior of the teacher and the role it plays in the behavior of students in the classroom. Specifically, the model identifies three types of teacher: the autocratic teacher, the permissive teacher, and the democratic teacher (Charles, 2002). The Dreikurs’ Model encourages the democratic style of teaching which encourages student participation in the decision-making process, the development of rules and consequences,
and the ability to choose appropriate behavior based on the choices they make (Dreikurs et al., 1971). The Dreikurs Model of Discipline also encourages both teacher and students to work together to manage behavior of students and help them to redirect their goals to achieve a positive classroom environment.

**The Jones Model.** The Jones Model of discipline emphasizes techniques that help students to manage their own behavior through self-control and self-direction (Charles, 2002). Psychologist Fredric H. Jones developed his findings by observing numerous classrooms, where he found that the majority of discipline problems were a result of minor disruptions like talking or students being out of their seats (Jones, 1979). Traditionally, the focus had been on major classroom behavior that impacted classroom instruction. In fact, Jones found that 95% of disruptions in the classroom were these types of minor infractions that he referred to as “goofing off” behaviors (Jones, 1987, p. 27; Rardin, 1978). Furthermore, Jones found that minor disruptions are very costly. In fact, Jones estimated that these minor disruptions resulted in teachers teaching only half of what they might teach if these disruptions were not so prevalent, a situation that leads to low morale, decreased job satisfaction, and diminished job performance.

The Jones Discipline Model includes numerous techniques to arm teachers with the behavior management skills needed to be successful (Jones, 1979; Morris, 2002; Rardin, 1978). The first technique suggested by Jones include utilizing body movements and gestures like eye contact and moving closer to the student when the student misbehaves in order to stop minor disruptions without interrupting instruction. A second technique suggested in the model is the use of effective incentive systems that motivate the entire classroom like free time or other activities voted on by students in the classroom. According to Jones, an incentive system only requires three parts: (a) the task, (b) the reward, and (c) the system of accountability to be
effective (Jones). The third technique emphasized in the Jones Discipline Model is an instructional component. Specifically, Jones stresses the method and time used to help student in individualized instruction and how this type of assistance often leads to disruption in the classroom. Observations of classroom teachers completed by Jones revealed that teachers often spend an average of four minutes with each student who requires individualized instruction, which leads to other students in the classroom being unsupervised. Furthermore, when several students require individual instruction, the amount of unsupervised time can be enormous and in the end, detrimental to the overall environment and management of classroom behavior (Jones). Jones recommends two techniques to assist students who require individualized instruction, reinforcing the student’s effort to do the work and providing only enough assistance to take the student to the next step. Thus, the student is given brief assistance, which allows the teacher to quickly return to monitor the behavior of all the students in the classroom.

**The Canter Model.** The Canter Discipline Model was designed by Lee and Marlene Canter and emphasizes the importance of teacher expectations and organized procedures when managing student behavior (Charles, 2002; Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007). The Canter Model differs from other models in its specificity. The model gives the teachers more specific activities for the day to day operations. The Canter Model is based on a classroom behavior plan that consists of basically three major parts: (a) simple classroom rules, (b) systematic consequences, and (c) appropriate rewards (Canter, 1998; Morris, 2002). The plan lays out specific steps for the teacher to complete to make the implementation of the process successful. The Canter Model suggests a number of steps to help teachers assertively manage behavior in the classroom (Charles; Morris). The first step in the model involves removing blocks that may interfere with assertive discipline such as negative expectations for children and the belief that the teacher
cannot make a difference in the behavior of students. The second step involves the manner in which the teacher responds to discipline problems. Canter recommends that the teacher responds in an assertive manner by making expectations clearly known and reinforcing the rules of the classroom. The third step involves the teacher setting limits. Setting limits, suggests Canter, involve three techniques: (a) requesting appropriate behaviors through hints, messages, and demands that the teacher can carry through; (b) delivering the verbal limit including voice tone and body language like eye contact and gestures; and (c) using the broken-record technique involving continuous repetition of the rules the teacher is trying to convey to the student. The fourth step involves teachers following through on the limits they have set in the classroom and involves taking appropriate actions when students follow or refuse to follow the classroom rules. Examples of following through techniques suggested by Canter involve time-out, students calling their parents, and involving the building administrators (Canter; Charles; Morris). The final step of the Canter model involves the teacher implementing a system of positive consequences. Examples of positive consequences include personal attention from the teacher, special awards, special privileges, and material, home and group rewards. The Canter Model combines strategies and techniques of the previous discipline model into a simple to use plan that involves parents and administrators, immediately handles problems in the classroom, and empowers teachers.

**The Glasser Discipline Model.** The Glasser Discipline Model was developed by William Glasser, a Los Angeles psychiatrist and stresses a classroom environment that meets the needs of students to enhance instruction and decrease disruptive behaviors in the classroom (Charles, 2002; Glasser, 1986; Morris, 2002; Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007). In addition, the model focuses on student input on establishing rules and consequences and high expectations for
quality in students’ work. Furthermore, the emphasis on developing this plan in a non-coercive manner is mandatory for its success. According to Glasser (1998), teachers must depart from being boss teachers and become lead teachers to make this model successful. Glasser asserts that a boss teacher sets the standards but does not include input from the students or consider the needs of students in the classroom. Additionally, the boss teacher often utilizes coercion when students do not follow rules. On the contrary, lead teachers involve students in the total operations of the classroom both with curriculum and discipline and continuously emphasize the importance of quality while meeting the needs of the students in the classroom.

In addition to the continuous emphasis on quality, the Glasser Discipline Model suggests several techniques to help teachers manage student behavior (Charles, 2002; Glasser, 1998). One technique emphasized in the model includes teachers engaging students in establishing rules in the classroom. Another technique emphasized in the model includes the teacher organizing interesting activities and providing assistance to students to meet the individual needs of students and decrease the number of disruptive behaviors. Finally techniques like discussing the underlying causes of the discipline problem, refraining from becoming angry and blaming students and treating students with respect are also emphasized (Charles). In the model, the emphasis is more on working together and allowing students to take an active role in the management of their behavior. According to Glasser, when students are not satisfied and needs are not met, they become discipline problems. The Glasser Discipline Model contrasts strongly with the stimulus and response theory proposed by Skinner and others and argues that behavior is based on the basic needs of the individual being satisfied (Glasser, 1986). Basically, Glasser’s theory, which he calls the Control Theory, is based on the idea that all behavior is the result of an individual’s need for survival and reproducing, belonging and love, gaining power, being free,
and having fun, not the result of someone telling them to do something. Also, if teachers are going to meet the needs of their students and prevent discipline problems, they must restructure the classroom and present instruction in a variety of ways to make students feel satisfied and an important part of the educational process. Glasser recommends that teachers move from the traditional lecturer-leader to a facilitator-manager and incorporate cooperative learning groups or learning teams to help students feel satisfaction, provide assistance, and increase participation and learning (Charles; Morris, 2002). Satisfaction plays a major role in the Glasser model as well as the students being involved in their own behavior management program. Moreover, Glasser recommends that school refrain from expecting discipline programs to manage the discipline problems that students display. According to this model, until students experience satisfaction in the classroom, no discipline plan will solve the problems that most schools face today.

**Cooperative Discipline Model.** The Cooperative Discipline Model is a behavior management model developed by Linda Albert (1989). Specifically, the model is designed around the School Action Plan. The School Action plan consists of the following steps: (a) pinpointing and describing the behavior. Pinpointing and describing the behavior involves observing the student for several days and determining what specific behaviors are causing a disruption to the classroom environment; (b) identifying the goal of the behavior. Albert believes that students misbehave for one or more of the following reasons: attention, power, revenge, and avoidance-of-failure; (c) choose intervention techniques for the moment of the misbehavior. Choosing intervention techniques does not refer to punishment. It involves the teacher influencing the student to choose a more appropriate behavior; (d) selecting encouragement techniques. Encouragement techniques help students develop relationships and
contributes to the student continuing the appropriate behavior; and (e) involving parents. When the teacher involves the parent, the parent is given an opportunity to work in a cooperative effort to redirect the problem behavior exhibited by the student.

The eight discipline models described in this section are the historical and theoretical foundation for the behavior management programs used in educational settings today (Benshoff, & Poidevant, 1994; Charles, 2002). Additionally, each model presents techniques and approaches that enable teachers to manage behavior in the day-to-day operations of the classroom. Research suggests that no one behavior management program can solve all the discipline problems that occur in the classroom; however, a combination of the various models can be successful (Barlow, Hayes, & Nelson, 1984; Morris, 2002; Rathvon, 1999). The teacher must learn to utilize a variety of techniques to continuously manage the behavior of every student in the classroom.

**Individual Behavior Management Plans Using Functional Behavior Assessments**

The functional behavior assessment is a tool that can be utilized by teachers as the basis for an individual behavioral management program (Bullock & Gable, 1999; Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Frey & Wilhite, 2005; Gresham, Watson, & Skinner, 2001; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 1997; Lane, Beebe-Frankenberger, Lambros, & Pierson, 2001; Mace, 1994; Scott, DeSimone, Fowler, & Webb, 2000; Sterling-Turner & Robinson, 2001). Functional behavior assessment focuses on the individual student and the development of a plan to meet the needs. The term functional refers to a demonstration of the effect of one variable on another variable or a cause and effect relationship (Shriver, Anderson, & Proctor, 2001). The emphasis of the assessment is to determine the function, or cause, of the misbehavior exhibited by the student. Functional behavior assessments have been utilized successfully for
over a decade to address a myriad of inappropriate behaviors such as disruptions, noncompliance, opposition, off-task, and tantrums in children with disabilities (Watson, Ray, Turner, & Logan, 1999). Although the assessments have been utilized for many different types of behavior, they have not traditionally been used for students in the general education population.

Originally utilized with students who had mild to severe disabilities, research shows that the functional behavioral assessment approach can be effective when used by general education teachers with students with average intelligence who exhibit continuous behavior problems (Ervin, DuPaul, Kern, & Friman, 1998; Kern, Delaney, Clarke, Dunlap, & Childs, 2001; Lewis-Palmer, 1986; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagan-Burke, 2000). The functional behavior assessment helps the teacher to analyze everything that contributes to the behavior and then develop a plan. Functional assessment involves techniques and strategies that allow the assessor to diagnose the causes of the disruptive behavior and then identify, define, and develop effective interventions to address the problems of the individual student (Gable & Quinn, 1998). In addition, functional behavior assessments have been proven practical enough to be used by the general classroom teacher.

Functional behavior assessment is based on the premise that inappropriate behaviors occur for some type of reason or function and is built on the most fundamental principle of behavior analysis, which suggests that intervention should start with thorough functional analysis and that the functional assessment should be the foundation of the intervention (Carr, 1997; Sugai et al., 2000). The assessment allows the intervention to specific to the misbehavior instead of a general activity given to all students. Foster-Johnson and Dunlap (1993) contend that the entire functional assessment process is based on the following assumptions: (a) inappropriate
behavior is related to the environment in which it occurs; (b) inappropriate behaviors serve a function, or purpose, for the student; (c) the functional perspective is directly related to behavior; simply stated, behaviors are increased, or decreased by the consequence or stimuli that follow the behavior (Reid & Maag, 1998), initiated by antecedents or stimuli that come before the behavior and then maintained (Kern, Choutka, & Sokol, 2002). The functional behavior assessment is centered on an individual plan for students as opposed to schoolwide programs traditionally used to manage behavior.

Functional behavior assessment is critical in helping teachers to accomplish three major goals to help manage disruptive behavior: (a) analyze events that occur in the classroom environment in order to discourage inappropriate behavior; (b) determine the purpose or function of the inappropriate behavior in order to replace it; and (c) utilize information obtained in the functional behavior assessment to develop interventions that will help the student learn appropriate behaviors (Reid & Maag, 1998). Functional behavior strategies collect data so that the intervention is data driven and not based on perceptions. Functional assessment involves techniques and strategies that allow the assessor to diagnose the causes of the disruptive behavior and then develop effective intervention to address the problems of the individual student (Gable & Quinn, 1998). The process increases the chances of the intervention being successful because everything that may be contributing to the inappropriate behavior is addressed.

Functional assessment literature suggests that continuous problem behavior is maintained by two broad factors: escape behavior, which is usually controlled by negative reinforcement and attention-seeking behavior, which is usually controlled by positive reinforcement (Carr & Durrand, 1985; Storey, Lawry, Ashworth, Danko, & Strain, 1994). Although the behaviors exhibited may manifest themselves in different ways, these two factors are believed to be at the
foundation of the problem. More specifically, these two broad factors can be divided into four functional categories (a) escape, which involves engaging in a behavior to avoid a particular task, person, or setting; (b) attention, which involves engaging in a behavior to draw attention to oneself; (c) tangible, which involves engaging in a behavior to obtain physical objects; and (d) sensory, which involves engaging in repetitive behaviors for sensory stimulation purposes (Carr, 1994; Gresham et al., 2001; Myers & Holland, 2000; Scarpaci, 2007). Once a teacher identifies the category to which the student behavior is related, it becomes the foundation of the plan of intervention.

Functional behavior assessments allow the classroom teacher to determine the function of the problem behavior and whether the problem behavior is positively reinforced or negatively reinforced (Gable & Hendrickson, 2000; March & Horner, 2002; Umbreit, 1995). The assessment gives the teacher specific information and steps to determine the cause of the problem. The assessment also allows teachers to link assessment with the most appropriate intervention, the ultimate goal being to replace problem behaviors with socially acceptable and useful behaviors (Carr & Durrand, 1985; Storey et al., 1994; Watson et al., 1999). The process is systematic and data driven. As a result, it is more likely to be effective. Functional behavior assessment systematically examines problem behavior by identifying factors that occur before and after the behavior (Sugai et al., 2000; Symons & McDonald, 1990). This is different from traditional methods that waited until the behavior escalated before it was addressed (Myers & Holland, 2000; Nelson & Roberts, 2000). Subsequently, once the behavior, antecedents, and consequence are identified, functional behavior assessments allow the assessor to predict the reasons for the behavior and to develop interventions to help replace the problem behavior with positive behaviors that can be maintained over time. Functional behavior assessment focuses on
teaching appropriate assessments that allow the assessor to predict the reasons for the behavior and to develop interventions to help replace the problem behavior with positive behaviors that can be maintained over time (O’Neill et al., 1997). Functional behavior assessment focuses on teaching appropriate behaviors that eventually replace inappropriate behavior that serves the same function (Scott, DeSimone, et al., 2000). The plan development, as a result of the assessment, will allow students' needs to be met in a positive way.

**Steps to conducting an effective Functional Behavior Assessment.** Various functional behavior assessment methods exist, but research suggests that an effective functional behavior assessment consists of three main components: (a) hypothesis development; (b) hypothesis testing; and (c) the development and implementation of the intervention based on the collection of data (Blood and Neel, 2007; Ervin et al., 1998; Ervin et al., 2001; Fitzimmons, 2000; Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Reid & Maag, 1998; Reid & Nelson, 2002; Repp, 1994; Umbreit, 1995). Each step in the process is important because it will allow the teacher or interventionist to address an aspect of the misbehavior. The functional assessment process is complete when all three components are completed (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Gable & Quinn, 1998; Reid & Maag). The individualized plan will address the unique issues related to the student’s misbehavior.

The first step in conducting a functional behavior assessment is to develop a hypothesis concerning the problem behavior. The hypothesis development step focuses on the conditions under which the behavior will most likely occur in addition to the consequences that help to maintain the behavior (Fitzimmons, 2000; Wager, 1999). The purpose of the hypothesis is to make the best determination of the root cause of the misbehavior exhibited by the student, based on data. Developing the hypothesis involves defining the behavior, collecting data, and
analyzing data related to the behavior of the student (Reid & Maag, 1998). The development of the hypothesis is critical because it will serve as the heart of the intervention. Basically, defining the behavior includes examining the history of the behavior and then putting it in terms that are simple to measure and record. The definition of the behavior should include the topography of appearance of the problem behavior, the frequency and the length of the behavior, and the severity of the behavior (Gartin & Murdick, 2001). Once the behavior is defined in measurable terms, data is then collected on the behavior that has been defined (Reid & Maag). The data collection process is crucial to the functional behavior process because data is collected on the events and activities present when the inappropriate behavior occurs. Foster-Johnson and Dunlap (1993) suggest 3 stages to the data collecting process: (a) defining the target behavior. This stage involves a standard description of the inappropriate behavior over a period of several observations; (b) identifying events that are usually associated with the occurrence of the inappropriate behavior. This stage involves circumstances and the events in which the behavior will and will not occur. Some variables that might influence the behavior include physiological factors, the classroom environment, and curriculum and instruction; and (c) determining the purpose or function of the inappropriate behavior. Collecting data and determining the cause of the problem behavior is usually completed in two ways: indirect methods and descriptive or direct methods (Fox, Gunter, Davis & Brall, 2000; Jolivette, Barton-Arwood & Scott, 2000; Lalli & Broiwder, 1993; Lennox & Miltenberger, 1989; Johnston & O’Neill, 2001; Mace, 1994). The functional behavior process looks at data from many different methods which help the teacher to see all factors contributing to the misbehavior of the student.

Indirect data collection includes techniques like behavioral interviews, informant-based assessment techniques, checklists, questionnaires, discipline records, and rating scales. Behavior
interview and informant-based strategies refer to procedures that form people (informant) such as parents, educators, and/or students as a source of information concerning problem behavior (Jackson & Panyan, 2002). Indirect data collection allows the teacher to see if the behavior is situational or if it occurs in different places with different people. However, indirect methods of data collection alone are considered by many researchers to be unreliable (Johnson & O’Neill, 2001; Mace, 1994; Reid & Maag, 1998; Scott, DeSimone, et al, 2000; Starin, 2002; Sterling-Turner & Robinson, 2001). By directly observing the behavior at specific times, the teacher may be able to see if the indirect data collected matches what actually occurs when the student exhibit inappropriate behavior. By contrast, direct assessment involves actually observing the student in the natural classroom and is considered more reliable (VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gatti, 2001). Direct observation allows the person to see the student in the natural environment in which the behavior occurs. One of the most widely used procedures for direct observations in the functional behavior assessment is the Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (A-B-C) method which involves the assessor recording the problem behavior along with the events that occur before and after the behavior takes place (Sasso et al.,1992; Sterling-Turner & Robinson). The A-B-C method looks at the entire cycle of the misbehavior and not just what happens when student behavior occurs. It also allows the teacher to see patterns that may be related to the behavior and determine if the environment can be changed to prevent the behavior.

Lennox and Miltenberger (1989) maintain that although extensive training is not necessary to successfully administer the A-B-C method for collecting data, the following guidelines should be observed: (a) shorthand or abbreviations is recommended for recording; (b) only the data heard or seen by observer should be recorded with inference or speculation; (c) the observer should only record events occurring immediately after the event; (d) the duration of the
event should be recorded; (e) the observation period should occur after several days; (f) the 
observation should be completed as unobtrusively as possible; and (g) a form should be used that 
has been designed to record the behavior, the antecedent of the behavior, and the consequence of 
the behavior. Collecting data using the A-B-C form should enable the teacher to predict the 
situations in which the disruptive behavior will occur. An analysis of data focusing on the 
specific times that the behavior occurs, persons involved when the behavior occur, and activities 
in which the behavior occurs should be completed (Gartin & Murdick, 2001). Once the teacher 
has collected sufficient data and the data has been analyzed, a hypothesis about the behavior 
based on the data collected can be developed.

Hypothesis development involves moving from general behavior information to a more 
individualized system of observing student behavior. The hypothesis development component of 
the functional behavior assessment process is based on specific data collected to determine the 
function of the student’s behavior (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993). By developing a 
hypothesis, the teacher makes a decision based on factual data and does not develop an 
intervention on what is believed to be contributing to the misbehavior. In addition, the 
development of a precise definition of behavior is crucial so that important interventions related 
to the behavior can be determined (Gable & Quinn, 1998). Traditionally methods of dealing 
with inappropriate behavior basically assigned a consequence to behavior without looking at how 
it was related to the behavior. As a result, the consequence assigned had no impact on changing 
the behavior.

The second step in the functional assessment process is to test the hypothesis that has 
been developed (Reid & Nelson, 2002). Basically, in the hypothesis testing stage, the 
environment surrounding the problem behavior is manipulated or controlled to determine if the
relationship between the behavior and its perceived function is valid. Hypothesis testing involves testing the hypothesis developed to ensure that the most appropriate intervention will be developed. Jolivette et al. (2000) suggest that hypothesis-testing can be completed by simply manipulating the predictor of the problem behavior identified in the hypothesis development step and observing to see whether there is a change in behavior. If a pattern is observed that validates the hypothesis statement, the hypothesis is considered to be correct (McCullough, 1999). However, if there is no clear pattern in either an increase or decrease of the problems behavior, changes in the hypothesis or the perceived relationship between the behavior and its function may be necessary. Some examples of simple environmental manipulation include the placement of the student in a different setting, involving the student in a specific activity, or simply making a request to that student in a certain manner (Lawry, Storey, & Danko, 1993). Once the data is collected, the teacher can determine if simple measures can be taken to change the behavior or if an individual intervention plan is needed.

The final step in conducting the functional behavior assessment, determining the appropriate behavioral intervention plan, can be completed once the function of the behavior has been determined (Gresham et al., 2001). The intervention plan is the result of data analyzed throughout the process and scheduled activities that will have an impact on the specific issues of the students. The behavior intervention plan should be based on the information obtained in the hypothesis development and testing phase of the functional behavior assessment (Fitzsimmons, 2000). In addition, the plan should include positive strategies that reduce the problem behavior as well as emphasize the skills the student will need to learn to replace the problem behaviors. Lawry et al. (1993) contend that the intervention component of the individualized behavior management plan should include four major variables: (a) structuring the environment to
discourage the antecedents that usually initiate the problem behavior; (b) monitoring any
physical or medical issues that might impact the behavior; (c) designing a plan that involves a
schedule of positive reinforcement including preferred activities; and (d) providing instructions
that have been adapted to the functional skill level appropriate for the individual student. The
individualized behavior intervention plan should emphasize teaching the skills the student
displaying inappropriate behavior will need to manage behavior in a positive support plan rather
than a plan to control behavior for a short period of time (Fitzsimmons). Additionally, positive
behavior plans will help students to address the problem and its source and help students
maintain appropriate behavior over time.

The individualized intervention plan should include behavior management techniques
that have been proven to be effective in helping to reduce the disruptive behavior and replace the
disruptive behavior with appropriate behaviors that serve the same function (Katsiyannis, Acton,
Ellenburg, & Lock, 2000). Examples of behavior management techniques that have been used to
intervene in the functional behavior assessment process include the token economy system,
differential reinforcement techniques, behavior contracting, and self-management techniques
(Carter & Horner, 2007; Gresham, 1985; Jackson & Panyan, 2002; Kamp, Kravits, Stolze, &
Swaggart, 1999; Kehle, Bray, Theodore, Jenson, & Clark, 2000).

Traditional schoolwide discipline techniques have fallen short of meeting the needs of the
diverse population of students displaying disruptive behavior in the general education classroom
today because they do not address the function or the purpose the inappropriate behavior serves
for the student or the manner in which the inappropriate behavior is related to the environment
(Warger, 1999). In addition, traditional methods for handling behavior problems when students
do not follow the schoolwide plan have often relied on restrictive forms of behavior management
such as punishment and exclusion to control behavior. These methods have yielded short-term results and have proven to be ineffective (Scott, Meers, & Nelson, 2000). To effectively change inappropriate behavior, the individual student behavior must be addressed.

Research shows that functional behavior assessment strategies that include appropriate interventions based on the function of the problem behavior are an effective method to deal with students that display continuous behavior problems (Umbreit, 1995). In fact, the functional analysis assessment is the most used technique to determine the function, or cause, of problem behavior. Functional assessment is not limited to identifying just one aspect of the problem behavior but involves a full range of strategies and procedures that allow the teacher to begin with defining the problem behavior and eventually determining an effective intervention to reduce or eliminate the problem behavior (Horner, 1994). Functional assessments are integral parts of the initial intervention program and should be on-going to ensure continuous effective interventions. Functional behavioral assessments are more detailed and require more time than traditional schoolwide behavioral management programs, but when implemented effectively and with integrity, functional assessments can provide strategies that are individualized, linked to identified problem behavior and effective in reducing behavior that disrupt the classroom environment (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993). These strategies are more likely to have a great and long-term impact on replacing inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior.

**Interventions within Functional Behavior Assessments.** The purpose of the functional behavior assessment process is to help determine the most effective intervention for students who do not respond to traditional schoolwide behavior management techniques and consequently require an individualized behavior plan to reduce disruptive behavior (Carter & Horner, 2007). The individualized plan will consist of information that has been collected specifically related to
the student’s inappropriate behavior. An intervention is a specific set of alterations in environmental conditions used to help manage students with disruptive behavior (Jackson & Panyan, 2002; Witt & Martens, 1983). Additionally, an intervention is designed for three major reasons: (a) to encourage student’s learning and progress; (b) to reduce disruptive behavior for the student and others in the classroom setting through positive support and instruction; and (c) to develop an understanding among teacher and student. Research indicates that when students are taught appropriate and effective intervention strategies, the number of students placed in special education classes is reduced, student performance increases, and teachers are better able to manage students who display disruptive behavior in the general education classroom setting (Prater, 1994). The behavior intervention must be specific, related to the behavior, and based on data collected on the behavior and the factors contributing to the behavior. To be effective, Kern, Choutka, et al. (2002) suggest that the core of the behavior intervention must involve three basic elements: (a) the antecedent; (b) the behavior; and (c) the consequence. This section focuses on four research-based interventions that are effective techniques when implementing the functional assessment process and used as part of an individualized behavior management program: (a) the token economy intervention; (b) the behavior contract intervention; (c) the self-monitoring intervention (DuPaul & Hoff, 1998; Scott, Meers et al., 2000); and (d) interventions that include schedules of reinforcement (Watson et al., 1999). The section ends with a brief examination of the basic components required to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention.

**The Token Economy System within Functional Behavior Assessments.** The token economy technique is one of the most utilized behavior management techniques in classrooms today (Rosenburg, 1986). In addition, when the token management technique is used effectively, it has been shown to help manage problem behaviors like disruption in the classroom, academic
skill deficits, and antisocial behaviors with both delinquents and pre-delinquents. Basically, the token economy method of behavior management does not involve one particular behavior management technique; many variations have been developed. In the token economy system, a token is some type of object that can be exchanged for something that the student feels is of value such as a privilege or a reward (Reid & Maag, 1998). By providing the student with a positive consequence, the student is motivated to perform the behavior again. The token used provides immediate gratification to the student displaying the disruptive behavior (Jackson & Panyan, 2002). As a result, the student is more likely to continue the behavior until it becomes automatic. Axelrod and Hall (1999) contend that there must be three elements in place for a token system to be effective: (a) the behavior must be specified; (b) back-up reinforcers, items and activities for which the tokens will be exchanged, must be clear; and (c) the student must understand the relationship between the tokens, the expected behavior, and the reinforcers that the students will receive. The token economy technique has been shown to be effective alone and in conjunction with other behavior management interventions (Zlomke & Zlomke, 2003). The token economy process is different from traditional methods of dealing with inappropriate behavior because it focuses on recognizing positive behavior.

Research suggests that the token economy system can be an effective intervention to reduce disruptive behaviors (Higgins et al., 2001; Zlomke & Zlomke, 2003). Higgins et al. conducted a study with a third grade student with learning disabilities who displayed continuous behavior problems. Three behaviors were addressed in the study: (a) out of seat; (b) talking out; and (c) poor posture. The result of the study showed a decrease in the rate of all three behaviors when the token economy system was implemented. Zlomke and Zlomke also conducted a study involving the use of the token economy system alone, a self-monitoring system alone, and a
combined package using both interventions. They found that when the token economy system was implemented alone, a significant decline in problem behavior occurred. Token economies have proven to be effective across various grades, diverse school populations, and number of challenging school behaviors (Higgins et al.). The process is effective because it focuses on what the student is doing right. However, to be effective, the token economy system must be driven by the individual student’s needs and preferences to be effective (Jackson & Panyan, 2002). If the token used is not a motivator to the student, the process will not be effective.

**Contingency/Behavior Contracting within Functional Behavior Assessments.**

Behavior, or contingency, contracts are written agreements developed by students and teachers contingent upon the completion of a particular activity or the demonstration of a specific behavior (Reid & Maag, 1998). The process is effective because it helps the students to understand the misbehavior and how it can be improved. Specifically, contingency contracts detail the process for a student to get a preferable activity or reward after completing an activity the student does not prefer (Clarizo, 1980). The process motivates the students to change behavior and rewards the student when appropriate behavior is exhibited. More specifically, the contingency contract states the goals for the desired behavior and what tokens or reinforcers will be given once the goals are met (Axelrod & Hall, 1999). By involving the student in the process, the students is more likely eventually replace the inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior. Advantages of behavior contracts include the student being actively involved, specified behavior, built-in accountability, and reinforcers that can be extended beyond the school (Reed & Maag). Effective behavior contracts involve the following components: (a) a focus on positive consequences; (b) a focus on small rewards for incremental improvement as opposed to large rewards for unreasonable or unreachable goals; (c) a focus on short-term rather
than long-term reinforcers; (d) a focus on clear expectations for all parties; and (e) an allowance for continuous adjustments or additional changes by the person with improving behavior (Axelrod & Hall).

Behavior contracts can be developed in a variety of ways depending on the age group and the goals desired (Jones & Jones, 1990). Jackson and Panyan (2002) suggest that the behavior contract involve the following steps: (a) the purpose for learning the appropriate behavior should be explained to the student; (b) the desired behavior should be determined; (c) the conditions under which the determined behavior should occur and the contingencies for the behavior being displayed or not being displayed should be discussed and agreed upon by both the teacher and the student; (d) the contract should be developed including the conditions and contingencies; and (e) the contract should be discussed and signed by all parties involved. The most critical step of all is the monitoring the desired behavior (Epanchin, Townsend, & Stoddard, 1994).

Contingency contracts have successfully been used to reduce disruptive behavior in a variety of settings.

The research involving the use of contingency contracts is well documented. Scott, Meers et al. (2000) conducted a study involving two students whose behavior interfered with instruction. The intervention for the study involved a contingency reinforcer. A functional assessment was conducted to determine the function of the disruptive behavior. The results of the functional behavior assessment suggested that the function of the disruptive behavior was teacher attention and escape from classroom assignments. A contingency contract was implemented. The final results of the intervention showed an increase in performance across time and a decrease in disruptive behavior.
Self-Monitoring with Functional Behavioral Assessments. Self-monitoring is one type of several behavior management techniques that have been shown to reduce disruptive behavior in the classroom setting (Carter, 1993; Cole & Bambara, 1992; Mathis & Bender, 1997; Rose & Gallup, 2001). Specifically, self-monitoring teaches students to monitor their own behavior in a manner that will help to decrease disruptive behavior and increase appropriate behavior. Additionally, self-monitoring techniques promote students monitoring their own behavior, performance, and reinforcement (Swaggart, 1998). Self-monitoring is a behavior intervention that involves two basic techniques completed by students: (a) self-assessment where the students evaluate if the appropriate behavior occurred; and (b) self-recording where the student records whether the appropriate behavior occurred or not (Prater, 1994; Prater, Hogan, & Sidney, 1992). Self-monitoring differs from other interventions because it heavily involves the student in replacing inappropriate behavior. Swaggart asserts that effective self-monitoring procedures are centered around six teacher-directed steps: (a) assisting the student in recognizing appropriate and inappropriate behavior; (b) assisting the student with the modeling self-monitoring techniques until the student can monitor appropriately independently; (c) monitoring along with the student periodically to ensure accuracy; (d) increasing praise for desired behavior and effective monitoring on the part of the student; (e) utilizing brief verbal corrections to help students stay focused on the self-monitoring process; and (f) prompting students to provide self-reinforcement when desired behavior occurs.

Research indicates that educators usually resist utilizing behavior interventions because they believe these interventions require time that could be used for instruction and are seen as difficult to implement (Cole, 1992). Self-monitoring has been shown to decrease the amount of time that the teacher spends with discipline allowing more time for instruction. The first step
involved in the self-management process is selecting and defining the target behavior. Self-monitoring should be applied at the early stages of the intervention process if it is to be successful. The behavior should be selected, defined accurately and objectively, and then communicated to the student who will be engaged in the process. The next step in the self-monitoring process involves developing data recording technique. The process chosen for the self-monitoring process should be one that is accurate and student-friendly. The teacher should instruct the student on the recording phase of the process and monitor and assess student recording for accuracy. The third step in the self-monitoring process involves the establishment and review of goals and the final step includes the maintenance stage where self-recording is reduced and the method is chosen to ensure maintenance and generalization. DuPaul and Hoff (1998) list several advantages for implementing self-management strategies to traditional strategies: (a) the individual is responsible for the management and control of behavior; (b) self-management has a greater generality or utilization factor for different behavior problems, and (c) self-management strategies allow student to monitor behavior with more independence results in a greater amount for instruction for the teacher.

Research using self-monitoring has shown it to be an effective intervention. Self-monitoring was used in a study conducted by Prater et al. (1992) involving a 14 year old student with continuous behavior problems. An informal assessment was conducted prior to the intervention. The results from the study indicated a dramatic increase in on-task behavior from a mean percentage of on-task behavior of 18% to a mean percentage of 89%. Sterling-Turner and Robinson (2001) also conducted a study using self-monitoring as an intervention. The study involved a 13 year-old male that displayed disruptive behavior daily. A functional behavior assessment was conducted and indicated that the function of the disruptive behavior was to
maintain peer attention. A self-monitoring intervention was developed to help reduce disruptive behavior. Contingent upon appropriate behavior, the student could work with a peer tutor for the last 10 minutes of class. Within one week of implementing the intervention, the number of disruptive behaviors reduced to zero and academic performance increased.

**Differential Reinforcement within Functional Behavior Assessment.** Differential reinforcement interventions focus on target behavior as opposed to focusing on the disruptive behavior (Epanchin et al., 1994). The interventions are individualized and a contrast to traditional methods. Kerr and Nelson (1997) contend that differential reinforcement involves four strategies: (a) differential reinforcement of low rates of behavior (DRL); (b) differential reinforcement of the other behaviors (DRO); (c) differential reinforcement of incompatible behaviors (DRI); and differential reinforcement of alternate behaviors (DRA).

Differential reinforcement of low rates of behavior (DRL) is a type of intervention that is implemented when disruptive behavior occurs less than a predetermined number of times (Kerr & Nelson, 1997). The intervention is important because it helps to intervene on behaviors that may not be the most disruptive but still impacts the learning environment. The DRL intervention is used when reduction of the frequency of the behavior is the main goal (Epanchin et al., 1994). In addition, the DRL intervention is the only type of differential reinforcement that focuses on the frequency of the disruptive behavior. The other three types of differential reinforcement, differential reinforcement of other behaviors, differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior, and differential reinforcement of alternate behaviors emphasize the use of other behaviors to reduce or replace the disruptive behavior.

Differential reinforcement of other behaviors is a type of differential reinforcement that emphasizes the reinforcement of absence of disruptive behavior during a particular interval of
Differential reinforcement interventions have successfully reduced various disruptive behaviors that occur in the classroom and interfere with the learning environment (Jackson & Panyan, 2002). Differential reinforcement is an alternative to traditional management because it is more individualized and focuses on appropriate behavior. Epanchin et al. (1994) believe that differential reinforcement interventions are advantageous for several reasons: (a) there is a focus on a positive approach to reducing behaviors; (b) the effects of punishment are avoided; (c) the interventions are easily generalized; and (d) a positive teacher-student relationship is promoted.

Research literature supports the fact that Differential Reinforcement can be effective in reducing disruptive behavior. Shabani, Wilder, and Flood (2001) conducted a study with a 12-year old boy whose disruptive behavior interfered with his ability to interact with others and learn. An assessment was completed at the beginning of the study to determine items that the student preferred most. A differential reinforcement of other behavior system was implemented to reinforce appropriate behavior. Appropriate behavior increased as a result of the intervention.

**Teacher Efficacy**

Bandura (1994) describes self-efficacy as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence despite events that affect their lives. Additionally, self-efficacy beliefs determine how people think, acts, and motivate themselves. According to Bandura, a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment
and personal well-being in many ways. In addition, people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Consequently, such an outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. In fact, a person with a high concept of self-efficacy sets challenging goals and maintains strong commitment to them; heightens and sustains his or her efforts in the face of failure; quickly recovers a sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks; attributes failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable; and approaches threatening situations with assurance that he or she can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Ross & Horner, 2007). The individual feels more confident and works harder toward the goal because he or she believes it is attainable.

In contrast, people who have low self efficacy doubt their capabilities and shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats. Specifically, they have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, people with low self efficacy dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter, and all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. Additionally, they slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties and are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks. Because they view insufficient performance as deficient aptitude, it does not require much failure for them to lose faith in their capabilities. Consequently, individuals with low self efficacy easily fall victim to stress and depression.

Ross and Horner (2007) agree with Bandura (1994) and defines teacher efficacy as the teacher’s confidence in their ability to encourage change in behavior. When a teacher has high
teacher efficacy, they believe what they do makes a difference. In addition, the researchers found that teacher efficacy had an impact on improved student achievement and was an indicator of overall effectiveness. Ross and Horner conducted a study on teacher efficacy through positive behavior support in four middle schools in Oregon. Teachers were randomly selected from each school and given instruments to measure teacher efficacy. Results from the study indicated that teachers in schools that had schoolwide positive behavior support program had a higher level of teacher efficacy.

Many researchers have applied Bandura’s concepts to teachers (Henson, Kogan, & Vacha-Haase, 2001). Teacher efficacy would suggest that teacher handle situations differently from the beginning because they truly believe that they can make a difference in the outcomes. Teachers who with a high sense of efficacy believe they have the power to produced desired results in their classroom and schools (Swicegood, 2005). As a result, the focus is more on getting the outcome desired than worrying that process may not work. Ross (1992) described two types of teacher efficacy, personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. Personal efficacy involves the expectation that the individual will be able to bring about student learning, and teaching efficacy is the individual’s belief that she can bring change despite factors beyond her control. Teacher efficacy has been shown to be correlated with student achievement; notions of good teaching practices; teachers’ use of more challenging teaching techniques; teachers’ willingness to try innovative methods; and teachers’ use of classroom management strategies considered more humanistic (Shahid & Thompson, 2001). When teachers felt they could make a difference by trying new and different strategies, they were more likely to implement strategies to meet the needs of students. Jerald (2006) highlights some teacher behaviors found to be related to a teacher’s sense of efficacy. Teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy tend to exhibit
greater levels of planning and organization; are more open to new ideas; are more willing to
experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students; are more persistent and
resilient when things do not go smoothly; are less critical of students when they make errors; and
are less inclined to refer a difficult student to special education.

Brouwers and Tomie (2000) conducted a study where they modeled relations between
self-efficacy in classroom management, student disruptive behavior, and teacher burnout among
high school teachers. As part of the study, 558 high school teachers were surveyed. The results
from the study suggested that perceived self-efficacy appeared to mediate the effect of disruptive
behavior on teacher burnout. In addition, a direct effect was found in the areas of personal
accomplishment on perceived self-efficacy in classroom management. Shahid and Thompson
(2001) also synthesized research on teacher efficacy. The purpose of the study was to investigate
research on teacher efficacy, bring together findings, and consider implication for educations.
As part of the study, a 14-stage model was implemented to identify and analyze characteristics
found in 89 primary studies addressing teacher efficacy. Conclusions from the study showed
strong correlations between teacher efficacy and student engagement and achievement; teacher
success and organization factors such as shared decision making and being part of a coaching
network; and implementation of instructional changes and integration of curriculum.

Gordon (2001) conducted a study comparing 96 high efficacy teachers to 93 teachers
considered to have low efficacy and examined cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors
associated with classroom management and discipline of at-risk students. The results from the
study indicate that high efficacy teachers are less likely to judge students with challenging
behavior and consider them to have chronic behavior problems. In addition, teachers with high
efficacy are more likely to believe student behavior will improve and less likely to feel anger or
guilt about student behavior. On the contrary, the study indicates that low efficacy teacher are more likely use severe punishment as a result of feeling stress and anger at the student behavior. In conclusion, the study made recommendations for support for the construct of teacher efficacy as a determiner of teacher effectiveness in the domain of classroom management.

Protor (1984) highlighted the importance of teacher expectations and efficacy on student learning in another study related to teacher efficacy. According to Protor, the concept of teacher efficacy has replaced the concept of teacher expectation. Additionally, there are eight dimensions to the development of teacher efficacy which include a sense of personal accomplishment which is related to the teacher viewing the work as meaningful; positive expectations for student behavior and achievement which involves the teacher expecting students to progress; personal responsibility for student learning which includes the teacher accepting accountability and shows a willingness to examine performance; strategies for achieving objectives which involves the teacher planning for student learning, set goals for themselves and identify strategies to achieve them; positive effect which involves the teacher feeling good about teaching, self, and students; sense of control which is related to the teacher believing that she can influence learning; sense of common teacher/student goals which involves the teacher developing a joint venture with students to accomplish desired goals; and democratic decision making which includes students being involved in making decisions regarding goals and strategies.

Research suggests that teacher efficacy does not always come naturally and can be developed by administrators and other leaders in the school. Hoy (2000) describes two factors that can impact a teacher’s sense of efficacy: vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Vicarious experiences occur when teachers observe other teachers using a particularly effective
practice and thus feel comfortable attempting the strategy. An example of social persuasion could take the form of either pep talks or feedback that highlights effective teaching behaviors while at the same time providing constructive and specific suggestions for ways to improve. However, the concept persuasion is likely to lose its positive impact if subsequent teacher experiences are not positive. Hipp’s (1996) study of the influence of principal leadership behaviors identified behaviors as significantly related to efficacy and having a great impact on teacher efficacy in the school. In fact, principals of teachers reporting high levels of efficacy frequently modeled behaviors such as risk-taking and cooperation. As a result, principals were seen as inspiring group purpose. Consequently, the principals contributed to the development of a shared vision which centered on creating a student-centered atmosphere. Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) suggest that one way for school administrators to improve student achievement is by working to raise the collective efficacy beliefs of their faculties.

Goddard et al. (2004) define collective efficacy as the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students learning and behavior. As a result, the faculty in general agrees teachers in this school can work together to get through to the most difficult students. In addition teachers’ shared beliefs shape normative environment of schools’ atmosphere and are an important aspect of the culture of the school. As with an individual teacher’s sense of efficacy, there is a positive relationship between collective efficacy and student achievement. For example, a study conducted by Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) found collective efficacy was more important in explaining school achievement than socioeconomic status and highlighted the finding’s practical significance.

In addition to collective efficacy, coaching in the area of teacher efficacy has been proven to be effective in helping teachers to have high teacher efficacy. Creating professional school
communities can help to overcome isolation through the facilitation of shared values, collaborative decision making, and reflective dialogue (Louis & Marks, 1998). A structured approach for building such a community is peer coaching in which pairs of teachers of similar experience and competence observe each other teach, establish improvement goals, develop strategies to implement goals, observe one another during the revised teaching, and provide specific feedback. This approach requires a safe and collegial environment. Peer coaching has not been found to be universally successful. Perkins (1998) found that teachers had difficulty with the specific communication skills associated with peer coaching. For example, peer coaching teachers rarely asked open-ended questions of peers, did not paraphrase to check for common understanding, and made limited use of helpful probes. Busher (1994) reported a study of teachers who were randomly assigned to peer coaching and control groups. Training consisted of sessions on questioning skills, nonverbal communication, support strategies, and thinking skills. The treatment had no effect on instructional practice, most likely because there was no attempt to provide teachers with content specific instructional skills. These findings suggest that an effective peer coaching program needs to combine training of the peer coaching process with content specific pedagogy training.

Bruce (2005) completed a study which designed a professional development program to increase the teacher efficacy of mathematics teachers. 106 grade six teachers in one school district were randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions in a delayed treatment design. The professional development explicitly addressed four sources of teacher efficacy information identified in social cognition theory (Bandura, 1994). Treatment teachers outperformed control group teachers on three measures of teacher efficacy but results were statistically significant only for efficacy for classroom management. The researcher attributed
the teacher efficacy effects to the priority given in the professional development and to
classroom discussions and overt attempts by leaders to redefine teacher conceptions of classroom
success.

Bruce and Ross (2008) examined the effects of peer coaching on mathematics teaching
practices and teacher beliefs about their capacity to have an impact on student learning. Twelve
teachers in grades three and six participated in a brief but intensive professional development
program over six months. The program focused on effective mathematics teaching strategies and
peer coaching opportunities. Data sources included classroom observations, teacher
self-assessments, interviews, and field notes. Findings showed that teachers implemented key
strategies for effective mathematics teaching, especially in facilitating student interaction and
improving the quality of tasks assigned.

Ross (1992) also completed a study that considered the relationships between student
achievement (knowledge and cognitive skill), teacher efficacy, and interactions with assigned
coaches in a sample of 18 grade 7 and 8 history teachers in 36 classes implementing a specific
innovation with the help of 6 coaches. Student achievement was higher in classrooms of
teachers who had more contact with their coaches and in classrooms of teachers with greater
confidence in the effectiveness of education. Teachers who relied on school administrators
reported less involvement with their coaches and these teachers obtained lower student
achievement. Research on coaching offers consistent evidence of positive outcomes. For
example, Bennett’s (1987) meta-analysis showed that coaching combined with other training
techniques produced implementation effects surpassing those of other methods.

**Rural and Small Town Educational Settings**

Half of the nation’s public schools and approximately 40 percent of public school
students are in rural areas and small towns (National Education Association, 1998).

Traditionally, rural schools have been given credit for pioneering many reform tools like multi-grade classrooms, block scheduling, cooperative learning, and peer assistance (Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, & Dean, 2005). Today, schools in small towns and rural areas face many challenges that are unique to their communities largely due to their geographic isolation.

The rural states in need of the greatest focus in terms of providing quality education for students are the Mississippi River Delta, including Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Arkansas; the Southeast, including South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina; the Southwest, including New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma; and Central Appalachia, which includes Kentucky and West Virginia (The Rural School and Community Trust, 2005). Some of the challenges facing rural schools in these areas include the following: (a) inadequate funding; (b) inadequate school facilities; and (c) inadequate teacher recruitment and retention.

Adequate funding is one of the most pressing issues for rural and small town schools. Declining enrollment plays a major part in adequate funding crisis for rural schools because the state revenue for most of these areas is usually based on a per-pupil formula (Jimerson, 2006). As enrollment declines, so does the amount of funding. In addition, lack of funding usually results in deep cuts in program, staff, and resources. Without proper funding, many students in rural and small town areas are at risk of receiving an education that will not allow them to compete on a larger scale. Related to the funding for rural schools is the challenge of keeping facilities updated and safe. The research shows that three out of 10 rural schools have inadequate buildings (National Education Association, 1998). As a result, 52 percent of rural schools report at least one inadequate building feature, compared with 67 percent of central city schools and 57 percent of urban fringe schools.
In addition to adequate funding and school facilities, teacher recruitment and retention ranks high on the list of most severe challenges facing rural and small town schools (National Education Association, 1998). The need to attract and retain high quality teachers is great. In fact, rural and small town schools in general tend to have teachers that are less educated, slightly less experienced, younger, and less likely to belong to a minority group (National Education Association). Additionally, the compensation given to teachers in rural and small town schools is usually significantly less than their counterparts in other areas.

Rural and small town schools face significant challenges in the effort to provide quality education to students. Due to the fact that rural schools contribute to such a large percentage of the educational settings for the students in our nation, success in these settings is crucial. Strategic recommendations for the success in rural and small town settings by the National Education Association (1998) include, but is not limited to, advocating more funds for rural education, promoting better salaries and benefits for teachers, improving rural school conditions, promoting the use of internet and other technology, and encouraging rural school teachers to enhance their teaching qualifications and skills by taking courses and specific professional training.

The state of Mississippi provides assistance to districts in rural education settings through federal funds distributed through the state’s Title IV- Rural Education and Low Income grants (MDE, 2010). To receive funding, the Local Education Agency (LEA) must meet the following criteria: (a) 20 percent or more of children age 5 to 17 served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line; (b) all schools served by the LEA have a school locale code of 6, 7, or 8 assigned by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center of Education Statistics. A school receives a locale of 6 if it is located in a small town within a metropolitan
statistical area (MSA) with a population of at least 2, 500; a locale of 7 if the rural area is located in an area outside of a MSA and has a population of fewer than 2,500 persons; or a locale of 8 if it is located in a place that is inside a MSA and has a population fewer than 2, 500; and (c) the LEA is not eligible to participate in other programs related to rural education funding.

Summary

Managing disruptive behavior effectively has continued to be a focus of behavioral theorists (Leslie, 1997). Many theories and behavior models developed to explain and redirect disruptive behavior are utilized in schools today as part of a schoolwide behavior system. These models have been effective in intervening on student behavior in the past. Unfortunately, the number of students not responding to schoolwide behavioral plans is increasing. Research shows that an increase in the number of students with diverse needs being educated in the general education setting as well as the impact of societal factors on student behavior are resulting in more students requiring individualized behavior plans (Stahr et al., 2006). The necessity for individualized plans to address student behavior is so important that the Mississippi Department of Education has mandated a policy to require schools in Mississippi to develop a tiered intervention system, which includes schoolwide and individualized plans for all students (MDE, 2010). Research shows that individualized plans using strategies like those found in the Functional Behavior Assessment process have been completed with students who do not respond to traditional methods, and in many cases, have been effective when implemented correctly (Bullock & Gable, 1999; Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Frey & Wilhite, 2005). Teacher efficacy, the teacher’s belief that he or she can be successful, will be essential to the implementation process regardless of teaching experience or grade level taught. Teacher efficacy in implementing behavioral intervention plans will be especially important in rural
educational settings where resources are limited to provide behavioral services and teacher retention is a major priority. This study looked at the relationship between teacher efficacy, years of teaching experience and grade level taught in three rural education school districts in north Mississippi. The methods used to complete the study including the research design, procedures, participants, instruments, and procedures used for data analysis are included in the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter provides a summary of the research design, procedures, participants, instruments, and data analysis procedures used in the study. The research design focuses on the type of study used. The procedures of the study identify what steps were taken to complete the study. The participants of the study describe the individuals that were involved in the study. The instruments of the study outline exactly what material was used to assist the researcher in collecting information, and the data analysis section of the study summarizes the data and draws conclusions about the results. Additionally, the methods used for obtaining and analyzing data are presented. These methods provide an outline of the process used to complete the study.

Design of the Research Study

A mixed methods research design was conducted in this study to investigate whether a relationship exists between years of teaching experience, grade levels, and teacher efficacy in three school districts located in rural education settings in Mississippi. The study involved a Sequential Explanatory Design which included a QUAN → qual data analysis process inclusive of the following (Creswell, 2008, p. 560):

1. The mixed methods researcher places a priority on quantitative data (QUAN) collection and analysis. This is done by introducing it first in the study and having it represent a major aspect of data collection. A small qualitative (qual) component follows in the second phase of the research.

2. The mixed methods researcher collects quantitative data first in the sequence. This is
3. followed by the secondary qualitative data collection. Researchers often present these studies in two phases, with each phase clearly identified in headings in the report.

4. The mixed methods researcher uses the qualitative data to refine the results from the quantitative data. This refinement results in exploring a few typical cases, probing a key result in more detail, or following up with other or extreme cases.

An integrative approach of quantitative and qualitative methods was used as part of this mixed method study. Using the QUAN→qual approach, mixed methods were chosen for this study in order to use qualitative data to help explain the results found in the quantitative data. The priority in the study was the quantitative data obtained from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. Once the results of the surveys were analyzed, the qualitative portion of the study included probing a key finding from the information obtained from the results of the quantitative data in more detail. The qualitative data in the study was used to align and explore information found in the quantitative portion of the study. To complete the qualitative portion of the study, principal interviews were conducted on the influence of teacher efficacy on the behavior intervention process.

The study completed had three major focuses. One focus of the study was to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the independent variable of years of experience and the dependent variable of teacher efficacy in rural school districts. The study included teachers having less than five years of teaching experience and teachers with five years or more teaching experience from school districts participating in the study.

A second focus of the study was to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the independent variable of the grade level taught by the teacher and the dependent variable of teacher efficacy. The study included elementary teachers in grades
The third focus of the study was to examine the interaction between the two independent variables, years of teaching experience and grade levels taught.

The qualitative focus in the study involved the leadership perspective on the relationship between teacher efficacy and implementing behavior interventions. The study included personal interviews with six principals, three elementary principals and three high school principals. Interviews were conducted with principals to explore the results from surveys completed by teachers. Interviews examined the impact of teacher efficacy on implementing behavior interventions from the perspective of leaders from different grade levels.

This study was conducted with elementary, middle, and high teachers from three school districts in rural education settings in north Mississippi in response to the increased number of students not responding to traditional schoolwide behavior plans and a policy mandated by the state of Mississippi to provide behavioral interventions to students who do not respond to schoolwide discipline plans (MDE, 2010). Research suggests behavior interventions strategies and plans can be successful when the behavior intervention process is implemented correctly (Sugai, 1990). Therefore, the teacher’s willingness to implement interventions and belief that the process will make a difference will be crucial to the implementation process.

Hypotheses in the Study:

The following null hypotheses were used to guide the quantitative section of the study:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by years of teaching experience (less than five years and five years or more) in rural school districts in north Mississippi.
Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by grade level [elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12)] in rural school districts in north Mississippi.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant interaction between years of experience and grade levels for teachers in rural schools in north Mississippi.

The qualitative section of the study was guided by the following three questions:

1. How was the behavior intervention process established and how is it implemented?
2. What influence does teacher efficacy have on the implementation process for behavior interventions?
3. What does your school do to enhance teacher efficacy toward implementing behavioral interventions?

**Procedures in the Research Study**

Different procedures were implemented in order to collect relevant data for the study. Prior to conducting the research study, the researcher gained approval and permission from the Dissertation Committee and Institutional Review Board of The University of Mississippi to conduct the study (see Appendix A). The researcher also obtained approval and permission from the superintendents or the board of trustees of the three rural school districts to administer instruments used in the study to staff and use the results from the data collected to complete this study.

Elementary, middle, and high school teachers in grades Kindergarten through twelve were included in the study. Participants were notified during a professional development meeting of the option to participate in the study. Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Information letters (see Appendix B) outlining the study and informing teachers of their option to
participate were distributed with the survey for the study.

Teachers who agreed to participate in the study were given surveys and time at the beginning of the professional development meeting to complete the surveys. The data was collected by a representative from each school and mailed back to the researcher. The data was analyzed to provide information concerning the relationship between years of experience, grade level, and teacher efficacy when implementing behavior interventions.

The procedures in the study also involved interviewing elementary and high school principals. Principals’ participation in the study was voluntary. Information letters (see Appendix B) outlining the study and informing principals of their option to participate was distributed prior to conducting interviews. Once the results from the teacher surveys were completed and analyzed, principals from the three elementary and three high schools were interviewed to explore areas identified from surveys. Results from the information obtained in this qualitative portion of the study were analyzed in themes to further determine the influence of teacher efficacy in the behavior intervention process.

**Participants in the Research Study**

The study targeted elementary, middle, and high teachers from three rural school districts in the Mississippi Delta. The population for the three districts included in this study ranged from 891 students to 1,319 students. All districts in the study are located in rural settings in north Mississippi and experience challenges such as teacher retention, lack of necessary resources, and funding to provide services to students that make the effective use of behavior interventions even more critical (MDE, 2010). Elementary and high school principals from the three districts were also included in the study.
Description of the Research Sites

Table 1 provides information on the three school districts that participated in the study. School District #1 in the study is a district located in a rural setting with a student population of 1,319 students. The district employs approximately 32 elementary classroom teachers, 13 middle school classroom teachers, and 26 high school classroom teachers. The demographics for the district include a population that is 91% black; 7% white; and 2% Hispanic. The student population is 50% female and 50% male (MDE, 2010).

School District #2 in the study is a school district located in a rural setting with a student population of 1,073 students. The district employs approximately 31 elementary classroom teachers; 12 middle school classroom teachers, and 25 high classroom teachers. The demographics for the district include a student population that is 100% black. The student population is 53% female and 47% male (MDE, 2010).

School District #3 in the study is school district in a rural setting that has a student population of 891 students. The district employs approximately 28 elementary classroom teachers; 10 middle school classroom teachers, and 24 high classroom teachers. The demographics for the district include a student population that is 96 % black and 4% white. The student population is 52% male and 48% female (MDE, 2010).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Number of Elementary Teachers</th>
<th>Number of Middle School Teachers</th>
<th>Number of High School Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School District#1</td>
<td>1,319</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District#2</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruments in the Research Study

**Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale.** The modified version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Morgan and Hoy (2001) was used in the study (see Appendix C). The survey collected data about the role efficacy plays in the implementation process for behavior interventions. The first section of the survey addressed teacher efficacy measures in the area of student engagement. Student engagement is crucial to effective classroom management (Jackson & Panyan, 2002). The second section of the survey measured whether the teacher can effectively instruct students. The third section of the survey involved classroom management and measures if the teacher believes he or she can make a difference with behavior problems that occur in the classroom on a daily basis. The final section of the survey is a modification to the original survey and focused on teachers' beliefs regarding implementing behavioral interventions for behaviors that go beyond minor behavior infractions. For the purpose of this study, the overall score was used for data analysis purposes. In a study conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, the following reliabilities were found for the scale used in this study: Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale overall alpha .94; Engagement alpha .87; Instruction alpha .91; and Management alpha .90.

**Principal Interview Questions.** The study included the use of interviews to probe key finding found in the results of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. The interview questions were developed by the researcher (see Appendix C) in an attempt to probe key findings from data results. Although this qualitative section of study was not the main method of the study, the results from this portion of the study were essential in clarifying and probing an area that could
not be explained using the quantitative method alone. As part of the qualitative section of the study, interviews were conducted with school administrations in elementary and high schools to obtain more information on the behavioral implementation process and the influence of teacher efficacy on the process.

**Data Analysis**

The study included a QUAN → qual process for data analysis. As part of the process, quantitative data collection was the priority method for the study followed by qualitative data collection to explore results. For the quantitative portion of the study, a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the relationship between years of teaching experience, grade level, and teacher efficacy toward implementing behavior interventions. The Two-Way ANOVA examines the influences of two independent variables on the dependent variable (Wiersma, 1991). The independent variables were years of teaching experience and grade level taught, and the dependent variable was teacher efficacy. The procedure was used to determine if the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable was sufficiently strong to warrant statistical significance. The procedure also was used to determine if there was a significant interaction between the two independent variables (Creswell, 1994). Interaction involves the combined effect of years of teaching experience and grade level on teacher efficacy.

Participants completing the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale received a summated score that was used to analyze the data for the study according to district designation. All data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for data analysis in the quantitative portion of the study. The results were used to address the hypotheses of the study. Years of teaching experience and the grade level of the teacher was obtained from Section II of the modified scale, which asked participants to complete demographic information.
The demographics section also collected additional information for exploration like race, highest level of certification and whether or not the participant attended schools in the district where they taught.

As part of the qualitative portion of the study, interviews were conducted with select principals based on information received from the quantitative section of the study in order to further examine the influence of teacher efficacy in the implementation of behavioral interventions from a leadership perspective. Qualitative results were used to explain and interpret findings of the quantitative study. Themes were developed to analyze the information from interviews and report key information.

**Summary of Methods**

Rural school districts face challenges in many areas including, but not limited to, limited resources, high teacher turnover, and funding. This study investigated the relationship between years of teaching experience, grade levels, and teacher efficacy in the behavioral intervention process in three school districts located in rural education settings in north Mississippi. A 2-way ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teacher efficacy with the two independent variables, years of experience and grade level. Personal interviews were also conducted and analyzed to obtain leadership perspectives from elementary and high school principals on the relationship between teacher efficacy and implementing behavior interventions. Data for the 2-way ANOVA and personal interviews are listed in the next chapter as well as an analysis of the results.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this mixed method sequential explanatory study was to examine the relationship between teacher efficacy, grade level, and years of experience with teachers in three rural school districts in north Mississippi. Within this chapter, the results of the study are presented. The quantitative portion of the study includes demographic information and data analysis for the three hypotheses that guide the study. A Two-Way ANOVA was conducted for data analysis. The qualitative portion of the study follows with information received from interviews with select administrators to expand on the results from the quantitative data and address this topic from a leadership perspective. For the qualitative portion of the study, participants were interviewed using three main questions with six follow up questions to probe findings collected from the survey completed in the quantitative section of the study. Responses to personal interviews were analyzed and emerging themes developed to address the qualitative section of the study.

Demographic Information

The study targeted elementary, middle, and high teachers from three rural school districts in the Mississippi Delta. The population of the three districts included in this study ranged from 891 students to 1,319 students. All districts in the study were located in rural settings in north Mississippi and experience challenges such as teacher retention, lack of necessary resources, and funding to provide services to students that make the effective use of behavior interventions even more critical (MDE, 2010). For the quantitative section of the study, teachers from each district
completed modified surveys. Approximately 201 surveys were distributed. Out of the surveys distributed, 123 surveys were returned resulting in a 61% response rate. Table 2 shows the percentage of surveys returned by each district:

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts Response to Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=123

Table 2, Districts Response to Survey, indicates the following: teachers from District 1 completed 24.4 percent of the surveys returned; teachers from District 2 completed 38.2 percent of the surveys returned, and teachers from District 3 completed 37.4 percent of the surveys returned for the study.

The study examined if a relationship exist between teacher efficacy, years of experience, and grade level taught. A demographic section was added to the modified teacher survey instrument used in the study to capture background information related to the participants in the study. The population for the study consisted of 123 elementary, middle, and high school teachers who completed surveys and six principals who completed interviews. Three elementary school principals and three high school principals were interviewed on how teacher efficacy impacts the implementation of behavior interventions.

The study examined the relationship between the dependent variable teacher efficacy and two independent variables, years of teaching experience and grade levels taught. For the years of teaching experience, the study focused on two groups: teachers with less than five years of
teaching experience and teacher with five or more years of experience. Table 3 shows years of experience information for teachers who participated in the study:

Table 3

*Years of Teaching Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 4 yrs.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more years</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=123*

Table 3, Years of Teaching Experience, reveals that out of the 123 surveys returned, approximately 51.6 percent of the surveys returned were from teachers with less than five years of teaching experience, and 48.4 percent of the surveys returned were from teachers with five or more years of experience. The table shows close to an equal number of new and experienced teachers completed the survey used in the study.

Grade levels taught was the second independent variable in the study. The study focused on three grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Elementary school grade levels include grades kindergarten through five; middle school grade levels include grades sixth through eighth, and high school grade levels include grades nine through twelve. Table 4 shows the information related to grade levels taught for teachers participating in the study:

Table 4

*Grade Levels Taught*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=123*
Table 4, Grade Levels Taught, indicates the following: Out of the 123 surveys returned, teachers from elementary grade levels submitted 36.6 percent of the surveys; teachers from middle school grade levels submitted 23.6 percent of the surveys; and teachers from high school grade levels submitted 39.8 percent of the surveys. The table shows fewer middle school teachers completed the survey. However, the number of middle school teachers represented in the study was smaller than the number of elementary or high school teachers represented.

Other demographic information was collected as part of the study for exploration purposes. Other areas included highest level of certification, race, and whether or not the teacher completing the survey attended school in the district. Demographic information collected revealed 72.5 percent of teachers who completed the survey had a Bachelors degree; teachers with Masters degrees represented 24.2 percent of the participants completing the study; teachers that had Specialist degrees represented 0.5 percent of teachers completing the survey; and teachers who had Doctorate degrees represented 0.8 percent of the participants completing the survey. In addition to highest level of certification, information on race and whether the teacher attended a school in the district were also collected. Information collected revealed that 68.3 percent of the teachers completing the survey were black; teachers who were white comprised 28.3 percent of participants completing the study; and 3.3 percent of teachers completing the survey filled in the category other. Teachers who attended school in the district comprised 32.8 percent of the participants completing the survey whereas 67.2 percent of the teachers completing the study did not attend schools in the district.

**Quantitative Analysis of Teacher Efficacy, Grade Levels, and Years of Experience**

Surveys were completed by teachers in three rural school districts in the Mississippi Delta. As part of the data collection process, surveys were administered and collected by
representatives from each district and returned to the researcher through the mail. Prior to placing the data in the SPSS database, the district and school were given identification codes: District 1 was coded with the number 1; District 2 was coded with the number 2; and District 3 was coded with the number 3. Each school was also given a code. Elementary schools in the study were coded with the number 1; middle schools were coded with the number 2; and high schools in the study were coded with the number 3.

To determine an efficacy scale score, each answer choice on the survey scale received 1-5 points based on the Likert scale of responses. For the demographic section of the survey, answer choices were coded based on the question. For example, for years of experience, zero (0) to four (4) years were coded with the number 1 and five (5) years or more was coded with the number 2. For grade level taught, elementary grade levels taught was coded using the number 1; middle school grade levels were coded with the number 2; and high school grade levels were coded using the number 3.

A Two-Way ANOVA was completed to address the three null hypotheses in the study and complete the quantitative section of the study. SPSS analysis was used to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the dependent and independent variables in the study. The alpha for the Two-Way ANOVA was 0.5. As part of the Two-Way ANOVA, a Levene’s Test of Equality was completed to determine the homogeneity of variance. Table 5 shows the results from the test:

Table 5

| Results from Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| $F$            | $df1$   | $df2$   | $Sig.$  |
| .537           | 5       | 116     | .748    |
Table 5, Results from the Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances, shows the p value from the Levene’s Test is 0.748. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the assumption of homogeneous of variance was met, and the Two-way ANOVA could be used to address the three hypotheses in the study (Katz, Restori, & Lee, 2009). Table 6 shows the results from the 2-way ANOVA:

Table 6

2-way ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>1.791</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>1.760</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1952.588</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1952.588</td>
<td>9592.080</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearsof teachingexperience</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.297</td>
<td>1.459</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradelevelstaught</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>2.939</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearsof teachingexperience</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>1.031</td>
<td>.360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradelevelstaught</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>23.613</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2083.170</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>25.404</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the results from the Two-way ANOVA. The results from the table provide the significance values for variables included in the study, teacher efficacy, years of teaching experience and grade levels taught as well as information on the interaction between the two independent variables.

Quantitative Analysis: Results of Hypothesis One

The first null hypothesis in the study is there is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by years of teaching experience (less than five years and five years or more). The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale survey instrument was used to measure teacher efficacy. Data from the 2-way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference between years of
teaching experience for teachers with less than five years of teaching experience and five years or more of teaching experience. The F value for the two groups was 1.459 and the p value was 0.230. Since the p value for the two groups is greater than 0.05, there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

**Quantitative Analysis: Results of Hypothesis Two**

The second null hypothesis in the study is there is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by grade level taught. The three grade levels in the study was elementary which included grades Kindergarten through five; middle school which included grades six through eight, and high school which included grades nine through twelve in rural school districts in north Mississippi. Data from the Two-Way ANOVA indicate the following: there is no significant difference in the three grade levels taught as it relates to teacher efficacy. The F value for the three groups included in the study was 2.939 and the p value was 0.057. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Although the results from the Two-Way ANOVA showed no significant difference in grade levels taught, the data showed that the difference between teacher efficacy scores for elementary high school teachers was approaching significance with a p value of 0.057. The difference in teacher efficacy for elementary teachers and high school teachers was an area the researcher believed warranted more examination. The qualitative section of the study was used to explore this finding in more detail.

**Quantitative Analysis: Results of Hypothesis Three**

The third null hypothesis in the study was there is no significant interaction between years of experience and grade levels for teachers in rural schools in north Mississippi. The 2-way ANOVA conducted indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in teacher
efficacy based on years of experience or grade levels taught. In addition, the interaction between the two independent variables, years of experience and grade levels taught was not significant with the F value 1.031 and a p value 0.360. The data did reveal significance approaching in the area of grade level taught. Further analysis showed the teacher efficacy score for elementary teachers and high school teachers was approaching significance with a p value of 0.052. To explore the difference in teacher efficacy for elementary and high school teachers, a qualitative section of the study was added which involved the school leadership perspective related to this finding.

**Qualitative Analysis on Teacher Efficacy, Grade Level, and Years of Experience**

For the purpose of this mixed methods study, a qualitative component was used to inform key findings in the quantitative portion of the study (Creswell, 2008). One quantitative finding particularly notable in the study was related to the teacher efficacy score for elementary teachers compared to the teacher efficacy score for high school teachers. Although there is no statistically significant difference between teacher efficacy and grade level taught, the findings indicated that results were approaching significance. As an initial step in exploring possible explanations for this finding, personal interviews were conducted with the three elementary and three high school principals that had schools involved in the study. In order to analyze the results, the information was put into themes. The responses for each question were analyzed for reoccurring and emerging themes based on the language that occurred in the participants’ responses. Narrative quotes from some of the participants are provided for some of themes examined.

For the qualitative section of this mixed methods study, interviews with three elementary principals and three high school principals were conducted by the researcher. The analysis for the interviews conducted focused on the following questions along with related follow up
questions: (1) How was the behavior intervention process established at your school and how is it implemented?; (2) What influence does teacher efficacy have on the implementation process for behavior interventions?; and (3) What does your school do to enhance teacher efficacy toward implementing behavioral interventions? These questions provide a framework for guiding the dialogue on this topic.

**Qualitative Analysis: Results of Question One**

The first personal interview question, How was the behavior intervention process established at your school and how is it implemented?, resulted in the following three emerging themes: (a) inconsistency with implementing school wide and behavior intervention plans; (b) the principal’s role in the intervention process; and (c) types of interventions used. The first interview question was designed to see if elementary and high school principals had similar processes for implementing behavior interventions.

**Inconsistency with implementing Schoolwide and Behavior Intervention Plans.** An analysis of responses to interview questions by elementary and high school administrators revealed the majority of participants reported their intervention process was built on a schoolwide plan. The schoolwide plan consisted of a number of steps used by teachers when misbehavior occurs in the classroom. All principals involved in the interview process stated similar processes such as giving a warning and calling parents are used in their school for conducting behavior interventions. As part of the schoolwide plan, the behavior intervention process begins in the classroom with the classroom teacher. Both elementary and high school principals stated teachers were required to follow steps daily. According to the principals interviewed, this process was in place to handle most of the behavior problems at the school. These statements were in line with prior research which suggests that schoolwide plans can
handle 80% of student discipline if implemented consistently (Scott, Meers, et al., 2000).

However, most principals indicated that the problem occurs when the process is not implemented as it is designed or there is no consistency in rules established by staff. Both elementary and high school principals reported that consistency was the major problem with implementing behavior interventions at their schools.

One principal stated:

Teachers know the plan that is in place, but they often do not want to go through the steps in the plan. There are some behaviors that are so severe that a step plan is not appropriate, but for most behaviors, teachers need to follow the plan in place (Elementary Principal from School District #3, January 21, 2011).

Several principals in the study noted that there are various steps that teachers do not want to always follow, and this is where the behavior intervention plans begin to fail. A high school principal emphasized the importance of consistency when making the following statement: The main thing teachers know is consistency and fairness is the key component to making behavior interventions work. Teachers must understand that they must be consistent when implementing the district plan and consequences (High School Principal from District #2, January 8, 2011).

**Principal’s Role in the Intervention Process.** During the interview, there was one area that appeared to differentiate the elementary and high school principals. When discussing the schoolwide plans and the behavior intervention process, elementary principals seemed to be a lot more involved and involved more frequently than high school principals. Several elementary principals described intervening in the behavior intervention process early, sometimes even before the process required them to do so.
One elementary principal stated:

In many cases, when students do not follow the process in the classroom, the teachers send the students to the office, and I talk to them. If they continue to misbehave, I may talk to them again (Elementary Principal from District #2, January 11, 2011). The statements indicate the principal is intervening before the teacher completes the steps listed in the behavior plan.

A second elementary principal stated:

We are urging teachers to take hold of things and use those classroom management strategies I know they know and are aware of implementing. Many things can be handled in the classroom and teachers must complete the steps if they are going to be effective. I have talked to the teachers about handling more of the minor infractions in the classroom (Elementary Principal from District #3, January 21, 2011).

By not consistently requiring teachers to complete the steps in the behavior plan for the school, elementary principals may impact teacher efficacy by not allowing them to take responsibility for behaviors that could be handled on the classroom level. If teachers feel they do not have responsibility for implementing behavior interventions, their sense of efficacy will never be developed.

**Types of Interventions Used.** An area that continued to surface in interviews with principals was the fact that corporal punishment is used as an intervention. The reviews were mixed. One elementary principal believed that corporal punishment had a positive impact on redirecting students’ behavior. In contrast, another elementary principal and one high school principal strongly believed that corporal punishment was very ineffective and did not think it should be used.
The first elementary principal stated:

One thing that I believe helps our teachers is that we still use corporal punishment. It does not work for all students, but for some students, it does help students to change their inappropriate behavior. For us, it has been helpful in managing behavior and keeping behavior problems down (Elementary Principal from District 3, January 11, 2011).

Although this principal believed corporal punishment was a deterrent for inappropriate behavior, other principals in the study shared a different view of the consequence. A second elementary principal shared that:

We have one big change in our behavior intervention process this year. Teacher can no longer use corporal punishment. Using the process was not effective. Teachers understand that it is no longer a tool in their toolkit. There are some growing pains with the change in school policy, but teachers are adjusting. Teachers have to look for different techniques like involving parents more. As a result of the change, discipline referrals went up at the beginning of the year, but teachers are now finding other ways to intervene on inappropriate behavior (Elementary Principal from District #1, January 21, 2011). The statements indicate that the principal strongly disagrees with corporal punishment as an intervention, and it has been removed completely from the behavior management plan.

A high school principal also discussed the lack of support for the consequence:

The one part of our behavior policy that I do not agree with is corporal punishment. Although we use it occasionally, I do not feel it is appropriate for high school students. I
try to talk to students more about wanting a quality education and not having to be forced into submission (High School Principal from District #2, January 8, 2011).

Corporal punishment appeared to be a large part of the behavior management process with the principals I interviewed either because they used it regularly as part of the steps in the behavior intervention process or because the decision not to use it was having a major role in the behavior intervention process.

**Qualitative Analysis: Results of Question Two**

For the second interview question, What influence does teacher efficacy have on the implementation process for behavior interventions?, the following three themes emerged: (1) influence of teacher efficacy on the behavior intervention process; (2) years of experience do not play a role in teacher efficacy; (3) the reliance on external behavior interventionist and partners may have an impact on teacher efficacy. Interview question two was designed to determine how important teachers and administrators believed teacher efficacy was in implementing behavior interventions.

**Influence of teacher efficacy on the behavior intervention process.** Most principals interviewed stated they believe teacher efficacy has a major influence on implementing behavior interventions. Both elementary and high school principals described staff members that had high teacher efficacy compared to those that had low teacher efficacy. One high school principal noted: If a teacher does not truly believe they can make a difference, they will not attempt to use the different behavior intervention strategies available to impact behavior (High School Principal from District #2, January 8, 2011).

An elementary principal stated:

Let me go back and stress the importance of teacher efficacy. If they [teachers] don’t
believe they can effectively manage the behavior, they will never do it. A classroom teacher definitely needs a sense of efficacy. I think efficacy is connected to teacher experience (Elementary Principal from District #1, January 21, 2011). These statements indicate that the principal believes teacher efficacy is strongly tied to the years of teaching experience the teacher has accumulated.

**Years of teaching experience and teacher efficacy.** Many of the principals in the study discussed the impact they feel years of teaching experience have on teacher efficacy. Whereas one elementary principal believed strongly that experience was directly connected to teacher efficacy, the majority of the principals interviewed stated they believed years of experience had nothing to do with teacher efficacy related to implementing behavior interventions.

One elementary principal stated:

Oh no! I have not seen that years make a difference at our school. As a teacher, you either have it or you don’t. It is about expectations! It does not matter if you have 25 years and on your way out the door or 3. It is about expectations (Elementary Principal from District #3, January 21, 2011)! These statements indicate the principal strongly believes that years of experience are not related to the level of teacher efficacy.

A high school principal had a similar response:

No ma’am! Older teachers sometimes have their own way of doing things and do not want to necessarily follow the policy or the plan. They want to do what they have always done because they feel it works even when it doesn’t work (High School Principal from District #2, January 8, 2011)! The principal’s statements suggest years of teaching experience may be a barrier to teacher efficacy and older principal do not want to change. The one principal that felt strongly that years of experience made a difference even admitted that
it is not always the case by stating the following:

Some of our best classroom managers are actually some of our younger teachers because they sometimes have a better relationship with students and leverage more with them. I cannot say it is all one way or the other, but I believe that overall years of experience make a difference (Elementary Principal from District #1, January 21, 2011). The statements indicate that although the principal believes years of experience is strongly related to teacher efficacy, there are some new teachers at his school that have a higher level of teacher efficacy than teachers with more years of experience.

**Impact of external behavior interventionists on teacher efficacy.** An emerging theme in several of the interviews was the dependence on an external behavior interventionist as part of the behavior intervention process, which may play a role on teacher efficacy. Several principals noted external interventionists play a major role in the intervention process at their school. In several interviews, principals commented that they have a person hired in their school or district that helps with the behavioral intervention process. Several principals shared their schools have after school programs conducted by mental health agencies that serve as interventionist for some of the behavior infractions that occur on a daily basis. There were problems noted by some principals with having an external interventionist. For example, one principal stated: One person in the district cannot handle all of the students that may need behavior intervention at the time the intervention is needed. As a result, the teacher must be responsible for some behavior interventions on the classroom level (Elementary Principal District 2). Other principals noted that with the programs conducted by mental health agencies, the intervention was not always directly aligned with the problems at school or timely as needed for interventions to be successful in the classroom.
Qualitative Analysis: Results of Question Three

For the third and final interview question, What does your school do to enhance teacher efficacy toward implementing behavior interventions?, the following themes emerged: (a) one shot behavior intervention training through professional development that was usually conducted during school orientation at the beginning of the school year and (b) the behavior intervention process did not focus on training teachers in day to day strategies to deal with behavior interventions that went beyond the schoolwide plan.

One-shot behavior intervention training at the beginning of the year. Since the quantitative data showed the difference in teacher efficacy scores for elementary and high school teachers was approaching significance, principals that participated in the interview process were asked what processes were in place to increase teacher efficacy in the area of implementing behavior interventions at their particular schools. Both elementary and high school principals stated that training was usually conducted early in the school year to assist teachers with implementing behavior interventions throughout the school year. One elementary principal stated:

Usually during the first days of school, our teachers receive training on how to implement behavior interventions. The teachers work on the schoolwide plans and determine what steps they will follow from day to day to manage behavior. All teachers do not use the same process. Some teachers may have five steps and some may have ten (Elementary from Principal District 3, January 21, 2011). The statements indicate the professional development at this school for behavior intervention only occurs once a
year, and teachers are not given consistent guidelines for behavior management at that time.

No principal interviewed reported ongoing training in the area of implementing behavior interventions. Lack of systematic on-going professional development contrasts with research that states professional development must be ongoing and job embedded if strategies covered are to be effectively implemented (Bruce, 2005). Several principals did state that they were looking to change ways to enhance teacher efficacy for the upcoming year and provide more professional development in order to make the behavior intervention process more effective at their school.

**Professional development on behavior interventions beyond the schoolwide plan.**

Responses from principals interviewed revealed that the focus for implementing behavior interventions is still their schoolwide plan and did not emphasize teacher interventions beyond the schoolwide plan or traditional approaches. The principals noted that the main source of professional development focused on the schoolwide plan but more training needed to be done to help teachers implement behavior interventions when the schoolwide plan does not work if students were going to remain in the general classroom, be successful in the classroom, and experience an increase in student achievement.

**Summary of Results**

This study used a mixed method design using both quantitative and qualitative method. As part of the QUAN → qual approach used for the study, quantitative data collection was the priority method for the study followed by qualitative data collection to explore results and key findings. For the quantitative portion of the study, a modified version of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Morgan and Hoy (2001) is the instrument used in the study. To analyze the data for the quantitative portion of the study, a Two-way ANOVA was
completed. For the qualitative portion of the study, interview questions created by the researcher were used to explain findings from the teacher surveys completed as part of the quantitative portion of the study. Six principals were interviewed as part of the study. Principals interviewed consisted of three principals from elementary schools involved in the study and three principals from high schools involved in the study. The results from the quantitative section of the study indicated that there is no statistically significant difference in teachers efficacy for years of teaching experience or grade level taught. In addition, there is no significant interaction between the two independent variables, grade level taught and years of teaching experience. The analysis did show that the test for teacher efficacy for elementary and high school teachers was approaching significance. As a result, the qualitative portion of the study focused on personal interviews from all elementary and high school principals involved in the study. The interview questions focused on the behavior intervention process and how it was established; the impact of teacher efficacy on implementing behavior interventions; and the processes in place at each school to enhance teacher efficacy when implementing behavior interventions. The summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications are presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V is comprised of four sections to include the following: (1) a summary of the study. The summary of the study outlines important concepts found in the study; (2) the conclusions of the study. The conclusions of the study make deductions based on the information obtained from the study; (3) implications based on findings. Implications for the study suggest what larger concepts can be inferred from the conclusions in the study; and (4) recommendations for future study. Recommendations for future study suggest how information from the study can be used to continue examining important findings in the study. The information in this chapter is a summation of important concepts in the study and how the information can be used as a stepping stone to future research in the area of implementing behavior interventions.

Summary of the Research

When analyzing the data collected from the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, it is apparent that although there is no statistically significant difference in teacher efficacy for years of teaching experience and grade levels taught, the difference in scores between elementary teachers and high school teachers is approaching significance. In addition to the quantitative data, information collected from interviews with elementary principals indicates that role of the administrator in the implementation process in elementary schools is different from the role of the administrator in high schools. Intervening in the behavior process is usually more prevalent and occurs more frequently with elementary principals. By intervening in the process and not
allowing the intervention to be completed as planned, administrators in the elementary grade levels may encourage teachers to depend on the administrator to handle problems related to intervention and not require teachers to take responsibility for the level of behavior management required on the classroom level.

Responses from the interviews completed in the study indicated a need for more consistency when implementing the schoolwide behavior plan and behavior interventions. Principals from both the elementary and high school grade levels reported that teachers are not always consistent in applying interventions with behavior. Several principals stated that most of their intervention plans require teachers to contact parents. They also indicated that this is a step that teachers often want to omit. Additionally, principals stated that there is usually a step by step process that must be completed, and teacher often skip some of the steps. For more severe behaviors, some principals stated that teachers do not consistently work with the behavior plan as it is designed. Lack of consistency can play a major role in the implementation process with behavior interventions.

Information received from the principal interviews revealed that some schools and districts rely on an external interventionist to help manage the behavior intervention process. Principals described different types of interventionists, including district behavior interventionist and mental health agencies that provided behavior management services. However, probing some administrators for more in depth explanations revealed that often what occurs in the services provided did not necessarily match the interventions needed in the classroom. An alignment of services provided and the services needed did not seem to be evident. Additionally, very little discussion of data driven decisions to drive the intervention was given during the interview process with both elementary and high school principals.
The impact of years of teaching experience was an area that recurred during most of the interviews with both elementary and high school principals. Five out of six administrators interviewed commented that years of teaching experience did not play a role in the management of behavior in the classroom or the implementation process for behavior interventions. In fact, one elementary and one high school administrator commented that many years of experience was often a barrier to implementing behavior intervention because the teacher did not want to use different strategies needed to address different types of behavior. Most of the administrators in the study verbalized what was found during the study; there is no statistically significant difference between teacher efficacy and years of teaching experience.

Professional development to enhance teacher efficacy and prepare teachers to effectively implement behavior interventions appeared to be an area of deficiency for both the elementary and high school principals interviewed. Most principals reported that professional development occurred during the beginning of the school year but was not followed up with on-going professional development. In addition, no job-embedded professional development was usually performed by trainers, behavior interventionist or mental health agencies. The lack of on-going, job-embedded professional development is essential for the effective implementation of strategies and procedures.

Conclusions of the Research

The present study examined if a relationship exists between teacher efficacy, years of experience, and grade level taught when implementing behavior interventions. From the quantitative perspective, data collected from the study responded to the three null hypotheses in the study. A 2-way ANOVA was completed to analyze data. Hypothesis One in the study stated there is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by years of teaching experience (less than 5
years and five years or more) in rural school districts in north Mississippi. Results showed no significant differences in the two levels of years of experience with an F value of 1.459 and a p value of 0.230. Hypothesis Two of the study stated there is no significant difference in teacher efficacy by grade level [elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high (9-12)] in rural school districts in north Mississippi. The results showed no significant differences in the three grade levels. The F value was 2.939 and p value was 0.057. However, the results showed the test was reaching significance. Since the test was reaching significance, this finding would serve as an area of focus for qualitative section of the study.

Hypothesis Three stated there is no significant interaction between years of experience and grade levels for teachers in rural schools in north Mississippi. Results from the 2-way ANOVA conducted indicated that the interaction term was not statistically significant; the F value was 1.031 and the p value was 0.360.

From a qualitative perspective, the interview portion of the study ascertained four key findings: (a) most districts still rely heavily on the schoolwide behavior plans developed by the school or district for all students; (b) the role of teacher efficacy and administrator efficacy play a significant role in implementing behavior interventions; (c) there is a reliance on external behavior interventionist but the process does not seem to be well coordinated; and (d) most professional development for this area was usually given at the beginning of the school year with little structured job-embedded training.

**Implications of the Research**

Information obtained from the study reveals that there is more to be done if teachers are going to effectively implement behavior interventions. It will be critical that the level of behavior interventions meet the needs of students who require more than is what is in place for
all students. In addition, the role the administrator play will have an impact on the level of teacher efficacy both in day to day interactions and in areas such as sustained job-embedded professional development. Based on the analysis of information obtained in the study, implications are listed below:

1. Schools and school district must move from schoolwide discipline plans for all students to more individualized behavior plans in order to meet the needs of the diverse population of students entering schools today.

2. Administrators in elementary schools must empower teachers to play a more active role in the implementation of behavior interventions on the classroom level.

3. The focus of external behavior interventionist, while convenient, must be in line with the intervention process developed by the school or district and support teacher behavior intervention plans in the classroom.

4. On-going, job-embedded professional development in the area of implementing behavior interventions must be completed if students with more severe behavior problems are going to remain in the classroom, allow teachers to meet the expectation of increased student achievement, and follow the mandate by the state to provide appropriate interventions.

Based on the findings of the study, school districts in the study are still utilizing schoolwide plans for most students they serve and have not moved beyond the schoolwide plans to more individualized behavior plans to address the diverse needs of students entering the classroom today. Methods external to the classroom teacher, such as district interventionists and mental health agencies, are utilized sparingly, but the interventions provided are often not directly aligned to what occurs in the classroom and do not adequately meet the needs of all students in
the school. The role of the principal in the implementation process, as far as enhancing teacher efficacy and providing quality job-embedded professional development, will be essential if teachers are going to implement behavior interventions effectively and meet requirements to provide adequate interventions to all students.

Findings of the study are closely related to the research when examining the impact of teacher efficacy in the behavior intervention process. Three areas in the research are especially relevant to this study: (1) the importance of teacher efficacy in the implementation of behavior interventions; (2) the role of the administrator in the management of student behavior; and (3) the importance of professional development to enhance teacher efficacy and the implementation process.

Teacher efficacy was a major focus of the study. The hypotheses in the study stated there was no significant difference in teacher efficacy for years of teaching experience and grade levels taught. Findings from the study indicated that teacher efficacy and expectations are critical to success when implementing behavior interventions despite the years of experience or grade level. The findings are in line with research by Tournaki and Podell (2005), which suggests that it is teacher beliefs not amount of experience that determines success for teachers. Swicegood (2005) also researched the impact of efficacy and found that teachers with high sense of efficacy believe they have the power to produce desired results in their classrooms and schools regardless of other factors. Shahid and Thompson (2001) agree and found that teacher efficacy was correlated with classroom management as well as other areas like student achievement and quality teaching.

As part of the qualitative portion of the study, many principals stated that teacher efficacy is essential to the implementation of behavior interventions during the interview process. Most
administrators strongly believed that teacher efficacy had nothing to do with years of experience. Rather, it was based on the teacher expectations and if the teacher truly believed he or she could impact behavior for students. Proctor (1984) agrees with the information received from principals related to teacher efficacy. According to Proctor, the concept of teacher efficacy has replaced teacher expectations. Gordon (2001) also researched the impact of teacher efficacy. The results from this study found that high efficacy teachers are less likely to judge students with challenging behavior. In addition, teachers with high efficacy are more likely to believe student behavior will improve and less likely to feel anger, embarrassment or guilt about student behavior. Both the findings from the study and the research on behavior interventions suggest that teacher efficacy play a major role on implementation process.

The role of the administrator in the implementation process was another common area found in the findings of the study and the research. Information obtained from the study indicates that principals on different grade levels have different approaches related to expectations when implementing behavior interventions. Elementary principals seemed to intervene earlier and more frequently in the process than high school principals which could have a direct impact on teacher efficacy. When teachers believe it is not their responsibility to handle interventions on the classroom level, their level of efficacy may be impacted. Hipp (1996) studied the influence of principal leadership and found that principal behavior is significantly related to efficacy and have a great impact on the level of teacher efficacy at the school. Hoy (2000) also addressed the importance of the school administrator’s role in teacher efficacy when implementing effective strategies in the classroom. External interventionist such as district personnel or mental health agencies is another area that could have an impact on teacher efficacy when implementing the behavior intervention process. Without a clear understanding of how
these external pieces impact expectations for teachers, using them could encourage teachers to refer students before classroom interventions have been completed. When administrators do not develop clear guidelines related to where teacher responsibilities end with behavior interventions and where external interventionist responsibilities begin, it may encourage teachers to feel it is not their responsibility to implement interventions and result in interventions that are not aligned or effective.

The need for quality job-embedded professional development related to enhancing teacher efficacy and the implementation process for behavior interventions is the third area identified in the findings of the study and the research. Information obtained from personal interviews suggest that professional development related to implementing behavior interventions is usually completed once a year and is disconnected to the day to day behaviors teachers are required to handle in the classroom. Research suggests that teacher efficacy does not always come naturally and can be developed (Hoy, 2000). Bruce (2005) completed a study which designed a professional development program to increase teacher efficacy. Teachers in the study that received quality professional development consistently outperformed other teachers in most areas of the study.

High levels of teacher efficacy are essential if teachers are going to effectively implement behavior interventions and provide an atmosphere that is conducive for all students to learn. Based on the large impact behavior has on student achievement, administrators must become more active in enhancing teacher efficacy as it relates the intervention process. By providing ongoing quality professional development that is job-embedded, school leaders can enhance level of teacher efficacy and provide a school culture where all students can achieve.
Recommendations for Future Study

Findings from the study indicate that there are areas related to implementing behavior interventions that require more exploration. Approaching significance for differences in teacher efficacy score for grade levels taught, the role of the administrator in the implementation process, and enhancing teacher efficacy to ensure teachers implement behavior interventions beyond what is required in schoolwide plans for every student will be key areas of importance as teachers educate more students with diverse needs and challenges. Recommendations for future study are as follows:

1. A qualitative study on teacher efficacy for elementary and secondary teachers to determine why the results were approaching significance. If behavior can be addressed as early as the elementary grades, the intervention process is more likely to be successful.

2. A longitudinal study of students who are impacted by the intervention process from elementary school through middle or high school grades.

3. A mixed method study that describes teacher perception and knowledge of effective behavior intervention strategies and processes.

4. A mixed method study of the impact of ongoing and job-embedded professional development in teacher efficacy and the behavior intervention process.

5. A qualitative study for elementary and secondary administrators on the role administrators play in the implementation process for behavior interventions.

Student behavior is one of the areas that have the biggest impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003). As teachers receive more diverse students in the classroom with more severe behaviors, they must be able to implement behavior interventions effectively to meet the needs of all students and provide an environment that is conducive to learning. Teacher efficacy, the
teacher’s belief that improvement in student behavior can occur and that the teacher can make a difference, will be essential to the implementation process. School leaders must empower teachers to implement behavior interventions effectively through a quality professional development plan that includes both training on the implementation process for behavior interventions and enhancing teacher efficacy. Ultimately, the responsibility to provide a culture of learning and an environment that will result in increased student achievement rests with the school leader.
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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER
September 20, 2010

Ms. Irene Walton
P.O. Box 492
Holly Springs, MS 38635

Dr. RoSusan Bartee
Guyton Hall
University, MS 38677

Dear Ms. Walton and Dr. Bartee:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, *The Relationship of Teacher Efficacy, Teacher Experience, and Teacher Grade Level within the Implementation Process of Behavioral Interventions (Protocol 11-001)*, has been approved as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi’s human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research*.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

- You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.
- Any changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes.
- You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (662) 915-7482.

Sincerely,

Diane W. Lindley
Coordinator, Institutional Review Board

A Great American Public University
www.olemiss.edu
Research Project Information for Teachers

Title: The Relationship of Teacher Efficacy, Teacher Experience, and Teacher Grade Level within the Implementation Process of Behavioral Interventions

Investigator
Irene Walton, S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Post Office Box 492
Holly Springs, MS 38635
Telephone: (901) 262-1806
Email Address: iwalton@hssd.k12.ms.us

Dissertation Advisor
Dr. RoSusan Bartee
School of Education
142 Guyton Hall
The University of Mississippi
Telephone: (662) 915-7636
Email Address: rdbartee@olemiss.edu

Description
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level within the implementation process of behavioral interventions. As part of the study, elementary, middle, and secondary teachers in the district will be asked to complete a survey related to implementing behavioral interventions. The name of the survey is the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale. Once the survey is completed, survey results will be analyzed, and data obtained from all interviews will be coded by themes to describe trends in the relationship between teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level.

Risks and Benefits
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks to you from your involvement in this project. Potential risks will be minimized by the opportunity for all participants to read the final transcripts and written reports and to request that any information you do not want divulged be removed from the records. Your participation in this project could have potential benefits by providing helpful perspectives and information on the relationship between teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level in the area examined.

Cost and Payments
There are no costs or payments for participants associated with this project.

Confidentiality
The survey that you are required to take does not require you to identify yourself for the study. All information from this study will be coded in such a way that that no individuals, schools, or districts will appear in the written reports. The final written reports will become part of the investigator’s dissertation.

Right to Withdraw
You do not have to take part in this study. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, all you have to do is tell Irene Walton in person, by letter, by telephone at (901) 262-1806, or email at iwalton@hssd.k12.ms.us.

IRB Approval
The information for this study has been sent to the Internal Review Board (IRB) to ensure that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482.
Research Project Information for Administrators

Title: The Relationship of Teacher Efficacy, Teacher Experience, and Teacher Grade Level within the Implementation Process of Behavioral Interventions

Investigator
Irene Walton, S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Post Office Box 492
Holly Springs, MS 38635
Telephone: (901) 262-1806
Email Address: iwalton@hssd.k12.ms.us

Dissertation Advisor
Dr. RoSusan Bartee
School of Education
142 Guyton Hall
The University of Mississippi
Telephone: (662) 915-7636
Email Address: rdbartee@olemiss.edu

Description
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level within the implementation process of behavioral interventions. As part of the study, the researcher will follow up with a brief interview with select administrators in the schools to elaborate on information obtained from a survey taken by teachers related to implementing behavior interventions. Administrators will be asked during interviews to provide narrative responses to open-ended questions. The interview will be approximately one hour and will include audio recording for accuracy.

Risks and Benefits
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks to you from your involvement in this project. Potential risks will be minimized by the opportunity for all participants to read the final transcripts and written reports and to request that any information you do not want divulged be removed from the records. Your participation in this project could have potential benefits by providing helpful perspectives and information on the relationship between teacher efficacy, teacher experience, and teacher grade level in the area examined.

Cost and Payments
There are no costs or payments for participants associated with this project.

Confidentiality
The results of this project will be coded in such a way that your name and the identity of other individuals mentioned in the interviews will not appear in the written reports. All audio recordings and transcripts will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Recordings will be erased from digital devices upon completion of the final transcripts. The final written reports will become part of the investigator’s dissertation.

Right to Withdraw
You do not have to take part in this study. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, all you have to do is tell Irene Walton in person, by letter, by telephone at (901) 262-1806, or email at iwalton@hssd.k12.ms.us.

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APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENTS
## Section I – Modified Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Beliefs</th>
<th>HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Great Deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much can you do help your students value learning?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. How well can you respond to defiant students?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. How much can you do to assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?  
24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?  
25. How well do you implement behavior interventions for disruptive behavior?  
26. How well can you calm a student who is disruptive or noisy with behavior interventions?  
27. How well can you establish appropriate behavior interventions to students who do not respond to classroom rules?  
28. How comfortable are you implementing behavior interventions for individual students?  
29. I know the steps necessary to implement effective behavior interventions.  
30. The inadequacy of discipline outside my classroom can be overcome by good behavior interventions.  
31. Increased effort in implementation of behavior interventions produces little change in some student’s behavior.  
32. I believe that most student can exhibit appropriate behavior if behavioral interventions are developed to meet their individual needs.  
33. Even teachers that effectively implement behavior interventions cannot help some students display appropriate behavior.
Section II - Demographic Information

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
   
   0 0-4 years
   0 5 or more years

2. What is your highest level of certification?
   
   0 Bachelor’s Degree
   0 Master’s Degree
   0 Specialist Degree
   0 Doctorate Degree

3. What grade levels do you teach?
   
   0 Elementary (Grades K-5)
   0 Middle (Grades 6-8)
   0 High School (Grades 9-12)

4. Race
   
   0 Black   0 White   0 Hispanic   0 Other

5. Did you attend a school or schools in the district where you teach?
   
   0 Yes     0 No
Interview Protocol for Personal Interviews with Administrators

The following research questions will be used to guide the qualitative section of the study:

1. How was the behavior intervention process established and how is it implemented?
   a. How do teachers at your school conduct behavior intervention when children exhibit inappropriate behavior?
   b. What process do teachers use when implementing behavior interventions?
   c. What type of professional development or training has been conducted on implementing behavior interventions?

2. What influence does teacher efficacy have on the behavior implementation process?
   a. How do teachers believe they can influence behavior through the intervention process?
   b. How do administrators believe they can influence behavior through the intervention process?
   c. What role do years of experience have on the implementation of the behavior interventions?
   d. Describe the importance of teacher efficacy to the behavior intervention process.

3. What processes are in place at your school to enhance teacher efficacy in implementing behavior interventions.
VITA

Irene LaShell Walton Turnage was born to Joe and Jewell Walton of Holly Springs, MS. She is the youngest of 10 children. From an early age, she was taught the importance of a good education and loved attending school in the Holly Springs School District. After graduation, she enrolled in Rust College where she received a degree in education. Since she was a little girl, Irene wanted to be a teacher, and she fulfilled her dream by serving as a classroom teacher for seven years.

In order to become a better educator, Irene enrolled in the University of Mississippi and received a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. After much encouragement, she continued her education and received a second Masters degree and a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. After serving as an assistant principal and principal for eight years, she was asked to serve as Superintendent of Education for the Holly Springs School District and continues to serve in that capacity today.

Irene has a wonderful husband, Cravin, and a loving daughter, Ashley. She is a member of Mt. Teamer C.M.E. Church and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.