A Study of Self-Efficacy of Educational Professionals in Managing Classroom Behavior and Their Readiness for Differentiating Discipline

Donna Riter
St. John Fisher University

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Degree Name
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Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
Dianne Cooney-Miner

Second Supervisor
Diane Reed

Subject Categories
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and Their Readiness for Differentiating Discipline

By

Donna Riter

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Dr. Dianne Cooney-Miner

Committee Member

Dr. Diane Reed

Ralph C. Wilson Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

August 2009
We recommend that the dissertation by

Donna Riter

Entitled: A Study of Self-Efficacy of Educational Professionals in Managing Classroom Behavior and Their Readiness for Differentiating Discipline

Be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Education Doctorate degree.

Dianne Cooney Miner, Ph.D.
Diane Reed, Ed.D.

August 13, 2009
Date
Dedication

The completion of my dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my remarkable husband Douglas, who has been my biggest fan. His unfaltering support, encouragement, great sense of humor and deep caring have taken me through the ups and downs of this doctoral journey. His selflessness helped make this dream of mine a reality. It is also dedicated to my wonderful sons Craig and Brad and their lovely wives Lisa and Tricia who have continuously cheered me on to the finish line celebrating each milestone along the way. It is dedicated to my loving grandchildren Rachel, Joshua, Ashlynn and Jaxon whose smiles, laughter and hugs always made even the toughest days easier. I further dedicate this to my parents who in their lifetime, instilled in me a strong faith, a strong work ethic and a belief that life is what you make of it. Finally and most heartfelt to my mother who took such pride in my accomplishments and was overjoyed when I was accepted into the doctoral program at St. John Fisher College. Although she will only be there in spirit on graduation day, I will know she is smiling down on me.
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Throughout my doctoral journey my life has been blessed with exceptional people that I would like to acknowledge. I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Dianne Cooney-Miner and Dr. Diane Reed for their support and guidance. My advisor Dr Michael Wischnowski, whose wisdom and wit have kept me moving in the right direction and been an inspiration for me as an educator. I would like to extend a special acknowledgement to all of my instructors within this program who are of the highest quality and whose dedication to the successful completion of this program is unmatched. They gave true value to what it means to be a leader. A special thank you to Dr. Bruce Blaine getting me started on my data analysis and Dr. Lynn Nichols for guiding me through the SPSS maze and helping me to make sense of it all. I would also like to offer my sincerest gratitude and highest praise to Dr. Arthur Walton and Dr. Steve Million who made the dream of the St. John Fisher Ed.D. Program a successful reality.

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who guided my work to completion. Finally, thank you to my supportive friend and administrator Dr. Marla Iverson and to the Wayne-Finger Lakes Board of Cooperative Educational Services organization along with Dr Joseph Marinelli and Jim McNeil, all of whom have offered me immeasurable opportunities to learn and grow both professionally and personally.
Biographical Sketch

Dr. Donna C. Riter is a Trainer and Consultant who has extensive experience in education as a teacher and administrator including speech language therapist, classroom instructor, instructional assistant, vice principal for the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, Director of the Halpern Education Center Day Treatment program for the emotionally disabled, Coordinator for the CHOICES program at Wayne-Finger Lakes and adjunct professor at Nazareth College in Rochester New York. She is a National Senior Life Space Crisis Intervention Trainer for the Life Space Crisis Institute in Maryland. Dr. Riter has extensive knowledge and background in education in and has developed and implemented numerous seminars for both special and regular educational professionals. She graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Nazareth College. In 1980, she earned a Masters of Science Degree from Nazareth with a concentration in special education and speech and hearing disabled, and earned a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Administration from SUNY Brockport College in 1988. She holds an SAS and SDA from New York State. Dr. Riter began doctoral studies in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College in 2007 and received her Ed.D. in 2009. She pursued her research on the topic of Self-Efficacy and Readiness of educational professionals trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention under the direction of Dr. Dianne Cooney-Miner and Dr. Diane Reed.
Abstract

Keeping children behaviorally appropriate and in their classrooms has become increasingly challenging for today's educational professionals where there is less tolerance for classroom disruption, greater expectation of performance and higher paced learning formats. These professionals face even greater dilemmas if they enter the classroom without confidence that the skills they have will be the right fit for managing students who struggle behaviorally. A Likert scale survey was used for this quantitative study to assess perceived beliefs of educational professionals concerning self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior, and their readiness (ability and willingness) to differentiate approaches to behavior intervention in order to meet the individual behavior needs of students.

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The data supported that belief in self-efficacy was significantly related to readiness. In addition a high correlation was supported between readiness to consider alternative intervention techniques for individual students and the value these participants
placed on the LSI training. Years of experience was also a factor related to self-efficacy for the status areas of teachers and “others”. Recommendations for education and training to promote school improvement concerning classroom management were included in this study along with recommendations for executive leaders and for future research.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

The national increase in aggression and delinquent behaviors in schools has reached critical proportions (Safran & Oswald, 2003). Larger numbers of students are plagued with difficult families and community situations that can promote failure in school and eventually failure in life (Long, Morse, Feeser & Newman, 2007). These same students demonstrate behavioral and social needs that challenge their academic preparation and classroom safety as schools find themselves trying to cope with the results of the poverty, neglect and abuse (Baker, 2005; Curwin & Mendler, 1997; Long et al., 2007). The education professionals within these schools, whether novice staff (5 years or less in the classroom) or veteran staff (more than 5 years) with varied levels of preparation and training, are expected to meet these social and behavioral challenges while demonstrating better preparation for building inclusive environments supportive of all learners. Furthermore, these educators must show greater confidence to persevere in today’s schools regardless of the challenging environments and behaviors they face (Bandura, 1993; Welch, 1996).

Currently to prepare pre-service teachers to enter the classroom, teacher education programs provide them with classroom experiences by immersing them in the climates of schools. This practice of “student teaching” aims to diminish the gap between theory and practice (Latham & Vogt, 2007) by providing preservice teachers “real-life”
opportunities for observation and interaction in classrooms. However, despite these student teaching experiences, nationally 12% of new teachers fail to make it through their first year of teaching (Gagen & Bowie, 2005). Although unfamiliar content, more difficult classes and less able students are factors that contribute to this failure, classroom management remains at the top of the list of responses teachers give for leaving the profession (Veenman, 1984; McCann & Johannsen, 2004). Potential gaps in the area of classroom management that continue to exist between teacher preparation and teacher practices, leads to a question about which components in preservice and ongoing teacher education programs might be needed, to help close this gap.

The most important element toward improving any school, either academically or behaviorally, is for educators within that school to begin to function in a collective capacity that exemplifies commitment and persistence toward a common goal (DuFour, 2007). Recognizing the high levels of stress that education professionals experience requires special educators as well as those in general education to consider a common set of competencies (Gilbert & Lignugaris-Kraft, 1997) particularly, when favorable school and training recollections collide with the harsh reality of everyday classroom life (Veenman, 1984). Included in this common set of competencies are behavioral aspects of classroom management that comprise the purpose of this study.

Since classroom management is a skill that must be learned and practiced, those who enter the classroom without reliable, research-based training and practice in various management models, will often discipline and punish students rather than manage them (Johnson, Rice, Edington & Williams, 2005). Lewis and Garrison-Harrell (1999) contended that, punitive and reactive disciplinary measures may actually heighten the
frequency and intensity of the behaviors they were intended to diminish. Adding to this knowledge and based on the review of the literature is the recognition that traditional strategies for discipline fail dramatically with highly troubled students. Students in crisis do not improve or benefit from interventions that implement punishment or exclusion (Long, Feeser & Brendtro, 1998). According to current research, schools that include intervention based on reclaiming or restorative approaches and a philosophy of student-centered interactions, display a more positive school climate than schools in which these approaches are lacking (Long & Feeser, 2001). Based on this research, reducing problem behaviors and teaching students positive and alternative behavior patterns can establish a constructive learning environment.

Effective classroom management requires education professionals to be skilled at implementing multiple student intervention strategies. They must also be able to recognize not only when and if a strategy is failing, but what to do to correct that failure. Enhanced knowledge of intervention strategies and skillfulness with classroom management may increase the educators' abilities to promote positive responses from students and increase the staff members' feelings of confidence in dealing with more challenging student behaviors.

This study examined the beliefs of education professionals previously trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), regarding their perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom crisis, and their readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crisis in the classroom. In addition, it explored the relationship, if any, to the status of the education professional trained in LSCI and the differentiating approaches to behavioral intervention taken by these
professionals to avoid thinking, feelings and behaviors that could otherwise be counterproductive to the desired outcome for the student (Friend & Pope, 2005).

Theoretical Rationale

Parallel to the belief that academic and behavioral successes are linked to a collective common goal, is the suggestion that the outcomes people anticipate depend largely on how they think they will perform in a given situation (Bandura, 1998). According to Bandura, such thinking results in teachers being more likely to engage in the tasks they feel competent to execute successfully.

Self-efficacy is a motivational construct based on self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006). This ability and confidence to plan courses of action, to anticipate the probable consequences of these actions, and to plan alternative strategies without ever engaging in the action, may be a predictor for decisions of teachers regarding classroom management and crisis intervention (Pajares, 2002). According to social cognitive theory, which stems from the social learning theory of Miller and Dollard (1941), acquisition of knowledge can result from observing others within the context of social interactions, experiences and outside media sources. This theoretical framework of social learning theory connected what people observed, to what they would imitate behaviorally. Millar and Dollard concluded that what solidified this observational learning was follow-up rewards that provided positive reinforcement (1941).

Topic Analysis of Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1962) grew out of the social learning theory (1941) to include the human thought process as essential to the acquisition of the
observational knowledge. Bandura's theory provided some guidance about possible sources for a sense of efficacy in teachers. He describes what he believes are the sources for self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994) which include: mastery experience (when people succeed because they have learned from setbacks), vicarious experience (direct observation of social models), verbal persuasion (verbally convince them that they have or do not have what is needed for success), and physiological arousal (gauging their capabilities by the emotional state they are in). Although mastery experience is postulated as the most potent source of acquisition of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006), the social cognitive theory acknowledges the diversity of human capabilities to symbolize, to plan alternative strategies, to learn through vicarious experiences and to self-regulate and self-reflect (Pajares, 2002). This self-efficacy belief system is described as “a differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of functioning” (Bandura, 1998, p. 36). A simpler description is that when different people who have similar skills are placed in the same situations or different situations, their performance of the skill they both have may be poor, adequate, or above average performance depending on fluctuations of their beliefs of self-efficacy (1998).

Bandura stated that the observer does not in fact rely on rewards or punishment for learning as previously believed in the social learning theory, but instead on expected outcomes similar to those observed. Consequently, observing successful outcomes from certain actions would result in the observer learning the action. Bandura's theory takes the researcher back to the idea of “student teaching” where an individual watches a trained teacher and observes successful outcomes in classroom management. The expectation of student teaching as an adequate venue for future teaching success is that
the student teachers, as observer, will be able to duplicate the actions of the teacher they are observing thus experiencing the same successful outcomes. Yet, constant stressors that accompany teaching may limit new teachers’ abilities to accurately reflect on these observed or learned practices once in their own classrooms. The result can be an increasing tendency for these teachers to rely on personal, experiential knowledge, rather than knowledge gained from other sources such as direct observation (Hargreaves, 1984).

If as Bandura (1997) suggested, people judge their efficacy for success over a wide range of tasks and will therefore transmit the belief of success at one task as a rational for belief of success at other tasks; conversely for people, failure in one area becomes a predictor of failure in other areas.

In comparison, individuals who have a resilient sense of efficacy, in a particular area, would be expected to learn and behave differently in a given situation, than those who doubted their own abilities (Bandura, 1998). Therefore, teachers who do not expect to be successful with certain students give up easily at the first sign of difficulty (Bandura, 1993). They are likely to put forth less effort even if they know of strategies that if implemented, could assist a student in crisis. Viewing self-efficacy from this perspective suggests that teachers’ self-perceived level of competence can be lower than their actual skills. It is also possible for teachers’ self-perceived level of competence to be higher than their actual skills causing them to believe they are more qualified to handle situations that in reality, they lack the skills to carry out (Bandura, 1993). These teachers may believe themselves to be self-efficacious when asked about their ability to implement behavior management, but demonstrate no skill in actually doing it. In contrast teachers may have average or above behavior management skills, but feel low
self-efficacy in their capabilities. If teachers think they will fail, and feel hopeless in their ability to affect change, the result as Bandura suggests, could be diminished effort. Self-efficacy beliefs can therefore become self-fulfilling prophecies validating beliefs of capability or incapability.

Bandura’s findings (1993) contributed to the value of further study by the researcher as to whether that same thinking applied to how teachers are prepared to enter the classroom, their perceived self-efficacy in the area of behavior management and how transferable that self-efficacy may be to readiness on the part of these professionals to consider adapting their approach to behavior intervention.

Research Methods

As a result of these findings concerning self-efficacy, a hypothesis was drawn by the researcher. If educational professionals trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) demonstrated similar beliefs in self-efficacy in behavior management, the outcome of these beliefs might correlate with an improved readiness (ability and willingness) of these professionals, regardless of their status, to engage in less punitive intervention approaches with students who display more challenging classroom behaviors.

To test this hypothesis, a quantitative correlational design method was used. Survey data were collected electronically online from The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors (Baker, 2002). A survey method was proposed since surveys lend themselves to correlational research (Patten, 2007).

Participants invited to complete this study were education professionals who received training in the Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) program during the 2001 to
2008 timeframe. Data collected from the survey results were used to examine the professionals' perceived beliefs of self-efficacy in managing classroom crisis, and their readiness (ability and willingness) for using alternative behavioral intervention strategies. Demographic questions were also included in this survey to assist in determining subgroups. Questions specific to LSCI were added at the end of the survey to assess the participants' current beliefs concerning their LSCI training experiences. These additional questions focused on the participants' current use of the training competencies, when they completed the training, the level at which the participants believe the objectives of the training added to their skills, and whether or not these participants would recommend this training to colleagues.

**Significance of Study**

The researcher is employed as the CHOICES Coordinator by a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) program. This BOCES services 25 school districts in a four-county area and is one of 38 BOCES within New York State whose responsibility is to provide shared educational services and programs to its component districts. A BOCES service is created when two or more school districts decide they have similar needs and then work to combine their resources to meet these needs. By doing this, school districts save money without compromising their efforts. Each year, Boards of Education from the component districts decide whether or not to contract for BOCES services.

The role of the researcher within this BOCES is to provide training and consulting to all levels of staff within the BOCES component districts and also to organizations outside of the BOCES geographic area. These services provided by the researcher cover
a variety of approaches to behavioral interventions in challenging situations both in and out of the classroom, with both students and the adults who work with these students.

Travel to local, state, national or international locations is required to provide these services. In conjunction with the BOCES, the researcher also works as a national Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) Senior Trainer under the guidance of Dr. Nicholas Long. LSCI is a nationally recognized professional training and certification program sponsored by the LSCI Institute of Hagerstown, Maryland.

The LSCI training involves advanced, interactive therapeutic strategies for turning crisis situations into learning opportunities for challenging students with chronic patterns of self-defeating behaviors. All LSCI training follows a set of specific instructions for presentation of skills covering specific competencies (see Appendix A). The understanding and practice of these competencies are supported by consistent visual and written true-life scenarios. In addition, they are also reinforced by standardized study materials and practical application which includes content materials (a participant manual and a textbook), a true/false test and random role-play test scenarios.

The information gathered from the LSCI section of the survey provided measurable data concerning how graduates of the training rated their experiences with LSCI. Questions were included to determine if these professionals continue to regularly use the skills taught during the LSCI training, and what level of impact they believe this training has within their current positions.

This study provided a scientific measure of relationships which will be shared with school district and day treatment administrators. It will also inform future decision
making regarding behavior management, and the preparation and expectations of education professionals, when interacting with students in crises.

**Problem Statement**

Students in behavioral crisis, who are considered at-risk and troubled, impact a school’s success by bringing the social ills, negative attitudes and dysfunctional behaviors of society into their classrooms (Long, Feese & Brendtro, 1998). As previous research data suggest, improvements in organizational conditions, including reduction in student discipline problems, ultimately aids the performance of schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Marzano and Marzano (2003) concur that of all the variables influencing student learning, classroom management has the largest effect on student achievement. Since classroom management and discipline problems have been long-time companions of teachers and their students (Ingersoll, 2001; Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Redl, 1951 as cited in Charles 2008; Veenman, 1984) the impact of success or failure in classroom management is intellectual as well as social.

If an effective education for learners with challenging behaviors is to be realized, strategies to support the progress of such students are essential (Baker, 2002). Yet according to research by Long and Feeseer (1998), students with behavioral and emotional disorders are the ones most likely to be suspended or expelled from schools through punitive responses to their behaviors. Without specific behavioral intervention strategies, these same students will become a school’s dropouts and castaways (Bradley, Henderson & Monfore, 2004).

A presenting problem surfaces that education professionals will be more likely to engage in unsuccessful punitive interventions if they lack belief in their self-efficacy
regarding management of classroom behavior while also lacking the ability or readiness to differentiate their responses to crisis. Such punitive methods with troubled students only serve to place a pessimistic focus on nonconforming and dysfunctional student behavior; they do not make schools safer (Long et al., 1998; Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Statement of Purpose

Research suggests that teachers, who lack self-confidence and fail to decrease students’ inappropriate patterns of behavior, will resort to punitive responses to classroom crisis (Johnson, Rice, Edington & Williams, 2005). The purpose of this study was to assess education professionals previously trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), to determine any relationship between their perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom crisis, and their readiness (willingness and ability) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crisis in the classroom. In addition, the researcher considered sub groups that reported high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy and compared those groups regarding status (teacher, teaching assistant and other), years of experience, length of time trained in the skills of LSCI, their use of the LSCI training sequence, and the differentiating approaches to behavioral intervention chosen by these professionals to avoid thinking, feelings and behaviors that could otherwise be counterproductive to the desired outcome for the student (Friend & Pope, 2005). Moreover, the study helped frame the value of training and preparations, from the research participants’ perspectives, in the area of classroom management.

Research Questions

To inform understanding of the topic under study, three questions were posed to guide this research. The primary research question asked: What is the relationship
between the status of educational professionals (teachers, teaching assistants and others) trained in LSCI, and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior? The second research question sought to answer: What is the relationship of this perceived self-efficacy on the readiness (ability and willingness) of these professionals to consider alternative discipline decisions when managing classroom behavior? The third question asked: What is the relationship between years of experience of educational professionals and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior, and their readiness to consider alternative discipline decisions to meet the individual needs of students?

In order to answer these research questions, quantitative data were collected using *The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors* (Baker, 2002, see Appendix B). This data assessed participants trained in LSCI concerning their beliefs in their perceived self-efficacy of behavior management skills, and their readiness to apply alternative crisis management strategies.

*Limitations*

This study included education professionals already trained in LSCI, but did not include a control group to account for before-and-after training results. Further, the researcher was the LSCI trainer for these participants, thus creating continuity in the training, but presenting a possible bias. In addition, the population for this study was small and was not the result of chance selection, making it non-randomized.

Although this study included education professionals from special and general education sites in both rural and urban settings, the largest number of participants were from a rural special education venue. This factor might result in research findings that
are not generalizable to all locations. Lastly, the survey tool used in this study has limited application in other studies, making reliability difficult to determine.

**Definitions of Terms**

As the researcher studied the historical background of self-efficacy, readiness and classroom management, more information was uncovered concerning the disparities in a variety of key terms and phrases. This discrepancy in definitions from one term or phrase to the next may add confusion about the content of the research and create an opening for possible contradictions. For this reason, before moving further into the review of the literature the researcher hoped to clarify possible misunderstandings by defining specific terms that were not already defined in the context of the proposal. The following definitions are used for the purpose of the dissertation: (terms being defined are italicized)

*Classroom Management* according to Charles (2008) is positive action taken by teachers to improve student behavior and good relations between the teachers and students.

*Crisis*, according to Long, Feeser and Brendtro (1998), is a conflict that escalates into an explosive situation that presents a time of both danger and of opportunity for change for a student.

*Education Professionals* for the purpose of this study included both general and special education elementary, secondary and day treatment staff, consisting of teachers, teaching assistants, administrators, counselors, and psychologists. In addition, for the purpose of this study, all professionals not listed as teachers or teaching assistants were placed in the group referred to as “others”.
*Life Space Crisis Intervention* (LSCI) is a nationally recognized, non-physical intervention training and certification program that uses a multi-theoretical approach to behavior management and problem solving. It is an interactive therapeutic strategy for turning crisis situations into learning opportunities for students (Long, 2008).

*Perceived Self-Efficacy* is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1998).

*Readiness* is the ability and willingness to differentially implement specific behavior management techniques to meet the needs of individual students (Baker, 2005).
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

Discipline in America's schools has been a major concern of the general public for the last 30 years (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1996). Decades of research and theory have described the difficulties and ongoing challenges faced by teachers in the classrooms (Rimm-Kaufmann & Sawyer, 2004). Although the focus of teaching should be academic in nature, today's teachers find themselves spending more instructional time on classroom discipline. As a result of this shift in focus, the beliefs, attitudes and teaching priorities of those in education has become a topic of national importance. The National Commission on Teaching in America's Future (NCTAF, 2003) reported one-third of new teachers leaving the profession within the first three years of their employment due, in part, to a lack of preparation and growing frustration surrounding the demands of 21st century schools.

In a study of the Researching Educators and Parents (RECAP) training program (Lane, 2002), forty-seven Nashville Tennessee teachers were recruited and then trained right in the classroom to work in with students with emotional and behavioral disorders. The goal of this study was to determine ways to reduce attrition rates, and to increase the behavior management skills of new teachers in the Nashville Public schools. Prior to this study, the 1998 teacher attrition rate in the Nashville schools was 25% in comparison with the national rate of 11% (2002). The training program drew 35% more applicants.
than expected, and over three years witnessed a reduction in attrition of new staff from the original 1998 figure of 25% to an improved 8.3% attrition. Furthermore, 77% of the new teachers involved in this research project took positions in the more difficult to staff high-poverty inner city schools. The results of this study revealed a correlation between the real life classroom training experience of the teaching recruits, an increase in behavior management skills and a reduction in attrition. Acting on these results, the State Department of Education committed to a three year expansion of the Nashville program to similarly train special education teachers across the state; however, the long-range project outcomes never materialized due to a lack of funding.

In another study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1997), more than 50,000 teachers from all grade levels indicated that having better control over children’s classroom behavior would be a reason for them to feel satisfied with teaching and cause them to want to remain in the profession (Rimm-Kaufmann & Sawyer, 2004). Concern therefore begins to develop about a teacher’s response to classroom discipline and willingness to remain in the profession when they are faced with what Veenman (1984) referred to as the “trauma” of transitioning from the preservice stage to the classroom. When pre-conceived beliefs that originated from teachers’ personal positive school memories or certain positive student teaching training experiences fail to hold up in the day to day classroom encounters, feelings of being poorly equipped to deal with their students’ misbehaviors start to emerge (Merritt & Wheldall, 1992 as cited in Martin et al., 1999; Veenman, 1984). The ensuing outcome is a related increase in the incidence of the teachers’ stress (Punch & Tuettemann, 1990: Tuettemann & Punch, 1992). A study by McCann and Johannessen (2004) supported the
NCES (1997) and RECAP (2002) findings by continuing to place classroom management at the top of the list of teacher concerns. In their qualitative study of new teachers, McCann and Johannessen also determined possible causes of frustration that influenced these teachers to leave the profession, and what supports, preparations and resources would have encouraged them to remain. The authors hypothesized that new teachers’ decisions to leave the profession were the result of a relationship between the frustration over concerns of classroom management, and the discrepancies between what they had expected the teaching experience would be, and their realization of the actual experience.

Billingsley, Carlson and Klein (2004) added to the research by placing special educators at an even greater risk to leave teaching because of the demanding nature of the students they service.

Problem Statement

As a further review of the literature suggests, when teachers perceive themselves to be inadequately prepared to manage behavior problems in the classroom, their resulting responses may actually exacerbate student misbehavior rather than improve it (Pettit, Bates & Dodge, 1993). Even though teachers hold sets of priorities that inform their discipline and classroom management style, as well as their instructional practices (Rimm-Kaufmann & Sawyer 2004), these priorities do not guarantee appropriate skills in the area of classroom management.

Within the review of pertinent literature, the researcher discovered that teachers’ responses to misbehavior in classrooms may be mediated by their beliefs about themselves and their efficacy in dealing with this misbehavior (Martin, Linfoot & Stephenson, 1999). Consequently, if an effective education for learners with challenging
behaviors is to be realized, additional strategies are needed by educators to support the progress of these students (Baker, 2005). Furthermore, since challenging behavior comes from both regular education students as well as those students in special education programs, the impact of that behavior is not narrowed to one population of students but may be school-wide. Accompanying this concern is the knowledge that punitive, traditional methods of behavior intervention with troubled students do not free schools of behavior problems, or make schools safer or more conducive to learning (Long et al. 1998; Skiba and Peterson, 2000).

Synthesis of the Literature

Safran (1989) found that teachers' personal efficacy was the only important and systematic predictor of the extent to which they felt they could manage student behavior. Even the addition of teaching assistants, whose instructional support is considered to be crucially important by teachers, especially in both general and special education (French, 2001), has not altered the level of stress experienced by these teachers in the day-to-day interactions of classroom management which they still place at the top of the list of concerns in their profession. In some cases, although the responsibilities of teaching assistants have increased and tasks and duties that were once reserved for teachers have overlapped into the role of the teaching assistant, supervision and training of the teaching assistants has not kept up with the demands placed on them by their positions (Riggs, 2001). Moreover, teachers do not want the responsibility of mentoring and supervising teaching assistants (Harrington & Mitchelson, 1987), when the demands of the students in terms of classroom behavior management is so high. Although "on-the-job" coaching has been recommended for both teachers and teaching assistants alike as a result of these
demands (Wadsworth & Knight, 1996), research supports that most teaching assistants receive only limited training (Riggs, 2001). Marginal preparation for managing behavior in the classroom can create self-doubt for educational professionals when they encounter more challenging students. According to Bandura (1994), if there is self-doubt about one's efficacy, and the demands of the environment are taxing, a person's thinking becomes more erratic, aspirations lower and the quality of performance deteriorates.

Data collected by Garibaldi, Blanchard and Brooks (1998) in a study of the New Orleans School District suggested a link between teachers' conflict resolution training, classroom management practices and tendencies to suspend or expel students who misbehave. These researchers hypothesized that with good classroom management and crisis intervention skills, these professionals would be less likely to initiate referrals for suspension and expulsion. Consequently, these findings supported that, although skepticism exists among educational professionals concerning the value of some conflict resolution programs (Posner, 1994), there are many in the profession who view such programs as practical answers to some of the behavioral problems they face within the classroom (1998). Thus preparation and training of education professionals in managing classroom crisis warrants further research. Investigation of what impact such training might have on perceived beliefs of self-efficacy and readiness, reduction of teacher stress and the promotion of school improvement around classroom management is prudent.

In a study of 100 student crises reported to Long, Fecser and Brendtro (1998) by counselors, psychologists, social workers and special education teachers, findings revealed that although 80% of the staff studied were able to de-escalate a crisis, only 15% knew how to use that crisis to give students awareness of, or insight into, patterns of self-
defeating behavior. In addition, only 10% of the staff were able to identify and to teach the student social skills necessary to avoid and prevent future crisis. More importantly, only 6% of the staff was able to provide effective guidance for students to reenter the classroom with improved behavior patterns even with teacher support and reinforcement (1998). Such a study focuses the researcher on the possibility that even when education professionals demonstrate crisis de-escalation skills, those skills alone may not be enough to improve the student’s behavior long-term. Repeated interventions that do not produce desired outcomes of reduction in negative behaviors or increase better decision-making on the part of the student can be discouraging and decrease motivation to try on the part of the educator.

Bandura (1994) stated that to remain task-oriented in the face of pressing situations, failures and setbacks, where significant repercussions are possible, one requires a strong sense of self-efficacy. He added that when faced with failure, people whose beliefs in their self-efficacy are low, dwell on their own deficiencies, slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of challenges. An insecure sense of efficacy and intimidation of staff exacerbated by new demands and the prospect of failure, delays the adoption of innovations involving more complex skills (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971).

Guskey (2006) indicated that a lack of skills for teachers warranted the introduction of researched-based staff development training models to reduce a learning gap. He concluded that to close this gap teachers would need to gain rapid evidence that what they have learned through their professional development is making a difference. His research suggested that if those who participate in staff development training do not see swift evidence that the knowledge gained makes a difference, they will revert to
previous response patterns. There is an added possibility that if participants of the training fail when attempting to implement their new learning into their classrooms, that they will become less convinced of their own perceived self-efficacy to exercise influence over current events. Guskey’s study emphasized that teachers, even when they are trained in new skills, will often revert back to their old patterns of practice if implementation of these new skills are not producing positive outcomes in a timely manner. Development of beliefs in self-efficacy to implement new skills therefore may also be impacted, as Bandura (1994) suggested, on the notion that it is harder to foster these beliefs in self-efficacy when or if, failure precedes their development.

Historical Perspective

Dawson (2001) stated, that the LSCI training differs from other classroom management models in that the focus is not on containment, coercion, and control. In contrast, she defined the model as using naturally occurring problems to teach youth more effective coping skills and alternatives to aggression and disrespect. She stressed in her research that the LSCI model involves strategies for teachers to connect and teach children in crisis to help them understand and change chronic patterns of self-defeating thinking and behavior that have not changed through traditional behavior management. This training is based on six stages of learning (Appendix A). The theory and research of LSCI is an integration of psychodynamic, developmental, behavioral, cognitive, and social learning principles (2001).

Historically the LSCI program dates back to the work of Aichhorn (1935) who translated psychoanalytical concepts into operating principles in his work with delinquent youth. In the 1950’s Redl, a student of Aichhorn’s, joined Wineman in developing what
they titled the Marginal Interview (MI). This interview was used in their work with troubled youth. When Redl and Wineman (1951) started training their staff in the Marginal Interview process, they changed the name to Life Space Interview (LSI). This change reflected the fact that the interview was now being done in the “life space” or in the here and now of the adolescent, and not just in the therapist’s office.

Redl and Wineman were the first to document and advocate for using an adolescent’s crisis as an opportunity for behavior change. Interest in LSI diminished, however, in the late 1960’s to 1980’s when behavior modification dominated the field and relationship-based interventions lost prominence (Long, et al., 1998).

In the late 1980’s, the LSI model was further developed in a teacher-friendly format by Wood and Long (1991) to be used in the educational setting. They changed the LSI name to Life Space Intervention, instead of Life Space Interview, to help educators see the program as a tool for change rather than a clinical assessment. In a nine-week study completed by DeMagistris and Imber (1980), they looked at the effectiveness of the then called LSI on three groups of randomly selected students who demonstrated what they called “immature behavior” patterns within a self-contained residential setting. These behaviors included class interruptions, refusals to follow directions, confrontations, arguing and work interruptions. Group 1 received LSI for four weeks followed by no LSI. Group 2 was not given LSI until day 26 of the study, keeping them at baseline, while Group 1 was already participating in the interviews. The third group was used as the control group, and received no LSI.

The results of this study showed a decrease of 33% in disruptive behavior for Group 1 in the first 8 days of the study. Similarly, Group 2 also showed a 25% decrease
in disruptive behavior even though they were not receiving any LSI. Researchers theorized that the improvements from Group 1 were impacting the overall behavior of the class, possibly accounting for the decrease in the disruptive behavior of Group 2. During the next eight weeks of the study, when LSI was continued with Group 1 and added to Group 2, the decrease in behavior problems was 67% for the first group and 45% for the second. DeMagistris and Imber also considered the impact of LSI on the math, science and reading performance of the students by recording amount of time on task, increase in items completed and accuracy of those results within individual assignments. The outcome for Groups 1 and 2 showed improvements in all areas.

DeMagistris and Imber saw the implication of their results to other areas of the students' lives and therefore proposed using LSI within a classroom. Based on significant findings of this and other related research, Long and Fecser worked together to expand the components of the training program which finally became the LSCI program used in schools today (Long, Morse, Fecser & Newman, 2007).

Dawson (2001) kept to the classroom while conducting her research by drawing participants for a study from New York City District 75, a district that serves over one million students and is the largest public school district in the United States. At the time of the study, 161,000 of District 75 students were identified as needing special education services with 12,000 of those special education students being classified as emotionally disturbed. Even though Dawson stated that public school systems are rarely places where research is carried out due to legal, financial, administrative, staff and parental issues, she believed however, for LSCI training to be seen as “best practice” with troubled students, a research-based study in just such a setting was needed. This study moved the research
of the effectiveness of LCSI from the private sector of a residential setting to the public school venue.

The schools of choice for Dawson’s research were two special education sites serving the emotionally disturbed population. Within that population, an experimental and a control group were randomly selected from two matched junior high school populations. Pre and post testing consisting of a Staff Satisfaction Survey created by Dawson and two colleagues provided comparison of results.

The experimental group consisted of 38 males and 6 females; 27 African–American and 17 Hispanic students. The control group was composed of 36 males and 11 females; 29 African–American and 18 Hispanic students. Although Dawson’s study contained additional key demographic variables beyond gender and racial distribution such as age, social economic status and level of emotional disability, she noted no significant differences found within these two groups on any of the variables mentioned. The experimental school sample received the 40 hour LSCI course in professional development in contrast to the control school which only received consultation to help them develop their own model of classroom management for challenging behaviors.

Over three consecutive semesters, the experimental group in Dawson’s study showed: a reduction by half in the average number of student behavioral crisis per month from 0.95 to 0.42, a decrease in student suspensions from 25% to 5%, an 86% increase in student attendance for the LSCI group compared to 74% of those subjects in the control group, and no students transferred to more restrictive environments. In addition, the ability of the experimental group students to mainstream into the General Education community moved from 13% before LSCI to 41% after. The most encouraging data
from her research however, was the 27% transfer rate of students from the experimental group to a less restrictive environment. This was a significant contrast to the 2% transfer rate of the control group and, according to Dawson, reflected the federal IDEA (1997) mandates of education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environments. Moreover, for her control group, behavioral crises increased where suspensions, attendance rates, ability to mainstream, or opportunities to move students to less restrictive placements either remained the same, showed minimal improvement (suspensions decreased 6% in the control group compared to 20% in the experimental group), or showed negative outcomes. Transfers of students to more restrictive environments increased 6% for those students in the control group.

In the outcome measures related to staff changes, Dawson's research stated that 100% of teachers in the experimental group reported improved skills and confidence in managing a student in crisis. During direct interviews with teachers in the experimental group, these staff members not only reported improvement in their level of skills in managing crisis, but also affirmed that the LSCI training helped them to understand why their students behaved in ways that contributed to the crisis escalation. Although the greatest emphasis of her study was similar to the DiMagistri and Imber research which concentrated on the impact of LSCI on student results, the data collected during these interviews highlighted the outcome of LSCI on teacher efficacy and self-confidence when dealing with classroom crisis.

**Topic Analysis**

Since the theory and research of the LSCI model is an integration of psychodynamic (inner forces affecting behavior), developmental, behavioral, cognitive,
and social learning principles, it differs from other classroom management models in that the focus is not on containment, coercion and control. In contrast, LSCI teaches therapeutic strength-based intervention using a student’s crisis, as an opportunity for personal insight and accountability (Long et al., 1998). This insight and accountability pertains to both the student and the staff member, making the training self-reflective as well as interactive. LSCI instructs educators to use naturally occurring problems to teach youth more effective coping skills and alternatives to aggression and disrespect.

According to Dawson, the LSCI model involves strategies for teachers to connect and teach children in crisis helping them to understand and to change chronic patterns of self-defeating thinking and behavior that have not changed, through traditional behavior management interventions.

Guskey’s (2006) research strengthened Dawson’s findings by connecting the learning of skills to the introduction of researched-based staff development, to reduce a learning gap. Rationale for this gap between training and the reality of teaching brings the candidate back to Veenman’s description of the environments where new teachers are generally placed which include being given unfamiliar content, more difficult classes and less able students. Guskey maintained that this regression discovered in the research is not because the teachers are afraid of change, but because they believe the change may cause additional problems within their classrooms.

Summary and Conclusion

As discovered in the review of the literature, there is agreement within the research that managing classroom discipline and crises continues to create high levels of stress and low confidence levels for education professionals. As a result of this lack of
self-efficacy, these professionals may resort to more punitive responses to behaviors resulting in more cyclic negative behavior patterns from students.

This current study consisted of educational professionals trained in LSCI in an effort to explore the possible relationships between their perceived beliefs in self-efficacy regarding behavior intervention and any correlation of that belief to their readiness to differentiate their responses to individual students during classroom crisis, by not engaging in unsuccessful, punitive interventions. Through demographic questions concerning years of experience with LSCI, the use of the six-step LSCI sequence, and perceptions about the LSCI training, this study also explored a possible relationship of LSCI training to self-efficacy and readiness within the status groupings.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

General Perspective

A group of 184 educational professionals from special and regular education K-12 programs and day treatment K-12 programs, was asked to participate in a quantitative correlational study. This study examined the relationship between the status of education professionals trained in Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), years of experience, their perceived beliefs concerning self-efficacy in managing classroom crisis and their readiness (ability and willingness) to consider alternative non-punitive approaches to these crises situations.

The researcher explored possible links between the dependent variable of readiness of educational professionals trained in the skills of LSCI regarding ability and willingness to consider alternative, less punitive classroom management intervention techniques, and the independent variables of their level of perceived self-efficacy in classroom management and status. For comparisons, teaching assignments, status, and years of experience of the participants were collected with demographic questions (Questions 94 to 96) along with perceived readiness (ability and willingness) to teach students with challenging behaviors. In addition, characteristics such as frustration level with classroom management were also included (Question 97). More demographic questions were asked concerning LSCI to provide specific data for this research study and to facilitate future research should any significance in this additional area be found.
After examining the overall relationship between the variables, the researcher considered sub-groups that reported higher self-efficacy and lower-self-efficacy and compared those groups.

A non-experimental ex-post facto study seemed an appropriate choice since the researcher was looking to the past for the possible cause of a current circumstance. When such a study is used properly, it can be a powerful data resource tool (Patten, 2007).

Research Context

The researcher conducted this study with educational professionals from a variety of K-12 settings in upstate New York (urban and rural districts, special education sites and day treatments). The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors (Baker, 2002), adapted from two previously administered surveys (Browers & Tomic, 1999; Bullock, Ellis & Wilson, 1994), was used to assess the level of self-efficacy and readiness of the participants who had completed the LSCI training. Baker’s survey, prior to a pilot study, was presented to practitioners and scholars considered to be experts in the education field. Feedback from these experts provided Baker with suggestions to heighten validity and reliability. Construct validity was explored and an exploratory factor analysis was completed. Reliability was assessed by Cronbach’s alpha and the overall reliability of the instrument, exclusive of the demographic questions, was .9579. The two main scales of self-efficacy (.8813) and readiness (.9566) along with the readiness subscales of ability (.9343) and willingness (.9458) were also seen as very reliable. The pilot study that followed these psychometric considerations indicated no need for substantial modification of the instrument to produce a valid, reliable, and usable study tool (Baker, 2002).
Research Participants

The research participants for the study were educational professionals trained in the skills of LSCI in the years from 2001 to 2008. Although participants may have been trained at different time intervals, the authors of the LSCI training program have restricted enfranchisement to those practitioners who have met the author's rigid requirements, which includes mandated reevaluation and recertification every three years (Dawson, 2001). As a result, every effort was made to present format, content and assessment of the participants' skills within the training, as consistently as possible over the years. This consistency was reinforced by the fact that all participants were trained by the researcher.

The study participants had all been taught six stages of LSCI skills training incorporating 26 competencies which were modeled and practiced (see Appendix A). The first three stages involved diagnostic skills, and the remaining three stages represented reclaiming skills. Each stage represented a sequential learning milestone, from the first phases of behavioral crisis where the behavior of the student must be managed, to the end of the crisis where staff reintroduces the student to the classroom.

Instrument Used in Data Collection

The design used in data collection was a non-probability, cross-sectional survey with data collected at one point over a specified time period. Since mailed questionnaires are notorious for low response rates (Patten, 2007), a link to The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors Survey (Baker, 2002) was electronically made available via e-mail to all potential participants for a 32-day period from April 20,
2009 to May 21, 2009. Four reminders were sent via e-mail during the survey period to improve response rates.

Prior to sending the survey link, the researcher sent a Participant Information Letter (see Appendix C) via e-mail introducing the researcher, explaining the research project, its goals and benefits, and directions on how to log in to the survey, navigate the survey and submit the survey. In addition, letters were sent through standard mail to any potential participants whose e-mail addresses were not readily available to the researcher at the time of the study. For potential participants whose e-mails were never received as a result of this mailing, a second mailing was generated with a link to the survey or the option of sending a completed survey to the researcher in a stamped self-addressed envelope via standard mail.

As part of the self-efficacy and readiness survey questions, information was also collected at the end of the survey concerning demographics of the participants, and how these participants currently viewed their personal experience with LSCI training. For the purpose of this study, the directions for completing the survey, the type of demographic questions, and the inclusion of questions concerning the LSCI training were a modification of this survey by permission of the survey author.

The LSCI questions were included to give participants an opportunity to express their perceptions about levels of success concerning the understanding, application, and transfer of the skills presented during the LSCI training. This additional information provided options for sub-grouping once the surveys were completed.

Although responders to the survey were not reimbursed for their participation, a modest incentive was offered. If they chose, they could have their names placed in a
raffle drawing for three $25 Visa gift cards. The raffle took place following the deadline date for completion of the data collection process.

Protection of Human Subjects

The survey instrument and data analysis procedures used in this study were carefully developed to minimize risks and discomfort. The research falls under standard daily practice and is within the realm of informing instruction and professional practice. Participants were told that if at any time they began to feel uncomfortable with the content of the questions, or desired not to answer any more questions, they could stop the survey. If that occurred, they were assured that their survey data would not be used in the study.

None of the information obtained during the course of this study will be attributable to the participants, their place of employment or personal residence. All data and associate information were obtained on secure computers and kept in confidence with no one having access with the exception of a data input person and the researcher. Data from the study was placed under lock and key following completion of the study where it will remain, for a period of three years.

Data Analysis

Quantitative approaches identify a dependent variable or variables (for the purpose of this study self-efficacy and readiness of response) to determine if one or more independent variables (for the purpose of this study: status of educational professionals, years of experience, LSCI training) influences, impacts or alters the dependent variables. In addition, the population of participants was divided into three categories of stratification which included teachers, teaching assistants and other. The category of
"other", the result of combining administrators with educational staff who did not fit the description of teacher or teaching assistant, was done to ensure sufficient numbers of participants per cell of the desired one third of the total number (70) of actual participants.

For the quantitative analysis, the researcher used descriptive and inferential measures to simplify and categorize the different aspects of the data. The data were analyzed using a combination of correlation, t-tests of independent means, one-way Analysis of Covariant (ANCOVA) and descriptive measures such as mean, standard deviation and frequencies. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected.

Summary of Methodology

This chapter has explained the quantitative method used in this study to determine if status and years of experience of educational professionals trained in LSCI has an impact on perceived beliefs in self-efficacy in classroom management. This method was chosen to also answer questions about LSCI in relationship to self-efficacy and readiness that have been missing from the literature. This study included education professionals who work daily in challenging classroom environments with students who have a wide range of academic and behavioral needs. Information from this study was collected using The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors Survey (Baker, 2002).

Teachers are expected to respond to behavior crises in the classroom with limited or no training in the area of behavior management. As research findings identify factors that contribute to classroom management issues and teacher frustrations, the possible
mismatch between preparation and actual working conditions becomes more apparent
(McCann and Johannessen, 2004). Subsequently, investigating training that can support
self-efficacy and readiness for teachers who are struggling or are unsure of how to
approach a classroom crisis is critical.

The findings of Long, Feeseer and Brendtro (1998) supported that traditional
strategies for discipline fail dramatically with significant numbers of highly troubled
students because these students do not improve or benefit from interventions that
implement punishment or exclusion. In as much as an intervention in classroom
management cannot be scripted for teachers (Long et al., 1998), a logical plan of
communication based on a strength-based approach to crisis seems to support the
candidate's first research question asked: What is the relationship between the status of
educational professionals (teachers, teaching assistants and others) trained in LSCI, and
their perceived beliefs concerning self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior? The
second research question sought to answer: What is the relationship of this perceived
self-efficacy on the readiness (ability and willingness) of these professionals to consider
alternative discipline decisions when managing classroom behavior? The third research
questions examined: What is the relationship between years of experience of educational
professionals and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom
behavior, and their readiness to consider alternative discipline decisions to meet the
individual needs of students?

Research data may have implications for student referrals, incident reports,
increased job satisfaction and confidence, and teacher understanding and approach to
crisis situations. The outcome of this study hopefully adds to the current knowledge base
surrounding: new teacher preparation, professional development supports for new and veteran staff, and alternative intervention approaches with behaviorally challenging students.
Table 3.1

Methodology Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions Analysis Method</th>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Location of Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the participants’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy? Is there a difference depending upon the status (teacher, teaching assistant, other) of those participants?</td>
<td>Items 1-23</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>chart/mean and standard deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the relationship between participants’ perceptions of self-efficacy and their perception of readiness (ability and willingness) for differentiating behavior intervention? Do years of experience impact on self-efficacy and readiness?</td>
<td>Items 1-23 (IV)</td>
<td>Correlation scatter plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Items 24-93 (DV)</td>
<td>MANOVA</td>
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<td>ANCOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the participants’ status (teacher, teaching assistant, other) significantly related to perceived readiness?</td>
<td>Items 95-96 (IV)</td>
<td>Correlation (Spearman rho, Pearson)</td>
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<td>Bar Graph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a relationship between educational Professionals’ perceptions of their own self-efficacy and the value they placed on their LSCI training?</td>
<td>Items 101-103</td>
<td>MANOVA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
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<td>ANOVA</td>
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<tr>
<td>What types of behavioral intervention techniques are educational professionals ready (able and willing) to use?</td>
<td>Items 24-93</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
</tr>
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<td>chart/mean and standard deviation</td>
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IV-Independent Variable    DV-Dependent Variable
Chapter 4: Results

In Chapter 4, descriptive summaries regarding educational professionals' perceptions of their own self-efficacy and preferences for behavioral intervention techniques they are ready to use are reported. In addition, a correlation between perceived self-efficacy and readiness for differentiating behavioral intervention to meet the needs of individual students, along with the impact of LSCI training on these variables is also presented. Correlational and descriptive data are presented to examine the impact of self-efficacy on readiness (ability and willingness) of educational professionals to differentiate discipline to meet the individual needs of students.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the status of educational professionals (teachers, teaching assistants and others) trained in LSCI, and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behaviors, and the relationship of those beliefs to their readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individualized, alternative, non-punitive approaches to intervention with students. In addition, the researcher considered subgroups that reported high self-efficacy, low self-efficacy and readiness, and compared those groups in years of experience and the value they placed on LSCI in their current work settings.
**Description of Sample**

For this research, educational professionals were surveyed using the Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Classroom Behaviors (Baker, 2002). In this researcher’s study, the Cronbach Alpha value for the self-efficacy questions was .924 and for the readiness questions was .974. Prior to the development of the original survey, content validity was established by Baker (2002) through feedback from four experts in the fields of special education and general education. Suggestions from these experts for clarification and format adjustments were used by Baker to heighten validity (2002). Face validity was also established by Baker through discussions with pilot participants, while construct validity was examined by exploring variances in individual responses related to demographic data (2002). The intent of maintaining Baker’s original grouping of Likert-type scaled questions, with the exclusion of the demographic items, was to maintain the validity already established for this survey.

This study was a non-experimental ex-post facto study of professionals from a variety of K-12 settings in upstate New York that included urban and rural districts, with both regular and special education sites along with day treatment facilities. All educational professionals included in the research had been previously trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). Of the 184 possible participants, 70 completed the survey, rendering an overall response rate of 38%. When the surveys were completed, participants were coded to determine the areas of primary teaching assignment as related to regular education or special education (survey question 94). As a result of this coding, it was determined that 10% of the participants in the survey held their primary teaching assignment in the area of regular education, and 84.3% in the area of special education.
Additional cases of incorrect response data to question 94, where participants chose more than one answer, resulted in data from 5.7% of participants to be discarded by the researcher for teaching assignment results.

Survey Results

Stratification cells presented in Table 4.1 are representative of the status of educational professionals from the various locations and their years of experience. This stratification process was utilized to insure a balance of participants in each of the three status areas of teacher, teaching assistant and other. The category of “other” was the result of combining administrators with educational staff who did not fit the description of teacher or teaching assistant. Of the total number of participants in the sample, more teaching assistants, 40%, responded to the survey than did teachers, 34.3%, or those, 25.7%, in the category of other.

Teachers (n = 8) made up one third of participants with ten years or less experience (see Table 4.1). A greater percentage, 65.7%, of educational professionals in this study had 10 years or more experience in the sample than those, 34.3%, with 1-10 years of experience.
Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Professionals</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Year of experience 1-10 years</th>
<th>Years of experience 10 years or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>n = 24</td>
<td>n = 8</td>
<td>n = 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(34.3%)</td>
<td>(33.3%)</td>
<td>(34.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>n = 28</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40%)</td>
<td>(41.7%)</td>
<td>(39.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n = 18</td>
<td>n = 6</td>
<td>n = 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25.7%)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>(26.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the three status groups (teacher, teaching assistant, and other), participants rated themselves high ($m = 78.61, sd = 7.57$) for perceived self-efficacy in managing difficult behavior in the classroom (questions 1-23) and high ($m = 237.3, sd = 24.98$) on their readiness to consider alternative approaches to discipline (questions 24-93). In addition, a Spearman rho correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the status of participants and beliefs about self-efficacy. No significant relationship was found ($r(2) = -.068, p > .05$) for participants between their status (teacher, teaching assistant, or other), and their beliefs in self-efficacy for managing behavior in the classroom. In addition, a Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between status and readiness. No significant relationship was found ($r(2) = -1.24, p > .05$) between status, and readiness to consider alternative intervention techniques when dealing with challenging student behavior as detailed in Figure 4.1 on the following page.
Figure 4.1

*Bar Graph for Subject Status Correlation to Self-Efficacy and Readiness*

Note. 1.00 represents teachers
2.00 represents teaching assistants
3.00 represents others

A Wilks' Lambda multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test was used to examine subject status and years of experience (1-10 years and 10 years or more).

Subject status had no significant effect on self-efficacy ($F(15, 5903) = .408, p = .80$). However, when coupled with years of experience, there was a significant difference in beliefs in self-efficacy between teachers with 1-10 years of experience and those with 10 years of experience or more ($F(915, 5903) = 5.55, p = .006$).

Follow-up univariate ANOVAs, when the results of the two dependent variables of self-efficacy and readiness were considered separately, indicated the only difference
to reach statistical significance was the total score for self-efficacy \((F(1,68) = 10.10, p = .002)\), partial eta squared = .136). Self-efficacy scores were generally higher with increased years of experience. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that with increased years of experience, self-efficacy scores also increased \((m = 80.56, sd = 7.39)\).

A two by two between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was also conducted on the data (Figure 4.2). For this analysis the independent variables were the status of the subjects and the years of experience. The dependent variables were the total scores on self-efficacy and the covariant was the total scores on readiness. The analysis supported the main effect of years of experience as established by other analyses and established that there was no interaction effect. Figure 4.2 illustrates the lack of interaction. It also illustrates the means on self-efficacy did not differ to any degree when the teaching assistants are broken into two groups by years of teaching experience.

Figure 4.2

*Between Group Analysis of Status and Years of Experience*

![Estimated Marginal Means for Total Score on Self-Efficacy](image)
The dependent variables were the total scores on self-efficacy and the covariant was the total scores on readiness. The analysis supported the main effect of years of experience as established by other analyses and established that there was no interaction effect. Figure 2 illustrates the lack of interaction. It also illustrates that the means for self-efficacy did not differ to any degree when the teaching assistants are broken into two groups by years of teaching experience.

In considering the Demographic information concerning LSCI, Table 4.2 indicates that there was no significant relationship between the value participants placed on LSCI (questions 101-103) and their total perceived beliefs concerning self-efficacy.

\[ r(2) = .148, p > .05 \]
\[ r(2) = .206, p > .05 \] and
\[ r(2) = .171, p > .05 \] In contrast, however, for those same questions there was a moderately strong relationship between participants' total readiness to consider alternative intervention techniques, and the value they placed on their LSCI training.

\[ r(2) = .394, p < .01 \]
\[ r(2) = .405, p < .01 \] and
\[ r(2) = .240, p < .05 \]

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonparametric Correlation Between Value Placed by Participants on LSCI Training, and Self-Efficacy or Readiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSCI Survey Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101. I use the LSCI six-step sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102. I feel LSCI has equipped me with skills for my work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103. I would recommend LSCI training to colleagues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Figure 4.3 represents a scatter plot used to examine the relationship between participant's perceptions of self-efficacy, and their perceptions of readiness for differentiating behavior intervention. Although the plot shows considerable variations, there is a linear progression representing a moderately strong Pearson correlation ($r(2) = .563, p < .01$) between self-efficacy and readiness ($r(2) = .563, p < .01$). As the confidence in classroom management increased, so did the readiness of participants to consider differentiated behavior intervention for students.
Perspectives on Self-Efficacy

The first section of the survey (questions 1-23) aligned with the researcher’s first question: What is the relationship between the status of educational professionals (teachers, teaching assistants and others) trained in LSCI, and their perceived beliefs concerning self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior? The initial questions in this section focused on the educational professionals’ management of disruptive classroom behavior, ability to engage reluctant students in lessons and their confidence in communicating with peers and administrators for guidance and support with behavior problems.

Participants in the study, as detailed in Table 4.3 on the following page, reported the highest levels of self-efficacy in seeking assistance with problem from their colleagues ($m = 3.74, sd = .440$). There was a drop in confidence for these participants in their ability to reach difficult students ($m = 3.03, sd = .742$) and to keep those difficult students engaged in their lessons ($m = 3.04, sd = .600$).
Table 4.3

*Descriptive Summary for Self-Efficacy Questions (n = 70)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest to Lowest Value</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Selected Questions Only from self-efficacy questions 1-23)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can find colleagues with whom I can talk about problems at work.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am confident that, if necessary, I can ask my colleagues for advice.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I know what rules are appropriate for my students.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. When it is necessary, I am able to ask a colleague for assistance.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. If I feel confronted by a problem with which my colleagues can help me, I am able to approach them.</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am confident that, if necessary, I can get the principal to help me.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can communicate to students that I am serious about getting appropriate behavior.</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am able to make my expectations clear to my students.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running efficiently.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am able to approach my principal if I want to talk about problems at work (includes assistant principals as well).</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am able to respond adequately to challenging students.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There are very few students that I cannot handle.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I am able to begin the scholastic year so that students will learn to behave well.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. If a student disrupts the lesson, I am able to redirect him/her quickly.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I can keep a few problem students from ruining an entire class.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. If students stop working, I can put them back on track.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I can keep defiant students involved in my lessons.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can get through to the most difficult students.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perspectives on Readiness

The second section of the survey (questions 24-93) aligned with the third research question that investigated the readiness (ability and willingness) of participants to consider alternative, individualized approaches with behavior intervention. The initial questions in this section focused on the educational professionals' use of more varied intervention techniques based on student need, the ability to recognize and analyze target behaviors and antecedents to those behaviors, the ability to collaborate with colleagues on classroom management, willingness to use conflict resolutions skills and ability to seek assistance from outside agencies or consultants.

Participants in the study, as detailed in Table 4.4 on the following page, reported the highest levels of readiness in their ability and willingness to use a variety of behavior management model techniques \((m = 3.70, sd = .462)\) (see Table 4.4). There was a drop in readiness scores for the ability of these participants to seek the help of outside agencies or consultants \((m = 2.81, sd = .597)\). They were however, moderately willing to access these consultants \((m = 3.46, sd = .674)\). The willingness to seek guidance from colleagues remained high \((m = 3.73, sd = .448)\).
Table 4.4

Descriptive Summary for Readiness Questions (n = 70)

Survey Questions Highest to Lowest Value
(Selected Questions Only from readiness questions 24-93)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91. I am willing to collaborate with colleagues to support students with emotional and behavioral needs.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. I am willing to consult effectively with colleagues and administrators.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. I am willing to use various behavior management models/techniques.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I am able to use a variety of non-aversive techniques (e.g., voice modulation, facial expression, planned ignoring, proximity control, tension release).</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. I am willing to apply problem solving and conflict resolution skills.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. I am willing to use various behavior management techniques; behavior modification, life-space interview, and natural consequences.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81. I am willing to use role playing as a behavior management technique.</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. I am willing to implement a consistent classroom routine.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. I am willing to self-evaluate my own teaching and classroom management skills and use the results constructively.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. I am willing to recognize the collaborative relationship of special education and general education.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80. I am willing to document student behaviors using a variety of systems.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. I am willing to designate certain student behaviors as either appropriate or inappropriate for a specified age group based on observation and social validation.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. I am willing to access specialists from outside agencies as consultants.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I am able to implement a positive reinforcement plan to change and/or maintain behavior for a classroom setting.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I am able to maintain pupil attention while presenting reinforcement.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. I am able to explain the rationale, program components, operation, and evaluation of the behavioral techniques I use.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. I am able to apply the theory behind reinforcement techniques to adjust interventions as needed to meet the behavioral needs of individual students.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I am able to develop and implement a reinforcement hierarchy for each student.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. I am able to access specialists from outside agencies and consultants.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I am able to use different reinforcement schedules (e.g., fixed-ratio, variable interval, etc).</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Results

A significant relationship was established through correlation between beliefs in self-efficacy to manage classroom behavior and readiness (ability and willingness) to consider alternative, individualized intervention to meet the needs of each student. Status (teacher, teaching assistant and other), did not impact on perceived beliefs in self-efficacy or readiness. However, years of experience within those status areas showed a significant difference for teachers in their self-efficacy beliefs to manage classroom behavior which increased significantly if these teachers had been in their positions for 10 years or more. There was no significant change in beliefs in self-efficacy for teaching assistants who had been in their positions 1-10 years or 10 years or more.

The results from the data obtained from the survey indicated a moderately strong relationship between perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior and readiness to consider individualized alternative behavior intervention techniques for students. Adding to that correlation is the impact of increased years of experience on perceptions of self-efficacy and readiness. Both were shown to increase for those participants who had 10 years or more experience. Status of participants showed no relationship to self-efficacy or readiness. In addition, although the value participants placed on LSCI did not show a significant relationship to self-efficacy, there was, however, a moderately strong relationship between participants' total readiness to consider alternative intervention techniques, and the value they placed on their LSCI training.
Chapter 5: Discussion

In this final chapter, an overview of the current study is presented including the tools used, the design of the study and demographics of participants involved in the research. A discussion about the study includes conclusions drawn regarding the statistical results of the research and implications of the findings. Limitations noted in the study and recommendations for further research are also included.

Discussion and Findings

For the last 30 years, discipline in America’s schools has been a major concern of the general public (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1996). This concern has been heightened by the exodus of one-third of new teachers from the profession within the first three years of their employment (National Commission on Teaching in America’s Future (NCTAF, 2003). Furthermore, departure of teachers has been due, in part, to both a lack of preparation and growing frustration surrounding the demands of 21st century schools. More than 50,000 teachers nationally from all grade levels, indicated that having better control over children’s classroom behavior would be a reason for them to be satisfied with teaching and to cause them to want to remain in the profession (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 1997). This “trauma” as Veerman (1984) referred to it, came about from the professionals’ transitional collision of realities from pre-service ideals of life in the classroom, to the actual classroom experience. Moreover, although the focus of teaching is expected to be academic in nature, today’s teachers have found
themselves spending more instructional time on classroom discipline. Even the addition of teaching assistants, whose instructional support is considered to be crucially important by teachers in both general and special education (French, 2001), has not altered the level of stress experienced by these teachers in the day-to-day interactions of classroom management. This trauma causes support staff within the classroom to rate classroom management as highly problematic for them as it is for the teachers they are there to assist (Riggs, 2001). Marginal preparation for managing behavior in the classroom creates self-doubt for educational professionals when they encounter more challenging students. As a result, many of these same educational professionals engage in unsuccessful punitive interventions if they lack belief in their self-efficacy regarding management of classroom behavior. Further, they are also deficit in readiness skills to consider alternative interventions for individual students. Moreover, these punitive, traditional methods of behavior intervention with troubled students do not free schools of behavior problems, or make schools safer or more conducive to learning (Long et al., 1998; Skiba and Peterson, 2000).

The purpose of this study was to assess educational professionals, previously trained in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), to determine any relationship between their perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom crises, and their readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crises in the classroom. In addition, the researcher considered subgroups that reported high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy and compared those groups regarding status (teacher, teaching assistant and other), years of experience (1-10 and 10 or more), value participants placed on LSCI training, and the differentiating approaches
to behavioral intervention chosen by them. Finally, this study framed the value of training and preparation from the research participants’ perspectives, in the area of classroom management.

As a result of this current study, the problem of how educational professionals responded to misbehavior in classrooms was considered, in respect to their beliefs about themselves and their efficacy in dealing with this misbehavior. It also considered their readiness to alter their approach to behaviorally-challenging students. Furthermore, since challenging behavior comes from both regular education students as well as those students in special education programs, both populations of educational professionals were included. The largest numbers of respondents to the survey, 84.3%, however, were special educators.

A significant relationship was established through correlation between beliefs in self-efficacy to manage classroom behavior and readiness to consider alternative, interventions to meet the needs of individual students. It was discovered that within the study population of educational professionals, the status (teacher, teaching assistant and other) of these professionals did not impact on perceived beliefs in their self-efficacy or their readiness. However, years of experience within those status areas show a difference for teachers and those who fell in the group “other” in their self-efficacy beliefs to manage classroom behavior; specifically, both status areas are generally higher. Moreover, this difference increases significantly for teachers, if they are in their positions for 10 years or more.

There was however, no significant change in beliefs in self-efficacy for teaching assistants in their positions 1-10 years and 10 years or more. The idea that self-efficacy
of teaching assistants is not impacted by years of experience may be due, in part, to the reality that although classroom responsibilities of teaching assistants have increased over the years, supervision and training of these paraprofessionals have not kept up with the demands placed on them by their positions (Riggs, 2001). If these teaching assistants perceive themselves as less prepared than the teachers with whom they work, this may account for no significant change in their beliefs in their own self-efficacy with years of experience. Since each day teaching assistants are expected to handle the same students in the same situations as the classroom teacher, but have fewer skills to do so, development of beliefs in self-efficacy may be negatively affected by the lack of training.

Furthermore, even when people are trained in new skills, they will often revert back to their old patterns of practice, if implementation of these new skills does not produce positive and timely outcomes (Guskey, 2006). Confidence in what educational professionals believe about their skills connects directly to their readiness to implement the skills they learn. It is hard to foster these beliefs in self-efficacy when, or if, failure precedes their development (Bandura, 1994).

In addition to the findings concerning status and years of experience, the value participants place on their Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) training was also considered. Although the participants' responses to LSCI training did not show a significant relationship to self-efficacy there is, however, a moderately strong relationship between participants' total readiness to consider alternative intervention techniques, and the value they place on their LSCI experience (Table 4.2).

This study also considered in what areas participants reported the highest levels of self-efficacy and what types of behavioral techniques participants were ready to, able to
and willing to use with students when offered a variety of options. Consequently, these findings support that, although skepticism exists among educational professionals concerning the value of some conflict resolution programs (Posner, 1994) like LSCI, the participants in this study as suggested by, Garibaldi, Blanchard and Brooks (1998), view such a program as a practical answer to some of the behavioral problems they face within the classroom.

Implications of Findings

Self-efficacy and readiness. The results of The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors Survey (Baker, 2002) yielded a moderately strong Pearson correlation between self-efficacy ($r(2) = .563, p < .01$) and readiness ($r(2) = .563, p < .01$). Considering the results of this current study, coupled with previous knowledge from a study done by Baker (2002) where a strong correlation was also found between these two variables, the inclusion of the development of a strong sense of self-efficacy becomes vital to staff development trainers and executive leaders both at the school and higher education pre-service levels. The researcher's current findings support the concept that when educational professionals are able to express a belief in their self-efficacy, they are also more ready, able and willing to seek alternative, individualized non-punitive approaches to behavior intervention. In turn, when there is recognition that educational professionals who work day-to-day with more challenging students, are more able and willing to alter their approaches to students because of a strong sense of self-efficacy, decisions to leave the profession over concerns of classroom management, and the discrepancies between pre-service expectations of teaching and the actual teaching experience, may be altered.
In contrast, if teachers believe themselves to be inadequately prepared to manage behavior problems in the classroom, high levels of stress result and their responses may actually exacerbate student misbehavior rather than improve it (Pettit, Bates & Dodge, 1993). This increase in student misbehavior can cause more stress for these professionals resulting in a failure to free schools of behavior problems, or make schools safer or more conducive to learning (Long et al. 1998; Skiba and Peterson, 2000). Repeated interventions that neither produce desired outcomes of reduction in negative behaviors nor increase better decision-making on the part of the students can be discouraging and decrease motivation of educational professionals to persevere, especially within the first three years of their employment.

Self-Efficacy Conclusions

Within the area of self-efficacy, participants report that they were most comfortable interacting with colleagues for assistance with problems that they encounter within the classroom. In contrast, they were least confident about both keeping their more defiant students engaged in lessons, and about their ability to handle more difficult behavior problems. It is of interest to note, that although participants in this study indicate they are least confident in managing defiant students and keeping these students engaged in their learning, among the 70 participants who completed The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors Survey (Baker, 2002) for this study, all of the respondents, regardless of status, reported themselves to be high in self-efficacy in classroom management ($m = 78.61$, $sd = 7.57$). Bandura (1997) suggested that if people feel successful over a wide range of tasks, their belief in success or self-efficacy, at one task accounts for such belief of success at other tasks.
Educational professionals would recognize self-efficacy as a desirable characteristic and may not rate themselves lower in this area so that it does not become a possible predictor of failure in other areas. This thinking may have held true for the participants as they completed this survey, since readiness scores are also in the high range (m = 237.3, sd = 24.98).

Since teachers' personal efficacy is believed by Safran (1989) to be the only important and systematic predictor of the extent to which they believe they can manage student behavior, there is the possibility that study participants perceive themselves as more skilled in classroom management than is actually true for all. They would not want to be seen to falter in this area and risk the implication that it reflects other skill areas. It may also be possible since there is a significant correlation between readiness and the value teachers (r(2) = .394, p < .01), teaching assistants (r(2) = .405, p < .01) and others (r(2) = .240, p < .05) place on their LSCI training, that this positive relationship between training and readiness also accounts for some of their responses. With a strong sense of self-efficacy in their classroom management skills, educational professionals are more able and willing to implement behavior interventions most suited to the needs of their students. Since participants reported that the value they place on LSCI training has an impact on their readiness to implement alternative behavior interventions, this finding might challenge the belief that such preparation as “student teaching” alone, is enough to ready a teacher to face the ever growing challenges in managing the behavior of today's students.

When people are faced with failure and their beliefs in their self-efficacy are low, they dwell on their own deficiencies, slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face
of challenges (Bandura, 1994). Participants would not want to be viewed as incompetent or less confident in their understanding of how to work with challenging students or their readiness to alter their approaches to these students.

**Readiness Conclusions**

Within the area of readiness (ability and willingness), participants indicated that they are most willing to collaborate and consult with colleagues and administrators alike when dealing with problem students. They were least able, however, to identify the theory behind interventions they might choose, or to vary intervention techniques. These findings correlate with Guskey’s (2006) thinking that teachers, even when they are trained in new skills, will often revert back to their old patterns of practice if implementation of these new skills is not producing positive outcomes in a timely manner. In addition, although participants indicated a willingness to seek outside consultants or agencies when they have problems with students, they consistently scored lower in their ability to access such support.

This finding could challenge the practice observed by this researcher of mentoring educational professionals for short periods of time, who are new to the profession and struggling with classroom management, without the guidance of outside consultants. If executive leaders in the area of education believe an extension of mentoring support is not improving the classroom management skills of their teachers, or outside consultants or agencies are too costly when there are veteran staff available, although teachers may have the desire or willingness to get such help, they may be unable to secure it. School leaders may believe such support would weaken the professionals’ self-confidence and readiness, or conflict with the use of available, in-district, support. Perhaps since
participants of this study indicated their willingness to work with consultants, but an
inability to access them, seeking out trained professionals to come into the buildings and
classrooms of these educational professionals to observe them in their work
environments, would seem to be a valuable step for executive leaders.

The inability of educational professionals to gain access to outside consultants
and agencies could also indicate that the number of skilled consultants or reliable outside
agencies in their geographic areas is limited. This constraint would make it difficult to
acquire these services at the time they are most needed. Moreover, the prospect of failure
by executive leaders to facilitate this access further delays the adoption of innovations in
using consultants or outside agencies. It may also support that executive leaders may not
be aware of whom these consultants or agencies are, what they do, or how to connect
with them. Some leaders may also believe that consultants or outside agencies are not the
answer to improving classroom management.

Self-Efficacy, Readiness and Years of Experience Conclusions

This current study shows that the mean scores ($m = 80.56, sd = 7.39$) indicate that
with increased years of experience, self-efficacy scores increased for research
participants. The more years educational professionals have to see themselves succeed
with students in the area of behavior intervention, the higher they report their self-
efficacy for managing classroom behavior. A wide range of research fields supports the
ten-year rule that no one becomes great at what they do without at least 10 years or more
of very dedicated preparation (Colvin, 2008). This perception reinforces the researcher’s
findings concerning years of experience. This growth rate however, does not hold true for
all three groupings.
Years of experience produce no significant impact on the teaching assistants' self-efficacy reporting (Figure 2). Such findings would need greater substantiation, but could have implications in the preparation of teaching assistants, since most mentoring programs and much of staff development are focused primarily on the teacher. Given that teaching assistants play a major role in classrooms with more challenging students, these results may be indicative of a need to consider teaching assistants when implementing school improvement plans. When people receive satisfaction from what they are doing because they see results with improved student responses and behavior, they work harder to make that success continue. However, if they have self-doubt about their efficacy, and the demands of the environment are taxing, their thinking becomes more erratic, their aspirations lower and the quality of their performance deteriorates (Bandura, 1994). If teaching assistants fail when attempting to implement new learning into their classrooms because they are undertrained for the expectations of the job, they may see that failure as a systemic problem and become less convinced as, Guskey (2006) indicated, of their own perceived self-efficacy to exercise influence over current events. Therefore, because the teacher will ultimately be seen in the classroom as the one responsible for the success or failure of students, teaching assistants, although they are central to the classroom environment, may not report themselves improving in self-efficacy over time because they see student success or failure as the result of the teachers' efforts, not their own. Consequently, with the results of this current research supporting that a high correlation exists between self-efficacy and readiness (ability and willingness) to consider alternative behavior approaches to individual students, it is unrealistic to
expect legitimate growth in self-efficacy and readiness of teaching assistants with 10 or more years of experience, without a change in their staff development training.

**Limitations of Research**

This study included educational professionals previously trained in LSCI, but did not include a control group to account for before-and-after training results. Although this prevents the researcher from determining any causality of the LSCI, it does not impact on the ability to determine a correlation of beliefs in self-efficacy to readiness or in the value participants place on the LSCI training. Further, the researcher is the LSCI trainer for these participants, presenting a possible bias in the study. However, this connection between participants in the study and the researcher also creates continuity in the training and possibly a greater willingness on the part of the study participants to complete the lengthy survey in full. Respondent fatigue might be a factor due to the length of the survey if this relationship does not exist.

In addition, although this study included educational professionals from special and general education sites in both rural and urban settings, the population for this study was small and was not the result of chance selection, making it non-randomized. Moreover, the largest numbers of participants were from a rural special education venue. This factor might result in research findings that are not generalizable to all locations. Lastly, the survey tool has limited use in other studies; however, the tool has a high reliability in both the areas of self-efficacy and readiness.

**Recommendations for Researchers**

Since all participants in this study are educational professionals trained in the skills of LSCI, replication of this study using a control group not trained in these skills
could examine data for possible correlation and causative relationships of the LSCI training to self-efficacy and readiness in the same study-specific groupings. Further research could examine ways to minimize the limitations of this study by enlarging the number of possible participants, and when using study-specific demographic questions, adjusting the phrasing to better denote years of experience, rural and urban settings and years of education. Future researchers should develop a teaching assistant version of the original survey to add to the knowledge about those who have an integral part in classroom management application. An administrative version of the original survey would also bring valuable data to the level of the executive leaders within a building to be supportive of their needs and further promote an understanding of self-efficacy and readiness at their level.

Since the majority of participants in this study are special educators, a future study should consider just general education classroom professionals with a wide range of years of experience, before and after LSCI training. Such a selection could provide a pre and post data that could serve to better generalize findings to a broader population of educational professionals.

A variation of the study could also consider a smaller group of pre-service participants in a longitudinal mixed-method design incorporating the quantitative survey used in this study and qualitative focus groupings. Such a study could extend over the first one to five years of their careers to determine what types of preparation and training would impact their self-efficacy and readiness (ability and willingness) to use individualized, alternative approaches to their students’ behavioral challenges, what variety of behavioral intervention techniques they are familiar with and incorporating into
their classrooms. At the end of this study, dialogue could be held with participants to determine how many of them plan to remain in teaching and what factors have encouraged them to stay, or may cause them to leave. If participants have left before the study is completed, a possible follow-up conversation with them could be considered to discover what influenced their decisions.

Adding a qualitative component to a replication of this current study would provide an opportunity for the researcher to compare the responses of the survey to actual observation of classroom activity such as implementation of the LSCI skills, referrals, in school and out of school suspensions and application of individualized behavior interventions for students. Accordingly, with this time in the classroom, the researcher can develop a bond with the educational professional and the executive leaders of the school to strengthen a relationship and further enhance collaboration.

**Recommendations for Educators**

Based on the findings of this study which indicate a relationship between self-efficacy and readiness in managing challenging classroom behaviors, it becomes important to determine ways to insure the development and growth of self-efficacy to promote readiness of educational professionals to consider alternative, non-punitive approaches to individualized intervention with students. A teamwork approach to building confidence in these educational professionals to insure greater readiness should begin at the higher education level. A network should be established to connect professors and outside consultants and agencies who demonstrate knowledge in this area with pre-service educators. This link could open up the opportunity for a transitional learning environment for these professionals from pre-service to actual classroom.
service. This association should be seen as a partnership that creates a link from higher education, to local school districts, both large and small, urban and rural. This partnership could provide wrap-around support and reinforcement.

Seeking out trained consultants to come into the classrooms of these educational professionals, either through face-to-face contact or by offering easy access through phone contact, e-mails, shared visitations and individualized on-site training, seems a valuable step for executive leaders of schools. This alliance could open opportunities for collaborative grants to seek ways to: promote greater self-efficacy, vary approaches to crisis intervention, and implement proactive strategies, with the hope of reducing and ideally eliminating the types of disruptive behavioral reactions by students that can be intensified by less confident and less trained staff.

With a stronger beginning into the profession and greater connections to skilled professionals, it may reduce the years required as this research suggests, for educational professionals like the participants in this study to develop beliefs about their own self-efficacy. Therefore, the likelihood that readiness to consider individually unique approaches to students' behavioral challenges may improve. Programs should be in place that provide regular feedback to teachers and teaching assistants as to their behavioral skills with students and progress they are making within this area. Teaching assistants and other paraprofessionals should be included in the Strategic Plans of districts to indicate their value and to establish a sequential avenue for training and improving their skill levels. Such inclusion of all educational professionals can build a professional community within a school creating a population of professionals more able and willing to make changes to their approaches to each student based on higher levels of skills and
an understanding behind the theory of the interventions they are selecting. As a result, school districts could see less referrals of students for more extensive services, fewer detentions and suspensions, a decreased drop-out rate, and higher graduation numbers.

With such recommendations in place, the focus of intervention is no longer on containment, coercion and control. The focus now becomes taking the problems that occur in the lives of students and using learned, practiced and reinforced skills to teach these students more effective coping skills and alternatives to aggression and disrespect.

Conclusion

Teachers experience significant job stress when facing the realities of the behavioral challenges of today's students. As a result of that stress, their beliefs in their self-efficacy and readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individualized, non-punitive approaches to students are impacted. Yet, the academic research supports that current methods of training and preparation of pre-service and veteran educational professionals does not meet the demand of these challenging situations.

The emerging body of research, begun as early as the 1950's, illustrates that although the concern over challenging behaviors is seen as an ongoing problem as well as a contributor to teachers leaving their employment, and in some cases, their profession, it is not changing the current system enough to alter the outcome for today's students.

However, only in the past 15 years has that research placed the focus of success and change in people on perceived beliefs in self-efficacy. Despite the growing attention on classroom management, the research to date, does not include the correlation of self-efficacy with readiness for educational professionals (teacher, teaching assistant or other) with 1-10 or 10 or more years of experience who have all been trained in the skills of
LSCI. The current research attempts to bridge some knowledge gaps about how status, years of experience, and value placed on training impacts educational practices.

The purpose of this current study was to assess educational professionals previously trained in the skills of LSCI, to determine any relationship between their perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom crises, and their readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crises in the classroom. In addition, the researcher considered subgroups that reported high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy and compared those groups regarding status (teacher, teaching assistant and other), years of experience, length of time trained in the skills of LSCI, their use of the LSCI training sequence, and the differentiating approaches to behavioral intervention chosen by these professionals. A quantitative non-experimental ex-post facto study examined the perceptions of educational professionals from a variety of K-12 settings in upstate New York (urban and rural districts, special education sites and day treatments) using The Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors (Baker, 2002). This survey was adapted from two previously administered surveys (Browers & Tomic, 1999; Bullock, Ellis & Wilson, 1994) and assessed the level of self-efficacy and readiness of the participants. In this study, all participants were trained in the skills of LSCI in the years from 2001 to 2008.

The design used in data collection was a non-probability, cross-sectional survey with data collected at one point over a specified time period. The survey was electronically made available via e-mail to all potential participants for a 32-day period from April 20, 2009 to May 21, 2009. Four reminders were sent via e-mail during the survey period to improve response rates. In addition, letters were sent via e-mail
introducing the researcher, explaining the research project, its goals and benefits. Letters were also sent through standard mail to any potential participants whose e-mail addresses were not readily available to the researcher at the time of the study. For potential participants whose e-mails were never received as a result of this mailing, a second mailing was generated. This mailing included not only a link to the survey but the option of sending a self-addressed envelope, with a completed survey to the researcher.

A total of 70 completed responses was received from the 184 potential participants, a 38% response rate. Data were collected and organized based on the three primary research questions: What is the relationship between the status of educational professionals (teachers, teaching assistants and others) trained in LSCI, and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior? What is the relationship of this perceived self-efficacy on the readiness (ability and willingness) of these professionals to consider alternative discipline decisions when managing classroom behavior? What is the relationship between years of experience of educational professionals and their beliefs concerning perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom behavior, and their readiness to consider alternative discipline decisions to meet the individual needs of students?

Survey results indicated that there was no significant relationship between the status of educational professionals and their beliefs in their self-efficacy. In addition, there was also no significant correlation between readiness and status. There was, however, a relationship between self-efficacy and years of experience for the status group of teachers and the status group of “other”. In contrast, there was no significant relationship to years of experience for teaching assistants. Furthermore, the value
participants placed on their LSCI training had no impact on self-efficacy, but had a significant relationship to readiness (ability and willingness) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crises in the classroom.

Participants in this study reported the highest levels of self-efficacy in being able to seek assistance with problems from their colleagues. They reported a drop in confidence in their ability to reach difficult students and to keep those difficult students engaged in learning. Participants also reported the highest levels of readiness in their ability and willingness to use a variety of behavior management model techniques. There was however, a drop in readiness scores for the ability of these participants to seek the help of outside agencies or consultants even though their willingness to do so remained high. In addition, participants reported their willingness to seek guidance from colleagues remaining high as well.

Finally, there are several implications of the findings of the current study in relation to the literature. For example, all of the participants report themselves high in the area of self-efficacy which is consistent with the literature that people may see themselves more skilled than is accurate or may demonstrate concern over the possibility that lack of self-efficacy in one area may translate to a lack of confidence and skills in other areas. The majority of respondents also indicate that they are ready (willing) to use a variety of intervention techniques but are unsure of the theory behind their choice. This suggests that participants use interventions without being sure of the potential of that intervention to be successful with a particular student. This supports the literature that high numbers of staff can de-escalate students, but the method they choose yields low success rates for changing behaviors. Moreover, the emphasis participants placed on
their value of the LSCI training and readiness to alter their intervention techniques to meet the need of individual students, also speaks to the literature concerning the need for continuous, well-structured staff development to promote positive, non-punitive approaches to intervention with more challenging students and keep children in the classroom and in the schools.

In conclusion, considering recognition that self-efficacy is related to readiness (ability and willingness) of educational professionals to see behaviorally challenging students as individuals who need and deserve alternative interventions rather than a "zero tolerance" approach to education, educators at all levels should see the need to make changes in how educational professionals prepare and continue to grow in their beliefs about their own self-efficacy. They should consider ways to build confidence at all status levels to insure the readiness to utilize a design for the classroom that is open to conflict resolution rather than the conflict cycle. This thinking may offer a universal and sustainable direction that not only leaves no child behind, but also no educational professional behind as well.
References


### Appendix A

**LSCI Six Stages**

*Long, Fescer and Brendtro (1998)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Developing staff de-escalating skills to drain off the student’s intense feelings, while learning how to control their own counter-aggressive reactions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manage Crisis (Drain-off)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Developing staff relationship skills to obtain and validate the student’s perception of the crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construct a Timeline</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Developing staff diagnostic skills to determine if the crisis represents one of the six LSCI patterns of self defeating behaviors or can be managed by short term interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Issue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Developing staff clinical skills to pursue the student’s specific pattern of self-defeating behavior for personal insight and accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teach Insight</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Developing staff empowering skills to teach the student new social skills to overcome a pattern of self-defeating behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teach New Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Developing staff consultation and contracting skills to help the student reenter the classroom and to reinforce and generalize the new social skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer Training (Reentry)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Appendix B

Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors
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Please indicate your response to each statement by clicking on your choice. There are no right or wrong answers. Your spontaneous and honest responses are important for the success of the study. Please do not include your name on any part of the survey itself so that your anonymity can be maintained. This should take about 20-30 minutes of your time and your efforts are greatly appreciated. Please use the following scale to record your responses:

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Agree  4 = Strongly Agree

1. If a student disrupts the lesson, I am able to redirect him/her quickly.
2. I am able to approach my principal* if I want to talk about problems at work (*includes assistant principals as well).
3. I am confident that, if necessary, I can ask my colleagues for advice.
4. There are very few students that I cannot handle.
5. I can get through to the most difficult students.
6. When necessary, I am able to work out problems with my principal.
7. I can find colleagues with whom I can talk about problems at work.
8. I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running efficiently.
9. I can communicate to students that I am serious about getting appropriate behavior.
10. I can manage my class very well.
11. I am confident that, if necessary, I can get the principal to help me.
12. I can keep difficult students involved in my lessons.
13. I am able to make my expectations clear to my students.
14. I am able to respond adequately to challenging students.
15. When it is necessary, I am able to get the principal to support me.
16. I can keep a few problem students from ruining an entire class.
17. If students stop working, I can put them back on track.
18. I am confident that I can ask my principal for advice when I need it.
19. If I feel confronted by a problem with which my colleagues can help me, I am able to approach them.
20. When it is necessary, I am able to ask a colleague for assistance.
21. I know what rules are appropriate for my students.
22. I am able to approach my colleagues if I want to talk about problems at work.
23. I am able to begin the scholastic year so that students will learn to behave well.
24. I am able to use a variety of nonaversive techniques (e.g., voice modulation, facial expressions, planned ignoring, proximity control, tension release).
25. I am able to maintain pupil attention while presenting reinforcement and or correcting pupil responses.
26. I am able to implement clearly stated classroom rules describing what students are expected to do and a means for enforcing these rules.
27. I am able to implement a consistent classroom routine.
28. I am able to use a variety of behavior management techniques such as behavior modification, life-space interviews, and natural consequences in a classroom setting.
29. I am able to implement a variety of crisis management procedures such as timeout and therapeutic holding to manage severe behavior.
30. I am able to use various techniques (e.g., modeling, rehearsal, inquiry, prompting, cuing, feedback, discussion, lecture) in isolation or in combination for providing appropriate instruction for students.
31. I am able to implement a positive reinforcement plan to change and/or maintain behavior for a classroom setting.
32. I am able to select target behaviors to be changed and identify the critical variables (i.e., setting events, antecedents, etc.) affecting those target behaviors as part of functional behavior assessment.
33. I am able to self-evaluate my own teaching and classroom management skills and use the results constructively.
34. I am able to use behavioral principles to design procedures (i.e., observation, recording, charting, interventions) to effect behavior change.
35. I am able to determine each student's reinforcement preference and use different reinforcers to change and maintain behavior.
36. I am able to designate certain student behavior as either appropriate or inappropriate for a specified age group based on observation and social validation.
37. I am able to implement a systematic behavior intervention plan that matches interventions with student needs including timelines and a hierarchy of intervention techniques.
38. I am able to develop and implement a reinforcement hierarchy for each student.
39. I am able to use different reinforcement schedules (e.g., fixed-ratio, variable-interval, etc.) effectively.
40. I am able to document the systematic evaluation of student behavior using charts, graphs, and logs in both academic and social areas of conduct.
41. I am able to negotiate contracts with students that are acceptable to all parties.
42. I am able to use the findings of systematic classroom observation to analyze student behavior as a component of functional behavior assessment and to make program adjustments.
43. I am able to gather performance samples of a student's work in order to generate a task analysis.
44. I am able to choose and justify an appropriate system for recording student progress.
45. I am able to document student behavior using a variety of systems such as rating scales or observation.
46. I am able to use role playing as a behavior management technique.
47. I am able to use a variety of behavior management models and techniques.
48. I am able to apply problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
49. I am able to apply the theory behind reinforcement techniques to adjust interventions as needed to meet the behavioral needs of individual students.
50. I am able to make high frequency behavior contingent upon low frequency behavior when creating an appropriate schedule for each student (i.e., If you stay in your seat during math, you can pass out snack.).
51. I am able to explain the rationale, program components, operation, and evaluation of the behavioral techniques I use.
52. I am able to apply the principles for increasing/decreasing behavior to individualized behavior intervention planning.
53. I am able to identify my ethical and legal responsibilities in behavioral intervention.
54. I am able to identify ethical and legal issues related to the use of punishment and aversive consequences.
55. I am able to recognize the collaborative relationship of special education and general education.
56. I am able to collaborate with colleagues to support students with emotional and behavioral needs.
57. I am able to consult effectively with colleagues and administrators.
58. I am able to access specialists from outside agencies as consultants.
59. I am willing to use a variety of nonaversive techniques (e.g., voice modulation, facial expressions, planned ignoring, proximity control, tension release).
60. I am willing to maintain pupil attention while presenting reinforcement and/or correcting pupil responses.
61. I am willing to implement clearly stated classroom rules describing what students are expected to do and a means for enforcing these rules.
62. I am willing to implement a consistent classroom routine.
63. I am willing to use a variety of behavior management techniques such as behavior modification, life-space interview, and natural consequences in a classroom setting.
64. I am willing to implement a variety of crisis management procedures such as timeout and therapeutic holding to manage severe behavior.
65. I am willing to use various techniques (e.g., modeling, rehearsal, inquiry, prompting, cueing, feedback, discussion, lecture) in isolation or in combination for providing appropriate instruction for students.
66. I am willing to implement a positive reinforcement plan to change and or maintain behavior for a classroom setting.
67. I am willing to select target behaviors to be changed and identify the critical variables (i.e., setting events, antecedents, etc.) affecting those target behaviors as part of functional behavior assessment.
68. I am willing to self-evaluate my own teaching and classroom management skills and use the results constructively.
69. I am willing to use behavioral principles to design procedures (e.g., observation, recording, charting, interventions) to effect behavior change.
70. I am willing to determine student's reinforcement preference and use different reinforceers to change and maintain behavior.
71. I am willing to designate certain student behavior as either appropriate or inappropriate for a specified age group based on observation and social validation.
72. I am willing to implement a systematic behavior intervention plan that matches interventions with student needs including timelines and a hierarchy of intervention techniques.
73. I am willing to develop and implement a reinforcement hierarchy for each student.
74. I am willing to use different reinforcement schedules (e.g., fixed-ratio, variable-interval, etc.) effectively.
75. I am willing to document the systematic evaluation of student behavior using charts, graphs, and logs in both academic and social areas of conduct.
76. I am willing to negotiate contracts with students that are acceptable to all parties.
77. I am willing to use the findings of systematic classroom observation to analyze student behavior as a component of functional behavior assessment and to make program adjustments.
78. I am willing to gather performance samples of a student's work in order to generate a task analysis.
79. I am willing to choose and justify an appropriate system for recording student progress.
80. I am willing to document student behavior using a variety of systems such as rating scales or observation.
81. I am willing to use role playing as a behavior management technique.
82. I am willing to use a variety of behavior management models and techniques.
83. I am willing to apply problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
84. I am willing to apply the theory behind reinforcement techniques to adjust interventions as needed to meet the behavioral needs of individual students.
85. I am willing to make high frequency behavior contingent upon low frequency behavior when creating an appropriate schedule for each student (i.e., If you stay in your seat during math, you can pass out a snack).
86. I am willing to explain the rationale, program components, operation, and evaluation of the behavioral techniques I use.
87. I am willing to apply the principles for increasing decreasing behavior to individualized behavior intervention planning.
88. I am willing to identify my ethical and legal responsibilities in behavioral intervention.
89. I am willing to identify ethical and legal issues related to the use of punishment and aversive consequences.
90. I am willing to recognize the collaborative relationship of special education and general education.
91. I am willing to collaborate with colleagues to support students with emotional and behavioral needs.
92. I am willing to consult effectively with colleagues and administrators.
93. I am willing to access specialists from outside agencies as consultants.

Demographic Section: Each statement has its own individual scale for recording your response.
94. **Primary Teaching Assignment:** (check one)
   1 = General education
   (K-5)_ (6-8)_ (9-12) _
   2 = Special education
   (K-5)_ (6-8)_ (9-12) _ (12+) _

95. **Title:**
   1 = Teacher
   2 = Teaching Assistant
   3 = Administrator
   4 = Other

96. **Years of Teaching Experience:**
   1 = 1-5 years
   2 = 5-10 years
   3 = 10-15 years
   4 = Over 15 years

97. **Rate your level of frustration with classroom management:**
   1 = Very Low
   2 = Low
   3 = High
   4 = Very High

98. **Rate your level of readiness (able and willing) to teach students who exhibit challenging behaviors:**
   1 = Very Low
   2 = Low
   3 = High
   4 = Very High

99. **Gender:**
   1 = Male
   2 = Female

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**Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) Section:** Each statement has its own individual scale for recording your response.

100. **I completed my LSCI training:**
    1 = 1-3 years ago
    2 = 3-5 years ago
    3 = over 5 years ago

101. **I use the six-step sequence of the LSCI process (Drain-off, Timeline, Central Issue, Insight, New Skills, Reentry):**
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

102. **I feel that LSCI training has equipped me with important skills for my work?**
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

103. **I would recommend LSCI training to colleagues:**
    1 = Strongly Disagree
    2 = Disagree
    3 = Agree
    4 = Strongly Agree

---

Is there anything else you would like me to know about the LSCI training or your LSCI experience? __________

Please **click submit** when the survey is completed and thank you for your participation.
Appendix C

Participant Information Letter

Dear Fellow Educators,

My name is Donna Riter. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College, in Rochester, New York. My experiences as a teacher, administrator, consultant and Senior Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) trainer, have fostered my interest in studying the impact of this training on beliefs of self-efficacy and readiness in classroom management.

My goals in this study are to contribute to scholarly knowledge and enhance understanding as to how capable and ready education professionals feel about managing challenging behaviors of students in special or regular education, or day treatment settings after these professionals have been trained in LSCI. The benefits of this information include improvements in: new teacher preparation, professional development supports for new and veteran staff, and alternative intervention approaches with behaviorally challenging students. The information gathered and reported in this study will help fill a gap in the research as to what preparation and practice in the area of classroom management is needed, for both new and veteran staff to better meet the behavior challenges in today’s classrooms.

If you select to participate in this study you will be asked to complete an online survey for my dissertation research which will be open from April 20, 2009 until May 21, 2009. You will receive an e-mail when the survey has been posted. The survey is anonymous and should take approximately 20-30 minutes to finish. Once completed, the information will become part of my dissertation study. All information will be kept in strict confidence and no one will be able to connect your responses to you, your position or your location. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time. The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed and approved this study.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your perspectives on a very critical topic. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (585)383-9017, (585)704-4343 or by e-mail at driter@rochester.rr.com.

Sincerely,

Donna Riter
St John Fisher College Doctoral Candidate
Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study: A Study of Self-Efficacy in Managing Classroom Behavior and Readiness for Differentiating Discipline: The Role of Life Space Crisis Intervention

Name(s) of researcher(s): Donna C. Riter, Ed.D. Candidate

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Dianne Cooney-Miner, Committee Chair, can be reached at (585).

Purpose of study: The purpose of this study is to examine beliefs of education professionals trained in Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) about their perceived self-efficacy in managing classroom crisis and their readiness (willingness and ability) to consider individual, alternative, non-punitive approaches to crisis in the classroom. The information gathered and reported in this study will help fill a gap in the research as to what preparation and practice in the area of classroom management is needed, for both new and veteran staff to better meet the behavioral challenges in today's classrooms.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: St. John Fisher College

Length of participation: The online survey will be available to complete from March 30, 2009 to April 30, 2009. Three follow-up e-mails will be sent to participants throughout that time period as reminders to complete and submit the online responses.

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

Risks: Concern of participants over anonymity of responses or worry that their identity or responses could be traced to their job location. Participant recognition of potential gaps in their own knowledge levels of behavior management that they recognize as important to their success in the classroom, but did not realize were missing.

Benefits: Benefits to participants of the study include:
- The opportunity for participants to reflect on and freely express their perspectives on the critical topic of classroom management of behaviorally challenging students. Data from participant's surveys will be recorded in
such a manner that they cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.
- Opportunities for participants to have direct access to the researcher who trains and consults in the area of classroom management, providing these participants with the potential for gaining increased awareness of their readiness to handle challenging behaviors in the classroom should they recognize gaps in their knowledge,
- Possible identification of improved professional development programs
- Identification of a potential opportunity to guide the planning and implementation of training and other supportive practices for both new and veteran staff.

Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy: The participant's identity, geographic location or place of employment will not be associated with any data collected or any records kept by the researcher. All surveys are anonymous. All data and associate information will be kept in confidence. Only the principle researcher, and possibly a hired and confidential data input or statistician, will have access to any raw data.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Please complete this consent statement and return it to me by March 30, 2009 in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. It is in no way connected to your survey response.

Consent Statement

I am willing to participate in the completion of the Teacher Readiness Scale for Managing Challenging Classroom Behaviors (Baker, 2002). I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from participation at any time. I am aware that this statement will be used as my raffle entry in a drawing offered by the researcher for a chance to win one of three visa gift cards.

Signature: ______________________
Printed Name: __________________

Phone Number Where You Can Be Reached: _____________________________
(to be used only to notify raffle winners)

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact:

Donna C. Riter
CHOICES Coordinator
Ed D Candidate, St. John Fisher College
Phone (585)-704-4343