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Striving for Homeostasis: Balancing the Inclusion of Students with an Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Robert McGarva

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Striving for Homeostasis: Balancing the Inclusion of Students with an Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

by

Robert McGarva

MA, Adler University of Professional Psychology, 1997

BEd, University of Regina, 1991

BA, Brandon University, 1986

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Psychology

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May 2021

Abstract

Social justice advocates have championed inclusive education, leading to its adoption in many jurisdictions. Despite policy changes designed to support learners with disabilities and research on inclusive education, students with an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD) experience significantly poorer outcomes than their peers. Teachers often describe including this group of students as impossible and attempts to achieve inclusion often result in extreme stress. Research has identified proven inclusion strategies, but there are often problems with implementation in real-world settings. There is a research gap concerning how teachers understand and select interventions. Classic grounded theory methodology was used to identify the primary concern of teachers who were including a student with an EBD in their general education elementary classroom in Alberta, Canada. Constant comparative analysis of 23 teacher interviews revealed a theory of striving for homeostasis by which teachers maintained the classroom's optimum functioning and addressed the often-conflicting needs of students with an EBD. Teachers used strategies of managing, unothering (fixing), inclusively excluding, recruiting allies, and conserving energy and resources. This theory provides an interpretation of why many current strategies have been ineffective in creating enduring change, given how teachers are perceiving and selecting interventions. Those who support teachers can use the resulting recommendations to reduce stress for teachers and more effectively encourage the use of evidence-based strategies. Such actions may lead to positive social change, promoting teachers' emotional health and greater school success for this disadvantaged group of students.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to the many teachers who provide love, patience, and support to children who are not easy to have in their classroom.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge those who have helped me complete this dissertation and provided me with tools to reach this point in my education. First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Karine Clay, and second committee member, Dr. Colleen Lindecker, for their patience, guidance, and encouragement. I appreciated the consultation with Dr. Helen Scott regarding classic grounded theory and am indebted to Dr. Judy Lupart, Dr. Tim Loreman, and Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond for sparking my interest in inclusive education. I have also benefitted from mentoring by more experienced psychologists, including Harvey Rogers, Leigh-Anne Williard, Kathy Hickey, and Dr. James Croake.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Historically, people in the Western world with mental disorders and aberrant behavior have been shunned and segregated. As schools became formal institutions, the problem of student disabilities was addressed by having less typical students similarly excluded from the educational system. In the 20th century, the needs of students with disabilities were recognized but resolved through the use of special schools. However, the civil rights movement spawned an awareness of disability rights and concerns about segregation (Stein & Stein, 2007). Advocates argued for inclusive education with a goal of equal rights and placement of all children with their same-age peers in their neighborhood schools (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2006). This approach was a value-based philosophy that was adopted by countries throughout the world (Kefallinou, Symeonidou, & Meijer, 2020; Peters, 2007). However, while teachers have been accepting of the philosophical tenets of inclusive education, they have struggled with the pragmatic aspects of implementation (Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015). This issue has been particularly troublesome with regard to students who have an emotional/behavioral disorder (EBD; De Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). The result has been extremely high levels of teacher stress and coping strategies that result in limited educational experiences and a lack of academic success for students with an EBD.

In Chapter 1, a summary is provided of the literature addressing this problem, attempts within school systems to support teachers, and scholars who have indicated the need for more research to understand how teachers perceive and use the support that is

available. I then provide an argument for the use of grounded theory to further investigate this issue and present an overview of the research design. Sections in this chapter also include an outline of the study's key terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations. I conclude with an explanation of the importance of this study and its implications for educational practice and social change.

Background

Inclusive education has been identified as an ethical requirement by the United Nations (UNESCO, 1994, 2009) and proclaimed as effective pedagogical practice (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2010). However, teachers have described feeling that they lack the knowledge and skills they need to deal with inclusive education (Heath et al., 2006; Slee, 2011). Questions have been raised about the disconnection between official policy and actual classroom practice (Tiwari et al., 2015).

The challenge seems to be particularly evident with regard to students who have an EBD. While proponents of inclusive education cite research that indicates no adverse effects from the general inclusion of students with disabilities (Loreman et al., 2010), recent studies have shown negative influences on typical children from peers with behavioral challenges (Gottfried, 2014; Gottfried & Harven, 2015). Teachers have identified these children as the most difficult group of individuals to include in a general education classroom (Cartledge & Johnson, 1996; O'Toole & Burke, 2013; Wood, Evans, & Spandagou, 2014). Educators have described the inclusion of students with an EBD as impossible (Gidlund & Boström, 2017). Challenges involved in the inclusion of students with an EBD often result in teachers forming negative attitudes toward such students;

when this occurs, teachers' feelings can impact student success (Orsati & Causton-Theoharis, 2013; Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013). Extreme levels of frustration often result in exclusion or strategies that reduce academic success (Cochran, Cochran, Gibbons, & Spurgeon, 2014; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel, & Tlale, 2015).

Understanding the best inclusive education practices requires exploration of how teachers conceptualize students with disabilities and how they choose to respond to them. Lalvani (2013) suggested that there is an "otherness" to how teachers perceive students with disabilities. This perception of otherness allows students to be excluded because they are seen as different from regular students. In contrast, teachers sometimes believe that all students are the same and those with behavioral problems should be punished to motivate them to behave better (Mills & Pini, 2015). These types of viewpoints can be connected to how teachers prioritize classroom issues (Gidlund & Boström, 2017) and the need for power and control in their classrooms (Orsati & Causton-Theoharis, 2013). Many teachers view factors affecting students with an EBD as outside their control (McKeon, 2017; Thomas, 2015). Thus, teacher perceptions and responses around this issue are a critical component of addressing the challenges.

The result of teachers' stress, hardships, and ineffective strategies is that students with an EBD are more likely to be excluded and to be unsuccessful academically (Goodman, Bucholz, Hazelkorn, & Duffy, 2014; Kane, Head, & Cogan, 2004; Malmqvist, 2016). Even when teachers do express positive attitudes toward students with behavioral challenges, there is often a discrepancy in their actions (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Scanlon & Barnes-Holmes, 2013). This observed incongruity in actions

may be the result of difficulty in creating an inclusive environment. Teachers with the most positive attitudes toward inclusion are likely to experience the highest rates of burnout as they try to meet their expectations for students (Stormont, Reinke, Newcomer, Marchese, & Lewis, 2015). As a result, inclusive education involving behavioral challenges creates significant stress, either because of incongruity between beliefs and not creating an appropriate environment, or the extreme effort required to meet expectations.

School culture and system support have been identified as influencing teachers' inclusive practices (Kozleski, Yu, Satter, Francis, & Haines, 2015). Educators can identify system-level issues and factors that affect success (McGoey et al., 2014; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, 2016). However, most research has focused on teachers' judgement about identifying barriers created by the system (Goodman & Burton, 2010), commenting on specific strategies (Chong & Ng, 2011; Curtis, Hamilton, Moore, & Pisecco, 2014; Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009), or improving the fidelity of behavioral interventions (Houchens et al., 2014).

Recent papers have called for a deeper investigation of the factors that affect how support is perceived by teachers (Newman & Clare, 2016; Sheridan & Erchul, 2014; Stormont et al., 2015). Researchers have reported that teacher attitudes and behavior toward students can be improved with the right intervention (Becker, 2014). However, support must be provided within a trusting relationship (Shernoff, Lekwa, Reddy, & Coccaro, 2017) and be easily accessible (Nel et al., 2016). The understanding of how support can help teachers with the inclusive education of students with an EBD should

not be reductionistic (Skidmore, 1996); it needs to involve richer study of teachers' voices regarding how they manage these challenges and the process that they use to access system supports (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016).

Problem Statement

Helping teachers with students who have an EBD has become a particularly pressing issue in many areas, such as Alberta, Canada, where the provincial government has mandated inclusive education (Alberta Education, 2016b). A significant social impact is related to teacher stress (McGoey et al., 2014) and teacher burnout (McCormick & Barnett, 2011), resulting in teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). Students with an EBD are also a disadvantaged population due to the long-term lack of educational success for this group (Siperstein, Wiley, & Forness, 2011). This trend is reflected in the negligible success of students in this category who successfully graduate from Alberta schools (Alberta Education, 2016a).

Further knowledge is necessary regarding how teachers cope with what many of them describe as an impossible task, and how they select their response to the student. This gap in understanding is particularly apparent regarding the process that teachers follow to cope with these demands and people within the system who try to help them. The phenomenon of support is an essential factor to understand if educational consultants and leaders wish to effectively help teachers and improve outcomes for these students.

Multiple interventions have been proposed to try to support teachers of students with an EBD. These supports include professional development workshops, consultants, coaches, paraprofessionals, and peer and administrator support. The strategies have been

received positively by teachers in managing students with an EBD (e.g., Chong & Ng, 2011; Stormont & Reinke, 2012). However, it is not clear how teachers determine which strategies to implement or which aspects of the interventions are most compatible with how teachers resolve demands. Understanding teachers' processes regarding educational supports can provide valuable information for system improvements (Shernoff et al., 2017). Recent papers have called for a deeper investigation of the factors that affect how support is perceived by teachers (Newman & Clare, 2016; Sheridan & Erchul, 2014; Stormont et al., 2015). This study addresses the problem of understanding how supports are accepted by teachers, and which strategies they select within an inclusive environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to reveal a grounded theory of how teachers navigate challenges and select strategies when they include a student with an EBD in a general education classroom. This grounded theory study focused on the substantive area of elementary teachers who have a student with an EBD in their inclusive classroom in Alberta school districts. Primary data involved interviews with teachers and reflective memos.

Grounded theory can be used to understand the primary problem of individuals in a studied situation and how they resolve this issue (Glaser, 1998). The existing literature suggests that given the competing demands and personal stress created by the inclusive education of a student with an EBD, a problem exists for teachers in these situations. The

adverse effects on students and teachers also support the relevance and urgency of this topic for study.

Research Questions

RQ1: What theory explains teachers' perceptions of support related to the inclusion of students with an emotional/behavioral disorder?

RQ2: What theory explains teachers' choices of strategies and changes in their approach to working with students who have an emotional/behavioral disorder?

Framework

Understanding how teachers process the demands of inclusive education and support is complicated by the individual characteristics of the teacher and the person providing support, the symptoms exhibited by the child, the composition of the classroom, and the culture of the school system (Thornberg, 2014). Due to the complex nature of this problem and the limited research in this area, a qualitative investigation was indicated (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). There have been several examples of a grounded theory approach being used successfully to study inclusive education (Pavenkov, Pavenkov, & Rubtcova, 2015; Thornberg, 2014). Grounded theory permits the assumption that social structures are undergoing constant change (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Further, grounded theory has been shown to allow the participants to clarify and build an understanding of how they negotiate with others (Waitoller, Kozleski, & Gonzalez, 2016). Such an approach appeared essential when considering that teachers

construct and operationalize their definitions of inclusive education and behavior challenges in their classrooms (Gidlund & Boström, 2017).

Recent studies have also revealed varying viewpoints of teachers regarding this group of students, dependent on whether the school is composed of typical students (Gidlund & Boström, 2017) or has a more at-risk population (Cochran et al., 2014). Differences have also been reported between the perceptions of teachers in developing nations (Engelbrecht et al., 2015) and those in more industrialized countries (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012). This variability of findings supports the need for a more in-depth investigation, to hear from teachers and explore patterns in the process as afforded by a grounded theory approach.

Grounded Theory

The purpose of grounded theory is to develop broad theories or hypotheses that account for behavior (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The researcher focuses on a substantive area, such as teachers dealing with the competing demands involved in the inclusion of students with an EBD. Grounded theory is particularly well suited for understanding people's challenges and how they resolve them (Glaser, 1998). However, attention is also paid to whether the findings are transferable to multiple settings and could provide a broader explanation. The focus is on understanding the actions that participants take from their perspectives. As participants are allowed to vent, their genuine concerns emerge (Glaser, 1998). This approach has the advantage of generating an explanation that is understandable and makes sense from both a practical and academic viewpoint (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory should also permit a practical application of

the findings that allows change because it explains factors that are controllable by individuals in the substantive area (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Social Support

Glaser (1998) warned that researchers should not approach their studies with preconceived notions of what they expect to find. However, it was anticipated the findings would need to be related back to existing theories about social support. A general definition of social support was presented by Shumaker and Brownell (1984) as "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient" (p. 13). Shumaker and Brownell emphasized that support is related to the viewpoints of the individuals involved, and the outcome may be perceived as positive, negative, or neutral. Additionally, this definition of social support may be applied to professional relationships, as well as more informal contacts (Danzl, Hunter, & Harrison, 2017).

House (1981) proposed a model of social support in the workplace that conceptualized actions as falling into four categories: emotional support (acts that address affect), appraisal support (providing feedback), informational support (sharing knowledge), and instrumental support (tangible efforts to modify the situation). Malecki and Demaray (2003) reported that most of the literature on support could be understood through this framework. This model has also been applied to investigations of teacher supports and may be used to help guide the categorization of results (Cancio, Albrecht, & Johns, 2013a).

Complexity Theory

Desired social support has been reported to change over time (Chivers, Burns, & Collado, 2017). This variation in needs was expected to be the case in schools, which are dynamic systems with multiple independent variables that exert influences on each other. Complexity theory was also used to inform the interpretation. This framework has previously been applied to explain aspects of inclusive education (Osberg & Biesta, 2010). Complex systems evolve and adapt over time. This model is designed to consider the possibility of shifting variables in fluid situations, without the belief that a standardized linear relationship can be established amongst factors (Walton, 2014). A teacher's needs and perceptions in September may be different than they are halfway through the year, which limits the usefulness of reductionistic approaches (Hawkins & James, 2016). An appreciation of these temporal changes is also important in understanding teacher growth through professional development (Wetzels, Steenbeek, & Van Geert, 2016). In complexity theory, interventions provided from outsiders are viewed as an agitation to the system. However, systems tend to return to their previous order after this ripple has been exhausted (Goldspink, 2007). This phenomenon may explain why providing teachers with evidence-based strategies and ensuring fidelity of implementation may not be enough for the practice to be continued after support is withdrawn. Similarly, if different models of intervention can be equally effective in education, this indicates that linear investigations are unlikely to reveal essential details (Bayliss, 1998). To move forward with a comprehensive understanding of inclusive

education, it is necessary to understand real-life applications (Barlow & Nock, 2009) and to understand the variables affecting the system (Byrne, 1998).

In addition, some educational challenges may not have a solution. Gidlund (2018b) pointed out that inclusive education often leads to different problems in the system. Policy analysts have labeled some complex issues as "wicked problems" because they are difficult to define and may not have an answer (Peters, 2017). The inclusion of students with an EBD contains many of the attributes of such a dilemma (Armstrong, 2017). For example, if teachers increase the amount of inclusion for this group of children, they can improve their access to the same education that other students receive, but the greater the degree of inclusion, the higher the risk of safety issues to others. Decreasing inclusion in the classroom results in the opposite effect. A consideration of wicked problems serves to suggest future directions for exploration based on the results of how teachers perceive this complex task. These topics will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative and employed classic grounded theory to guide the methodology of data gathering and analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A qualitative approach is consistent with the exploration of areas that have limited previous research. It is also an indicated methodology when complex social interactions are being studied. Grounded theory has been described as a highly suitable approach for understanding how individuals resolve problematic processes (Glaser, 1998). Researchers use classic grounded theory in an attempt to develop theories that are

relevant and useful to participants within a substantive area (Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott, & Nicol, 2012). Glaser (2005) has described this approach as having a neutral ontology and epistemology, which Holton (2009) explained can take on the characteristics indicated by the data. As a result, there is an emergent nature to these studies as research generates further questions as it progresses. The nuances and justification for using the classic variation of grounded theory will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The substantive area investigated was elementary school teachers who had a student with an EBD in an inclusive setting. The process of interest in this study was how teachers dealt with challenges, support, and strategy selection with students who had a behavioral disorder. This methodology used inductive logic and a constant comparative approach to determine the direction for investigation.

The data were primarily gathered from interviews with teachers. Teachers were encouraged to email any descriptions of incidents or thoughts that occurred in the 2 months after the interview. The reflective journal and memos that I created during the study were additional sources of data. School and provincial practice and policy documents were considered.

Definitions of Terms

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD)

The designation EBD was defined as applying to a student who met the criteria for this special education code as specified by the provincial department of education (Alberta Education, 2019).

Inclusive Education

Multiple definitions exist in research and policy regarding what constitutes inclusive education (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011; Loreman, Forlin, Chambers, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2014). For this study, a teacher was considered to have a student in an inclusive setting if the child was with the teacher and typically developing, same-age peers for over 50% of the day.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Teacher perception sometimes influences which actions are labeled as behavioral difficulties (Avramidis & Bayliss, 1998). However, common disruptive behavior that leads to teacher frustration and stress includes disruptive activities such as opposition and aggression (Pepe & Addimando, 2013). These behaviors reflect difficulties in managing students and the teaching environment.

Public Schools

In Alberta, the majority of schools are public, nondenominational institutions. Public schools are those that are fully provincially funded and require certificated teachers, including public, Catholic, and Francophone divisions.

Teacher Stress

Stress is an emotional and physical response to demands (Selye, 1973). In the case of occupational stress, it involves these responses to work requirements and situations. Teacher stress has been linked to burnout, complete emotional exhaustion, and eventually quitting the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Assumptions

The first assumption was that participants who responded to my study request were certified teachers and worked in an inclusive classroom. Secondly, it was supposed that teachers would be interested in participating in the study and that those who did volunteer would provide an adequate sample of the substantive area. Without enough participants, I would not have been able to fully develop a theory. A similar issue would have been created if the group had only represented a biased sample of the problem.

My ability to build rapport and elicit genuine and candid responses was the second assumption. Due to privacy laws and the desire to create a feeling of safety by allowing participants to not reveal their name or school, I could not determine if they actually taught a student with an EBD and that they had an inclusive classroom. It was also unlikely that I could confirm the details of the information that they shared. This latter issue was controlled by the grounded theory approach, in which the researcher is encouraged to "read between the lines"; however, it then introduced an additional assumption that I, as a novice researcher, would be able to do so (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 231).

The issue of being a novice researcher was the basis for the third assumption related to my ability to correctly apply grounded theory. The method required that I could observe my own subjective biases and treat them as data. I needed to correctly recognize saturation and stop gathering data appropriately. There was also a belief that if I did everything correctly, a pattern would emerge that would allow the generation of a

substantive theory and that I would have the patience to let it appear without forcing an interpretation (Glaser, 1992).

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited to a focus on elementary teachers in Alberta school boards ("public schools" included public, Francophone, and separate (Catholic) schools). Charter, private, federal (First Nations), and special schools were not included, as these may have unusual characteristics. Based on data from the 2017-2018 school year, this approach would include 92% of the students in the province ("Student Population Overview," n.d.). Secondary teachers were excluded because they sometimes have more limited contact with individual students. Students with an EBD are also more likely to exclude themselves as they get older by dropping out or choosing an alternative educational model such as distance learning.

The scope of the study was also restricted to students who had been identified as fitting the criteria for a severe EBD as defined by Alberta Education (2019). Meeting this standard requires that the student have a medical or psychological diagnosis and that the school system can identify a substantial impairment in classroom functioning. Typically, students in this category have been diagnosed with severe forms of oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder. Students with more biologically linked conditions, such as autism spectrum disorder and fetal alcohol syndrome disorder, are placed under the severe medical disorder category. This may have limited the findings to students with a particular type of disability but ensured that the issues addressed by teachers focused on behavioral needs.

Limitations

As mentioned above, the defined scope placed limitations on the transferability of the findings. This study focused on teachers in regular elementary classrooms, so the results may be different than results in other settings, such as segregated behavior disorder classrooms and institutional settings. Transferability is also an issue with all qualitative studies due to the small nonrandom selection of participants. As participants needed to volunteer, this self-selection may have been more appealing to a specific section of the entire population.

Participant bias may have influence in other ways. Although the interview criteria limited participants to those who currently taught a student with an EBD, the events discussed were not happening as the interviews took place. As such, there was the potential for recall bias. Descriptions of behavior may also have been influenced by how the participants wished they had behaved. There may have been a positive reporting bias. Although I attempted to appear nonjudgmental or nonleading, participants may have perceived that I wanted a specific type of response.

In addition, I may have introduced bias into the study. In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. As a novice researcher, I may not have had the theoretical sensitivity needed to correctly identify patterns. Additionally, Glaser (1978) suggested not conducting a literature review; a literature review was an institutional requirement but may have introduced ideas that forced my interpretation. This limitation was controlled by memoing my emerging thoughts and not imposing predetermined labels on the data (El Hussein, Kennedy, & Oliver, 2017).

As discussed under assumptions, I needed to correctly recognize saturation and stop gathering data appropriately. As qualitative studies are limited in the population sampled, there is a possibility that sampling was stopped before a broad enough group had been selected.

Significance

Students with an EBD are a disadvantaged population due to the long-term lack of educational success for this group (Siperstein et al., 2011). The difficulties of teaching students with an EBD also contribute to increased levels of stress and burnout amongst teachers, causing them to use less appropriate pedagogical strategies (Forlin, 2001; McGoey et al., 2014). A more comprehensive understanding of the factors that create challenges with support and how teachers can be helped would improve the implementation of inclusive education for students with an EBD and reduce the inequality in their educational opportunities. The phenomenon of support and strategy selection are essential factors to understand if educational consultants and leaders wish to effectively help teachers in improving outcomes for these students. Multiple interventions have been provided to try to support teachers of students with EBD. These supports include professional development workshops, consultants, coaches, paraprofessionals, and peer and administrator support. The strategies have been received positively by teachers in managing students with an EBD (e.g., Chong & Ng, 2011; Stormont & Reinke, 2012). However, it is not clear how teachers perceive these strategies and respond to them over time, or which aspects of the interventions are essential. This study has positive social change implications by providing a deeper

understanding of how supports are helping teachers, in addition to identifying natural assistance in their environment. This knowledge should allow system-level changes that increase academic success for students with an EBD and reduce the negative effects of teacher stress.

Summary

Disability rights activists and the United Nations have highlighted ethical reasons for inclusive education. Despite broad international acceptance, there has been a discrepancy between policies to promote this approach and the ability of classroom teachers to implement it. This challenge is particularly evident when a student has an EBD. The result has been ineffective educational strategies and a lack of academic success and inclusive experiences for students with this type of disability. School systems have tried to support teachers, but the interventions have had limited effectiveness or have not produced sustained change. Recent studies have suggested the importance of understanding teachers' perceptions, how they are influenced, and how they navigate the available supports.

The purpose of this study was to discover a grounded theory of how teachers navigate challenges and select strategies when they include a student with an EBD in a general education classroom. This chapter provided the rationale for a classic grounded theory approach and data collection primarily through teacher interviews. A brief overview outlined concepts that needed to be integrated with the discovered theory. These theories included social support and complexity theory.

Chapter 2 provides an expanded review of the literature related to the inclusive education of students with an EBD. The literature review also includes discussion of previous studies that have relevance regarding support for teachers in these settings. These topics include the areas of disability rights, implementation science, complexities in special education, school consultation services, and social support in education. Chapter 3 includes a detailed examination of the grounded theory methodology and how it was applied to answering the research questions identified in this chapter, while Chapter 4 provides the results of the study. The final chapter interprets these results and how they relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as a discussion on the study limitations, and suggestions for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to discover a grounded theory of how teachers navigate challenges and select strategies when they include a student with an EBD in a general education classroom. Glaser (1998) advised that in grounded theory research, the literature review should be completed at the end of the study, once the writer has determined how the target population resolved their problem. However, Glaser acknowledged that institutional rules for dissertations might require completing the literature review first. Glaser recommended treating the literature as data for constant comparison. As such, the literature review resulted in the emergence of several themes related to historical, political, pedagogical, system, and personal factors that might be relevant for the inductive generation of theory during the data interpretation phase of the study.

First, existing theories are discussed that provide a framework from other scholars to explore and interpret school system responses to students with disabilities. The second section deals with the history and development of the concepts of inclusive education and EBD. This segment is followed by a discussion of the negative impacts of current practices on both students and teachers. This is followed by the literature on teachers' perceptions related to inclusive education and students with an EBD. The fifth section details research support for strategies that teachers can select and explores the challenges in getting teachers to adopt these approaches. The next part reviews how the educational system has responded in trying to help teachers with students who have an EBD. The

chapter concludes with an exploration of how teachers perceive this help, and which factors they feel are most important for support.

Literature Search Strategy

Literature searches were conducted in September 2018 using the electronic databases EBSCO (PsycARTICLES, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC, PsycINFO, SocINDEX with Full Text, and Teacher Reference Center), Sage Journals, and ProQuest (Central and Dissertations & Theses Global). Keywords included *inclusion*, *inclusive education*, *general education*, *emotional disorder*, *behavior disorder*, *EBD*, *SEBD*, *BESD*, *disruptive disorder*, *mental disorder*, *mental illness*, *support*, *consultation*, *coaching*, and *teacher*. Searches were performed using both the Canadian spelling *behaviour* and the American spelling *behavior*. Publication dates were limited in the searches to January 2014 to September 2018. Additionally, a manual search of the reference sections of the pertinent articles and dissertations was performed. Tables of contents for relevant journals were also searched for the target period (these included the *International Journal for Inclusive Education*, *Beyond Behavior*, *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *Behavioral Disorders*, *Exceptional Children*, and *Intervention in School and Clinic*). Investigation of "gray literature" was conducted regarding inclusive education and EBD on the websites of Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and the U.S. Department of Education. Articles focused solely on a mental/behavioral diagnosis, parent training, clinical treatment, autism, or bullying were removed. Consultation with a research librarian did not provide further strategies.

Inclusive Education Theory

There are multiple philosophical perspectives regarding inclusive education. These theories range from Marxist ideas of disruptive behavior, which attribute deviance to behavior that interferes with the school's job of producing a workforce, to the postmodern thinking of Foucault, who described science as helping to legitimize what society considers deviant (Macleod, 2010). In contrast, Artiles and Kozleski (2016) questioned whether there was a theory of inclusive education at all, or if it was better considered a social justice reform movement.

In exploring these theoretical issues, Allan and Slee (2008) described the term *inclusive education* as having been spawned in the 1980s by dissatisfaction with *integration*. They indicated that inclusive education had historical and political roots, but that the definitions and ideologies were often confusing and controversial. They suggested four loose categorizations of inclusive-education-related theory, encompassing special education, school reform, disability rights, and critical research.

Special education is based on a medical model of identifying the disability and fixing the student or containing them in a safe space to care for them. This model of understanding and interacting with student disability still has active proponents (Kauffman, Anastasiou, & Maag, 2017). Kaufman (2015) has suggested that inclusion is "folly" and that the resources of the school system make it unlikely that it can occur. He has maintained that there are structural and instructional reasons for keeping a system specifically for dealing with students who have disabilities.

Mel Ainscow, a proponent of inclusive education as part of school reform, agreed that both special education and inclusion were likely to continue as parallel options (Allan & Slee, 2008). However, Ainscow argued that the disability debate had too narrow a focus and that the real issue was marginalization (Clough & Corbett, 2000). He felt that there was a disconnection between special education and general education (Clough & Corbett, 2000). Ainscow suggested that the answer to inclusive education lay in overall school improvement and improving outcomes for all students (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006).

Another perspective on inclusive education involves a focus on the rights of those who are identified as disabled. For example, Mike Oliver is a scholar who was motivated by the lack of power of the disabled and the negative experiences many had encountered when in special schools (Clough & Corbett, 2000). Oliver is credited with creating the "social model of disability" (Clough & Corbett, 2000). He spoke from his own and other people's experience of disability. He argued that the concept of disability was socially constructed based on cultural factors (Oliver, 1992). This labeling resulted in the oppression and discrimination of disabled people.

The issues of social inequality and power differentials were also considered by theorists who fell in the critical research category. Sally Tomlinson contended that many people in special education mean well but are actually not helping their students (Clough & Corbett, 2000). She received significant backlash from the psychological community for suggesting that those who created labels and expertise in identifying disability gained

personal power as a result of conceptualizing the issue this way (Clough & Corbett, 2000).

The majority of this literature has focused on the theory and philosophy of inclusion without addressing practice (Amor et al., 2018). However, others have argued that education's most pressing issue is not conceptualization but implementation (Slee, 2007). Recent attempts have been made to integrate functional approaches in the education system. Loreman, Forlin, and Sharma (2014) identified key aspects of inclusive education and the need to support these factors at the micro, meso and macro levels. Proponents of other theoretical applications have attempted to use pedagogical or psychological approaches to the problem of inclusion. For example, Jennifer Katz recently promoted a "three-block model" of inclusive education based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL; Katz, 2013; Katz, Sokal, & Wu, 2019). This approach involves consideration of how teachers can implement the strategies associated with UDL (Rose, 2000) but is expanded to include the classroom, school, and district systems in which the method is applied.

Complexity and Contradictions With Inclusive Education

The incongruities of inclusive education practice highlight the complications of developing theory. Burton, Bartlett, and Anderson de Cuevas (2009) described how educators were often confused about the contradictions in educational policy in England for students with an EBD. The same is likely true in Alberta, where educational policy directs students toward placement in regular classrooms but also requires schools to maintain a "safe and caring" environment.

Erchul and Martens (2010) highlighted the complexity within the classroom, noting that the same actions by a teacher can impact multiple individuals differently, that many events are happening simultaneously, that thousands of decisions and interactions occur in a single day, that the classroom evolves and changes throughout the year, and that unpredictable agents intrude. Citing the work of Good and Brophy, Erchul and Martens (1990), argued that teachers may not even be aware of their decisions and behavior, given everything that is occurring in a typical classroom. Responding to student behavior is also complex because of factors over which teachers may have no control or knowledge (Berliner, 2013). Even if teachers are acting in the best manner possible, students' behavior may worsen.

Complexity Theory

Given such convoluted interactions, it has been argued that to solve these types of issues, science needs to move beyond a simple, clean experimental approach (Bradbury, 2006). Complexity theory is one approach to understanding systems that allow the consideration of unique aspects of individual parts of the system. It was an idea first developed in the physical sciences to understand the intricate interactions of multifaceted open systems (Holmdahl, 2005). It was extended to the social sciences to provide a model for understanding nonlinear interactions.

Schools have been recognized as complex adaptive systems (Fidan, 2017; Hawkins & James, 2018). Wolf-Branigin (2013) suggested that the first step in applying such an approach to service delivery is to deconstruct the system to identify the basic agent with which other parts interact. Within the school system, the most primary parts

are the student and teacher. Complexity theory has been used to examine aspects of the educational system, such as curriculum change (Wood & Butt, 2014) and the dynamic interactions of classroom discipline (Saeed, 2016).

Wicked Problems

The identification of contradictions in a complex system has spawned the subcategory of a "wicked problem" (Rittel & Webber, 1973). The idea of wicked problems stemmed from comments by Rittel and Webber (1973) that science was unsuccessfully attempting to address small, discrete parts of large, interconnected social systems. Science had solved many of the "tame" problems, but Rittel and Webber argued that major policy initiatives would increasingly encounter complex obstacles against which this approach would be unsuccessful. They contended that for many of these issues, the challenge might be that there were no solutions, only optimal ways of responding.

Armstrong (2017) posited that responding to the needs of students with an EBD is an example of a wicked problem within a school system. Expanding on this idea, he claimed that educators are caught trying to address the behavioral needs of students and promote their inclusion but have been mostly unsuccessful, even when implementing the best available evidence-based strategies (Armstrong, 2018).

History and Development of Inclusive Education and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Inclusion is a nebulous concept that has been interpreted in various ways by scholars and policymakers throughout the world (Armstrong et al., 2011; D'Alessio,

Grima-Farrell, & Cologon, 2018; Loreman, 2007). Topping (2012) conceptualized multiple levels of inclusion, while Slee (2011) argued that students are either included or excluded. Göransson and Nilholm (2014) suggested that varied definitions of inclusion have muddied discussions, in that inclusion has been used to mean placing students in mainstream classrooms, meeting the needs of disabled students, meeting the needs of all students, or creating inclusive communities. Differing opinions make it difficult to accept statements regarding inclusion at face value. In reviewing two decades of research on the inclusive education of students with an EBD, Willmann and Seeliger (2017) noted that there was little consistency in the definition of inclusion across research articles.

History of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education represents a meeting of disability politics and educational practices (Slee, 2001). Some of the confusion regarding the meaning of inclusion likely stems from the different sources of this philosophical idea. Armstrong et al. (2011) described the concept of inclusive education as stemming from four sources: student advocates who were frustrated with a dual system involving special education, the disability rights movement, aspects of school competition based on accountability and finances, and international equity goals.

Winzer (1993) noted that compulsory attendance laws resulted in more diverse children entering the school system. At the turn of the last century, support grew for providing education for disruptive and low-functioning students in segregated settings. However, bureaucrats appreciated that placement in typical schools was a much cheaper alternative. Kauffman (2015) described the development of "special education" as an

attempt by the school system to deal with prominent variability in abilities found among children by creating a reasonable range of abilities within general education classrooms while using segregated classes for the lower end of the spectrum.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s led to legal action against racial discrimination in schools (Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2012). Similarly, belief in the importance of equality served as a basis for rights of those with disabilities. Parallel movements emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1970s, where it was argued that the medical model was an oppressive system unfairly labeling and limiting individuals (Connor, Gabel, Gallagher, & Morton, 2008). The initial solution for the school system was "mainstreaming" or "integration" of students with disabilities, which evolved into the idea of "inclusion" (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011). Champions of the movement defined inclusion as full participation in regular classrooms, with no segregation (Connor et al., 2008).

Legislation of Inclusive Education

During the 1970s, many legal actions occurred in the United States where parents demanded access to public education for their children with disabilities (Freeman, Yell, Shriner, & Katsiyannis, 2019). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1973 and protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in schools receiving federal funds to a free and appropriate public education. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) provided additional funding to states that promoted more friendly legislation for students with disabilities; this law was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 (Freeman et al., 2019). The most recent revision was the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004), which continues to ensure free and appropriate public education and special services. However, the challenges of supporting students, including those with an EBD, continue to be the most highly litigated area in education law (Katsiyannis, Counts, Popham, Ryan, & Butzer, 2016).

In Canada, the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped was formed toward the end of the 1970s (Peters, 2004). This group advocated for nondiscrimination based on "disability" to be included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canadian Constitution Act, 1982). However, a recent legal challenge has created some questions about inclusion. In reviewing the Moore case (*Moore v. British Columbia (Education)*, 2012 SCC 61, Henteleff (2013) explained that the school district was found negligent for not providing equal opportunity to receive an education. Special education was described as a way that a student gains access to a typical education, which must be specific to the student's identified needs. Henteleff noted that an inclusive placement does not meet the needs of all students and other alternatives must be available. As a result of this legislation in both Canada and the United States, there are legal arguments to be made for inclusion, as well as for the option of special education services.

International Perspective on Inclusive Education

The international perspective and ambitions related to inclusive education have been reflected in United Nations policy statements to which the vast majority of countries have become signatories. Recent examples are the United Nations Convention on the

Rights of the Child (1989), which promoted the right to education without discrimination, followed by the World Declaration on Education for All (1990). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) recognized the uniqueness of each child and children's fundamental human right to education. The agreement declared that "[i]nclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the exercise and enjoyment of human rights." The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) created international law supporting inclusive education for people with disabilities (de Beco, 2017).

Implementation varies widely by country (Anderson & Boyle, 2015; Cumming, 2012; Jahnukainen, 2011; Kim & Kim, 2016). Additionally, even in countries making a significant commitment, challenges continue to be present (Boyle, Anderson, & Swayn, 2015; Lauchlan & Fadda, 2012). No country has been successful in creating a system of inclusive education that mirrors the vision (Haug, 2017).

Inclusive Education in Alberta

As each province in Canada has jurisdiction over education, the responses to special education vary across the country. In relation to EBD, some regions have no definition of this category, some defer to a medical diagnosis, and others have specific criteria (Dworet & Match, 2007; Maich, Somma, & Hill, 2018). These differences extend to programming as well with significant differences evident even within provinces. For instance, in Ontario, there are many more students with special needs placed in segregated classrooms in the Toronto school district, than the rest of the province (Brown et al., 2016).

In Alberta, programming for students with disabilities is directed by the Standards for Special Education (Alberta Learning, 2004). These standards reinforce the legislated guarantee of access to education for all students. The guidelines state that placement in an inclusive setting should be the first choice "in regular classrooms and neighborhood schools."

Due to problems found in identification and assessment of students with special needs, a review was conducted in 2008 and 2009, with consultation meetings involving over 6000 stakeholders held throughout the province (Alberta Education, 2009). The final report outlined ten recommendations focused on curriculum, capacity, and collaboration. The broad-based recommendations also launched a further visioning of changes to the entire education system and resulted in "Inspiring Education" (Alberta Education, 2010). A ministerial order on student learning (which has the weight of law) was issued in 2013 that again emphasized the rights of education for "all" students (#001/2013). In 2018, new Teaching Quality Standards were issued which all educators are expected to meet (Alberta Education, 2018b). The standards indicate that teachers should have skills to "meet the learning needs of every student." These standards state that, "a teacher establishes, promotes and sustains inclusive learning environments where diversity is embraced and every student is welcomed, cared for, respected and safe." Students with emotional and mental health needs are specifically mentioned.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is both the union and professional body for educators in the province. It has responded to these developments by sponsoring several studies that consider the challenges of inclusion for teachers. While these were

produced for political leverage, they were conducted by independent, trained researchers. The first, Falling Through the Cracks, was based on feedback from over 1200 teachers. The report noted frequent comments regarding teachers' frustration in meeting the needs of all students (ATA, 2002). In a more recent review of special education, the writers questioned whether inclusion was always the correct choice for students (ATA, 2008). There was a suggestion of tension and stretched funding in trying to support both segregated and inclusive settings. The report again noted the frustrations of teachers in trying to meet students' needs and the concern for classroom functioning and physical safety for other students.

The most recent ATA work on this topic was the results of a "Blue Ribbon panel" on inclusive education in Alberta schools and a research report that considered the panel findings (ATA, 2014, 2015). The report suggested that most teachers do not have concerns about the government philosophy regarding inclusive education, but with how it is operationalized. The report concluded that while there were a few unique examples of inclusive education in Alberta, it was generally neither wide-spread or successful. The panel report made 38 recommendations on vision, leadership, training, resources, and collaboration. The research report on which the panel based their conclusions came from over 1400 online submissions, follow-up focus groups, and telephone interviews with superintendents. Teachers reported that they valued inclusion, but felt resources were declining. Comparison between a similar survey completed in 2007 showed a significant decrease in teacher's perceptions of support. For instance, the percentage of teachers who felt they had adequate specialized support within their school system dropped from

67% to 29%, and those that believed they had adequate paraprofessional support went from 71% to 25%.

In many jurisdictions in the world, funding and resources are still allocated by identifying the student's "problem" (De Silva, 2013). Jahnukainen (2011) referred to this as the "bounty system." In Alberta, there were also difficulties with identifying the boundaries as to whether students should be classified under the different categories, with an obvious incentive for schools to include students under more severe labels (Wishart & Jahnukainen, 2010). The province reviewed their funding system for special education in 2007 and found that many students did not actually meet the provincial criteria (Alberta Education, 2009). Guidelines still exist for students to be identified based on disabilities, but the funding for inclusive education in public schools is now provided based on student population, historical rates, and demographic risk factors (Gilham & Williamson, 2013).

Definitions and Prevalence of Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

United States. The definition of an EBD in the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act (1975), and subsequent versions of IDEA, is based substantially on the work of (Bower, 1959; Bower, 1960). Bower determined the defining characteristics by considering teacher identified differences amongst students who were receiving mental health services from those that were not. The most recent version of IDEA (2004) provides the following definition:

Sec. 300.8 (c) (4) (i)

(i) Emotional disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

(A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.

(B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

(C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.

(D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

(E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

(ii) Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section.

In the United States, 0.5% of the school population receives services through IDEA under the category of Emotional Disturbance (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). However, experts agree that developmental changes through childhood make estimating the actual prevalence rate very difficult (Ringeisen et al., 2016). State level identification varies widely and has been linked to political factors (Wiley, & Siperstein, G., 2011). It has been argued that there is a much higher number of students with EBD symptoms and

requiring support, than are identified in this category (Forness, Kim, & Walker, 2012; Kauffman, Mock, & Simpson, 2007). Complicating research and practice was the finding that children may have similar levels and types of behavior difficulties, but be identified in different special education categories (Mattison, 2015). There are also likely many children who do not meet the full criteria but still require significant support in school. This is consistent with meta-analysis, which reported prevalence rates of 13% for all childhood mental health disorders, and 6% in the disruptive behavior category (Polanczyk, Salum, Sugaya, Caye, & Rohde, 2015).

Although there has been a move towards placing students in the least restrictive setting, students with an EBD are one of the least likely groups to experience this trend (McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, & Hoppey, 2010). Exclusion is a commonly used option for students with an EBD (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013). In the most recent federal data from 2017, amongst all students with disabilities, 64% were educated inside the regular class 80% or more of the day (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). However, only 48% of students in the category of emotional disturbance were in the classroom for a majority of the time. In addition, 17% were in other locations like a separate school, residential facility, homebound/hospital environment, correctional facilities, and parentally placed in private schools.

Alberta. The Alberta Education coding criteria for a severe emotional/behavioral disorder differs from the American legislation in that it includes specific DSM diagnostic categories for inclusion or exclusion. It has undergone only minor revisions over the past decade.

Severe Emotional/Behavioural Disability (Code 42)

An ECS child/student with a severe emotional/behavioural disorder is one who(se):

has been diagnosed by a qualified professional;

- displays chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviours and requires close and constant adult supervision, high levels of structure, and other intensive support services in order to function in an educational setting; and
- behaviours significantly interfere with both the learning and safety of the ECS child/student and other ECS children/students. For example, the ECS child/student could
- be dangerously aggressive and destructive (to self and/or others), violent, extremely compulsive, withdrawn, delusional, or paranoid.

Diagnoses could include: conduct disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, severe chronic depressive disorder, severe oppositional defiant disorder, severe obsessive/compulsive disorders, trauma and stress-related disorders.

NOTES:

1. Students with a primary diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or attention deficit disorder (ADD) are not included in this category.

2. ECS children/students diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)or selective mutism should be reported under Code 44 rather than Code 42.
3. ECS children may have either a diagnosis or statement based on a functional assessment from a qualified professional indicating that the child experiences severe emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

(Alberta Education, 2018a)

Wishart and Jahnukainen (2010) noted that determining the threshold of meeting the severity criteria was often difficult for school personnel. For example, a mild/moderate EBD includes as one of the characteristics, "physical violence toward other persons and/or physical destructiveness toward the environment" (Alberta Education, 2018a). This indicates similar observable behavior between those in the severe and mild/moderate category, but with no explicit suggestion of what determines the difference.

In 2016/17, approximately 1.2% of students were identified with a severe EBD (Alberta Education, n.d.-b). The percentage of students identified in this category has dropped slightly over the last five years (Alberta Education, n.d.-b). However, this may be a result of a reduced motivation for identification, as funding is no longer tied to the disability codes.

Outcomes of Current Practices

Does Inclusive Education Work?

The inspiration for the inclusive education movement comes from ideological and political beginnings however, as inclusive education began to be implemented and spread to different locations, questions were asked about the scientific and pedagogical justification (e.g., Hornby, 1992). Initial studies were conducted to investigate the outcome on typical children, such as the oft-cited articles of Huber, Rosenfeld, and Fiorello (2001) and McDonnell et al. (2003). Huber et al. (2001) reported that inclusion did not affect reading scores over a two-year period in which inclusion was introduced. It was found to have a somewhat negative effect on high achieving children but benefited lower performing general education students. McDonnell et al. (2003) discovered no differences in reading or math growth amongst general education children who were educated with children who had developmental disabilities. This type of result continued to be confirmed, such as the review of the literature conducted by Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, and Kaplan (2007) that found over 80% of studies reported neutral or positive outcomes for inclusive practices. Similarly, a large scale analysis of national assessments in the United Kingdom concluded that the degree of inclusivity of a school had no relationship with nondisabled students' academic achievement (Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2007).

One limitation to these studies was that the sample of children with disabilities tended to be heterogeneous. When the investigation separated students with behavioral disorders, the findings have been less clear. There have been no reported differences for

inclusion in Dutch schools by type of disability, including EBD (Ruijs, 2017; Ruijs, Van der Veen, & Peetsma, 2010). Similarly, a recent meta-analysis that incorporated many of these studies found no proof of detrimental effects for including students with an EBD (Szumski, Smogorzewska, & Karwowski, 2017). However, these were in contrast to studies that report having a peer with an EBD in the early years of schooling, lowered reading and math scores (Fletcher, 2010; Gottfried & Harven, 2014) and that absence rates of students without disabilities are higher in classrooms that have a student with an EBD (Gottfried, Egalite, & Kirksey, 2016).

Academic success for the disabled students themselves has been found to be the same or slightly better in inclusive settings (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Jackson, Ryndak, & Wehmeyer, 2008; Lindsay, 2007). Additionally, the amount of time special needs students spend in general education classrooms was reported to be directly related to their achievement in reading and math (Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013), although this benefit is often forfeited when teacher assistants are given primary responsibility for the students' instruction (Webster & Blatchford, 2015). There is also a noted lack of research validating instructional techniques for students with an EBD (McKenna, Solis, Brigham, & Adamson, 2019).

In summary, the evidence tends to suggest that inclusive education has some benefits for students with disabilities and a neutral or positive impact on their peers. However, there have been conflicting studies and controversy. The research has been particularly less conclusive regarding the inclusion of students with an EBD.

Adverse Outcomes for Students With Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

Regardless of the placement, students with an EBD have predominantly negative school experiences and academic outcomes. Gage, Adamson, MacSuga-Gage, and Lewis (2017) reported that students with an EBD demonstrated limited academic success, made poorer gains than other students, and seemed not to benefit from more experienced teachers. This lack of progress is despite this category of students having generally higher abilities than students with other areas of disability (Bradley, Doolittle, & Bartolotta, 2008). This trend is evident in Alberta in the negligible graduation rates of students in this category (Alberta Education, 2016a).

While students with an EBD often experience academic frustration, they also frequently encounter negative social experiences. Behavior or learning problems in the first grade has been found to correlate with a lack of peer acceptance in the second (Krull, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2018). Children with behavioral issues experience more active rejection, compared to the passive social rebuffs to those with learning problems. Even when students with behavioral difficulties are integrated into regular classrooms, they are likely to experience social exclusion (de Leeuw, de Boer, & Minnaert, 2018). Students with an EBD are much more prone to experience bullying from other students than children with other forms of disability (Bear, Mantz, Glutting, Yang, & Boyer, 2015). Further exacerbating negative perceptions about them, EBD students are likely to respond with aggression as a defensive strategy to victimization (de Leeuw et al., 2018; Pereira & Lavoie, 2018).

This negative trajectory continues after students with an EBD leave school. In reviewing data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Newman et al. (2011) reported that only about half of students with an emotional disturbance enter any postsecondary training. Students with an EBD are also often unsuccessful at finding and maintaining employment (Prince, Hodge, Bridges, & Katsiyannis, 2018). Many of the same characteristics that create difficulties in classrooms also impact work settings. In the United States, there has been further concern about a "school to prison pipeline," where student behavior and lack of success result in increasing punishment and exclusion, and result in incarceration as they move into adulthood. Three-quarters of students with an emotional disturbance report involvement with the justice system (Newman et al., 2011).

Negative Effects on Teachers

Stress. Loreman (2011) postulated a connection between love and teaching. Empathy and compassion are part of being an educator. Similarly, Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) referred to the caring and commitment of teachers as "emotional labor." As such, it should not be surprising that the demands of this work can result in emotional stress. Being exposed to the traumatic and dysfunctional life circumstances of children can result in "compassion fatigue," a contributing factor in teacher burnout (Koenig, Rodger, & Specht, 2018). There can also be tension between feeling responsible for children's mental health and not knowing what to do about it (Ekornes, 2017). Likewise, Mäkinen (2013) reported that some teachers have high levels of engagement in their work and commit significant energy towards the success of all students. However, it was

argued that this combination of characteristics set teachers up for stress when they were unsuccessful in teaching students with disabilities. This finding was consistent with previous research that found teachers who were supportive of inclusion experienced a higher level of burnout with regards to self-fulfillment (Talmor, Reiter, & Feigin, 2005).

In addition, teaching in general is a very stressful occupation. In a recent study by Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, and Reinke (2018), only 7% of teachers fell into the well-adjusted category, indicating strong coping strategies, with low levels of stress and burnout. In addition, specific trends have been identified that relate to stress with behavior difficulties. Student rule breaking and behavior management has been frequently identified as contributing to teacher stress (Geving, 2007; Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, & Spencer, 2011). Higher rates of disruptions and using punitive warnings has been associated with emotional exhaustion (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). Efficacy regarding classroom management seems particularly linked with stress (Dicke et al., 2014; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010). Chang (2013) reported that even one particularly challenging behavioral event could have adverse effects on teacher self-perception and create feelings of burnout.

Teachers who work with students who have an EBD frequently report stress from out-of-control behavior and ensuring the safety of other students (Adera & Bullock, 2010). In her doctoral dissertation, Martfeld (2015) described moderate levels of stress amongst a group of Alberta teachers who had students with an EBD in their inclusive classroom. These results were reported to be similar to other samples of teachers in the United States.

Burn-out and quitting. Chronic and extreme stress can lead to burn-out and leaving the teaching profession. The odds of teacher attrition are increased by having a student with an EBD (Gilmour, 2017). Concerns about classroom management and student discipline are one of the many reasons that new teachers leave the profession (El Helou, Nabhani, & Bahous, 2016). McCormick and Barnett (2011) found a relationship between student misbehavior and all aspects of burn-out. They described teachers who are unable to manage behavior as depersonalizing students, feeling emotionally exhausted, and having a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. These findings were echoed in a French-Canadian study by (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012).

Teacher Perceptions of Inclusive Education and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Perceptions and beliefs are significant due to the impact these factors have on a teacher's actions towards students. Teachers in inclusive settings who believe children's abilities are malleable are more likely to set high expectations and engage all their students in learning (Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). This influence even extends to the number of practice attempts students with disabilities are provided in inclusive physical education classes (Elliott, 2008). Such examples are in contrast to teachers with less positive views about student potential and equity, who are more likely to stifle learning opportunities for some students (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

Understanding the impact of teacher's beliefs is also essential for those who want to help them. Curtis et al. (2014) found that the teacher's "pupil control ideology" and culture influenced which types of intervention strategies they found acceptable for students with ADHD. Likewise, McKeon (2016) reported that many teachers view

students as similar, and as a result apply the same strategies to students with an EBD as they do to the rest of the class. McKeon suggested that where students with behavioral issues are treated differently, it is because of individual teacher beliefs or the culture of the school.

Issues in Studying Perceptions of Inclusion

While it is crucial to understand teacher's perceptions, there are difficulties in studying these factors. Luke and Grosche (2018) found that social desirability was a significant influence on teacher's responses regarding inclusive education. Teachers in this study were highly influenced by what they thought were the beliefs of the source of the questions. Also, Gajewski (2014) reported that teachers are often aware of poor pedagogical practices towards students with disabilities. However, teachers' sense of loyalty and desire to protect their colleagues may result in the under reporting of educational practices that are not inclusive.

Perceptions of Inclusive Education

Teachers have been described as accepting the moral and philosophical basis of inclusive education but struggling with the pragmatics in achieving its implementation (Tiwari, Das, & Sharma, 2015). Lalvani (2013) identified a predominance of "otherness" in the teacher's conceptualization of students with disabilities. Teachers also had differing ideas of what was meant by inclusive education.

Factors Influencing Perception

Perceptions of inclusion are affected by the severity of the disability and the availability of resources (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). For example, secondary teachers

have reported concerns about supports and access to paraprofessionals (Round, Subban, & Sharma, 2015). Similarly, Monsen, Ewing, and Kwoka (2014) found that teachers held more positive views about inclusive education when they felt adequately supported. This connection seems especially true when students had behavioral or complex needs (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011).

Training can also influence a teacher's perception. Amongst South African and Australian preservice teachers, a correlation was found between more courses in inclusive education and positive attitudes (Subban & Mahlo, 2016). Similarly for Singaporean preservice teachers, the number of special education courses and exposure to people with disabilities were found to be significant contributors to believing in inclusive education (Thaver & Lim, 2014). When experienced teachers in the United States Midwest were asked to reflect on their preparation, those with more training in inclusive education and the skills to work collaboratively had more positive attitudes about students with disabilities in mainstream classes (Zagona, Kurth, & MacFarland, 2017).

In a phenomenological study involving a large number of interviews with Finnish teachers, Mäkinen (2013) discovered that attitude towards inclusion was linked to how inclusion fit with their view of teaching. Some teachers described themselves as presenting knowledge in an undifferentiated fashion, with little self-reflection about their actions. Other, more reflective teachers expressed a high degree of ownership for the learning of all students, and a quest for solutions when they were unsuccessful. Likewise, Gunn\xFEórsdóttir and Bjarnason (2014) investigated how inclusive education matched educator's perceptions of their professional role. The results suggested a

disconnect when teachers felt the primary responsibility for students with disabilities should lie with specialized support staff.

Perceptions Regarding Students With an Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

In developing an instrument to measure teacher's views of inappropriate behaviors, Malak (2017) reported that student actions could be divided into those that were unproductive and those that were aggressive. The author suggested this was significant to differentiate, as some teachers have been more concerned about disruptive behavior related to work and classroom functioning, while others are more concerned about underlying threats to safety.

While teachers are concerned about violence, off-task behavior has been rated as the most frequently occurring and most problematic (Alter, Walker, & Landers, 2013). The authors suggested that this was because not being focused on work is often the start of other inappropriate activities. Verbal disruptions and aggressive behavior were rated as the next most difficult behaviors. This finding contrasts with a literature review conducted by Crawshaw (2015) that found over thirty years, secondary teachers reported verbal disruptions were the most prevalent misbehavior, followed by inattention. Incidents of violence were found to be relatively rare, but this infrequency suggests teachers may not have the experience and skills to deal with the extreme behavior introduced into their classroom by students with an EBD. In addition, many teachers blame themselves when behavior escalates to threats and violence, and may not report the incident (Anderman et al., 2018).

Pavenkov et al. (2015) posited that teachers required high levels of altruism if they were going to successfully include student behavioral and mental health issues. Prather-Jones (2010) explored the characteristics of teachers who choose to work with students who have an EBD. The teachers in this study report that to be successful required high levels of intrinsic motivation and an interest in helping students with behavior issues. The ability to not personalize children's misbehavior, remain flexible, and accept personal limitations were also seen as essential characteristics. Many teachers in the study indicated that they continued working with challenging students because they felt that this was their "calling" and what they were meant to do. These findings were consistent with the reports of other professions who choose to work with difficult youth, such as Kindzierski, O'Dell, Marable, and Raimondi (2012) description of teachers who work at treatment facilities for children with an EBD. In addition to substantial training, essential characteristics were related to flexibility, humor, patience, empathy, and physical and emotional resilience. Teachers who chose to specialize in students with behavioral issues report that general education teachers were often confused why they would continue working with this group of children (Broomhead, 2016). These findings would suggest that there may be significant differences in the personal characteristics and motivations of those teachers who choose to work with students with an EBD and general education teachers who find such a student suddenly placed in their classroom.

Buttner, Pijl, Bijstra, and van den Bosch (2015) explored which characteristics were associated with expert teachers for students with an EBD in inclusive settings. Teachers identified by school staff as expert teachers scored higher on measures of self-

efficacy and meeting the needs of students with behavioral challenges. In further investigations, the personality traits of "Conscientiousness" and "Openness to Experience" correlated with effective teachers of students with behavior issues (Buttner, Pijl, Bijstra, & Van den Bosch, 2016). "Conscientiousness" was described as related to problem solving, and "Openness to Experience" connected to being influenced by training. Self-confidence also appeared to be a strongly related trait.

Teachers' Feelings and Understanding Regarding Student Behavior

There is a general tendency for people to explain noncompliant behavior as being a result of some internal factor rather than elements external to the person (Auzoult, Hardy-Massard, & Gangloff, 2013). As would follow, students are perceived as "having" an EBD (Avramidis & Bayliss, 1998). The problem lies within the child (Gidlund, 2018b; Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, & Conway, 2014). This inclination has been expanded by Orsati and Causton-Theoharis (2013) who noted that teachers tend to label the child as challenging rather than their actions. The labeling extends to the language that is used, such as "problem behavior" and "classroom control." The authors argued that this language justifies punishment, restraint and exclusion. When asked about students with an EBD, a majority of teachers believe that these children have control over their behavior (Nash, Schlösser, & Scarr, 2015). Similarly, teachers frequently fail to identify mental illness in the students they see daily (Armstrong, 2013). As a result, they may misinterpret these symptoms as willful acting out that needs correction.

In exploring the discourses that teachers construct, Gidlund (2018a) noted that students with an EBD were described as the antithesis of desirable students. Teachers

felt frustration and blamed themselves for students not succeeding (Gidlund & Boström, 2017). The inclusion of such students was believed to be impossible, and teachers rarely articulated any advantages to having them in general education classrooms (Gidlund, 2017). Similarly, Kristensen (2013) described how teachers are often placed in an impossible situation, but instantly move to negative self-judgment when they are unsuccessful.

Teachers may also explain misbehavior as a result of factors beyond their control. For example, despite studies suggesting ADHD is neurologically based, many educators attribute the symptoms to the home environment (Russell, Moore, & Ford, 2016). Studies in Bangalore (D'Souza & Jament, 2015) and Romania (Stefan, Rebega, & Cosma, 2015) suggested most teachers attributed student misbehavior to poor parenting and their family situation. Broomhead (2014) reported that teachers felt that the parents of students with an EBD viewed child care and the importance of education as very different than their own values. Teachers perceived students with behavioral disorders as coming from very chaotic homes into the structured and predictable environments they were trying to create and maintain.

Teachers are very apprehensive about having a student with an EBD in their classroom (Cassady, 2011). Lohrmann and Bambara (2006) found that the background of teachers influenced how they felt about including students with an EBD in their classroom. Those with previous experience and training were reasonably confident, while those new to this situation or lacking in knowledge were more apprehensive. However, self-assurance may not translate to positive feelings. Armstrong (2013) found

general classroom teachers who had more experience with students having an EBD expressed more negative attitudes about their inclusion in mainstream settings.

A combination of frustration and concern has been reported in other research (Hecker, Young, & Caldarella, 2014). Cochran et al. (2014) concluded that the frustration teachers feel dealing with students with EBD in a mainstream classroom may be the result of their awareness of the children's issues and the inability to adequately address the need. These authors also identified ambivalence amongst teachers who believed that mainstream classrooms should be accessible to students with behavioral difficulties but felt there was a lack of resources and that they lacked the necessary skills.

Broomhead (2013) noted this ambivalence might be reflected in the school community, with some schools taking steps to avoid admitting students with behavioral issues into their mainstream classrooms. This exclusion was warranted to ensure classroom control and the school's level of academic achievement. In contrast, teachers in this investigation did not say that the children were unwelcome, but did express concern that they received preferential treatment and services because of their disability.

Strategies and Intervention for Inclusive Education and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

There are a wide variety of potential interventions for students with an EBD in an inclusive classroom. These range from group contingencies directed at the whole class (Sutherland, Conroy, McLeod, Kunemund, & McKnight, 2018), to functional behavior analysis of individual students (Common, Lane, Pustejovsky, Johnson, & Johl, 2017). However, the very breadth of existing research means that teachers are faced with a

myriad of choices and a depth of complexity that makes adoption difficult. To improve the outcomes for students, high-quality strategies need to be identified, and then they need to be implemented (Cook & Odom, 2013). Fixsen, Blase, Metz, and Van Dyke (2013) summarized this idea as "effective interventions X effective implementation = improved outcomes." However, teacher training programs may provide only a cursory overview of behavioral strategies or classroom management (Flower, McKenna, & Haring, 2017). Research suggests that teachers often do not consistently apply classroom management strategies (Gage, Scott, Hirn, & MacSuga-Gage, 2018; Zoromski, Evans, Owens, Holdaway, & Royo Romero, 2020).

The field of education and special education, in particular, has been vulnerable to adopting fads and unproven strategies (Foxx & Mulick, 2016). In some instances, teachers have been found to use tactics that are ineffective more frequently than those for which there is research evidence (Burns & Ysseldyke, 2009). Similarly, Carroll and Hurry (2018) noted that many programs were being used with students that did not have an empirical basis. For instance, they identified anger management and social-emotional learning as popular approaches despite studies suggesting only a limited effect, and teachers questioning the transferability of the skills to regular behavior. However, legal and professional standards now emphasize the need for scientific support for approaches to student intervention (CEC, 2015; Yell & Rozalski, 2013; Yell, Katsiyannis, Losinski, & Marshall, 2016).

The level of scientific support for strategies can be difficult for educators to determine, particularly given a range of descriptors that may not clearly communicate the

criteria by which they were selected. Some articles refer to "research supported" and "evidence-based" as being equivalent (Oakes, Lane, & Hirsch, 2018), while others use the term "research supported" to mean aspects of the approach have been published in a peer-reviewed journal (Cook, Cook, & Collins, 2016). The Council for Exceptional Children promotes an exemplary book of "high leverage" practices for special education (McLeskey, 2017). The author of this monograph clearly defined what he meant by this term and provided a detailed summary of the research support for each strategy. In more widely distributed literature, the evidence can be quite limited. For example, two recent editions of the journal published by the College of Alberta School Superintendents focused on "promising practices" in inclusive education (Litun, 2016). The criteria appeared to be the writer's interest in sharing their ideas rather than any objective outcome criteria.

Teachers also tend to focus only on behavioral interventions, despite a connection between academic struggles and behavioral issues (Mowat, 2009). In reviewing educational interventions for students with an EBD, Vannest and colleagues reported on multiple approaches that demonstrate positive academic effects for students with an EBD (Vannest, Harrison, Temple-Harvey, Ramsey, & Parker, 2011; Vannest, Temple-Harvey, & Mason, 2009). Wexler, Pyle, Flower, Williams, and Cole (2014) found that general education academic interventions, like peer-mediated instruction, are also effective with incarcerated students. However, in reviewing the existing literature, McKenna et al., (2019) reported that there is little evidence of academic strategies being targeted to EBD students in general education classrooms.

Issues With Strategy Implementation

Research-to-practice gap. Scholars have been aware of a research-to-practice gap in special education for a considerable amount of time (Carnine, 1997; Greenwood & Abbott, 2001). Cook and Odom (2013) argued that there has probably always been a gap between research and practice in special education. In discussing progress in the field of EBD, Maggin, Robertson, Oliver, Hollo, and Partin (2010) claimed that future research still needed to consider intervention implementation and sustainability. It has been argued that part of the solution can be achieved by developing collaboration between researchers and school systems (Lane, 2017). There has been a recognition amongst scholars of the need to translate scientific discoveries into practical strategies. Hott, Berkeley, Raymond, and Reid (2018) reported on an analysis of special education journals from 1998 to 2015. Over this period, over 350 articles were published that focused on translating research on social/emotional intervention into practice.

This availability of high-quality research has been identified as a necessary precursor to improvements in special education (Hott, Berkeley, Fairfield, & Shora, 2017). However, the existence of credible studies does not mean that general education teachers will have been exposed to the information. General education teachers tend to have less knowledge and readiness to implement empirically supported research (Beam & Mueller, 2016; Gable, Tonelson, Sheth, Wilson, & Park, 2012). Stormont, Reinke, and Herman (2011) reported that in a survey of general education teachers, the majority of teachers had not heard about 90% of the evidence-based programs of which they were

asked. In this population, over half of the teachers did not know if their school offered any type of behavioral assessment or intervention planning support.

Treatment integrity. Even when teachers adopt a research-supported intervention, they have difficulty doing so in a manner that follows the way the technique was developed. Treatment integrity refers to the competence of the individual applying the strategy and how closely an intervention is implemented, particularly regarding key components (Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009). The degree of adherence and skill in executing the steps can significantly impact the outcome. Caldarella et al. (2017) reported that for students at-risk of an EBD, group contingencies implemented with higher fidelity resulted in greater improvements. However, implementation often does not meet the accepted standard. For example, Reinke et al. (2013) noted that most experts agreed that four positive comments to one negative was a minimum ratio, but in observations of 33 teachers, only one met this level in their interactions.

Fixsen, Blase, Metz, and Naoom (2014) argued that because of the unique characteristics of each individual, treatment varies in every human-to-human interaction. These authors suggested treatment integrity required clear identification of the fundamental practices, what those parts involved, and a way of accurately measuring whether this was actually occurring. The notion of essential components is often particularly difficult when implementing interventions in real-life settings, which often differ from the more ideal situations created during research (Bettini, Cumming, Merrill, Brunsting, & Liaupsin, 2016). Gresham (2009) suggested that there needs to be clarity of where there is "treatment flexibility." For example, in one case study, the teacher gave

verbal prompts only 20% of the time (Schmidt, Kamps, & Wills, 2018). Despite this lack of fidelity to the system, significant improvements were observed. The authors argued that this aspect of the program might not be an essential feature.

Unfortunately, teachers are often left alone to determine the logistics of strategy implementation. In a large-scale survey of teachers, only a third reported a high degree of support in employing strategies (Long et al., 2016). A majority described no help after the start of initiating a program. This lack of support may also explain why few teachers continue with interventions. Despite positive results in one study, less than half the teachers continued to implement the strategy after the project support ended (Kamps et al., 2015).

Teachers' perceptions of interventions. An interaction appears to occur between teachers' perceptions of interventions, the fidelity of delivery, and the effect of the strategy. As mentioned, procedures implemented with fidelity have been shown to have better outcomes. However, teachers who perform with poorer fidelity have been found to rate a strategy as less effective (Harrison, State, Evans, & Schamberg, 2015). Additionally, teachers who perceived an intervention as acceptable implemented it with much higher fidelity (Tsai & Kern, 2018).

Cain (2017) reported that teacher resistance to evidence-based intervention reflected several factors. Firstly, teachers did not perceive research findings as having superior validity to their own experiences. They could identify exceptions to research findings. Teachers were also concerned about the generalizability to their situations. Finally, some educators found incongruence with their own values. Dutton Tillery,

Varjas, Meyers, and Collins (2010) suggested general education teachers might be more focused on finding behavioral strategies for individual children, rather than looking at practices that could influence the entire class.

Challenges of severe students. Intervention results suggest that some children may be more "treatment resistant" than others. For example, children with callous-unemotional characteristics benefit less from evidence-based interventions (Datyner, Kimonis, Hunt, & Armstrong, 2015). Students with gross neurological impairments may also be more difficult for teachers to influence (Treble-Barna, Chapman, Schwartz, & Axelrad, 2013). As a result, when they do employee research supported strategies, teachers may not be reinforced for their efforts.

Collaborative strategies. Inclusive education is associated with collaborative teamwork as many students require multiple individuals to provide support (Lyons, Thompson, & Timmons, 2016). Botha and Kourkoutas (2015) argued that coordinated efforts and dialogue amongst all stakeholders was required to support students with behavioral disorders. Certainly, for students with the most severe forms of EBD, a tiered model like Response to Intervention (RTI) is needed. This level of support requires a team to work together to gather data and intensify interventions when there is a lack of success (Kern & Wehby, 2014).

Paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals are frequently employed for students with an EBD in general education classrooms and may be the only form of support the teacher receives (Burton & Goodman, 2011; Giangreco, 2013). They are often seen as the only alternative when children exhibit severe behavior and create issues of safety (Nye et al.,

2016). Also, teachers of students with behavioral issues are more likely to quit if they do not have the teacher aide to help them (Albrecht, Johns, Mounsteven, & Olorunda, 2009; Cancio et al., 2013a citing George, George, Gersten, & Grosenick, 1995). However, it has been argued that there is often an over-reliance on paraprofessionals as a strategy to support students with an EBD (Giangreco, Broer, & Suter, 2011). It has been suggested that teacher aides should be deployed to support able children, while the teacher works with those requiring the most support; however, this is rarely the case (Butt, 2016). Even when the paraeducator takes responsibility for students with special needs, there are significant demands placed on the teacher. Cipriano, Barnes, Bertoli, Flynn, and Rivers (2016) noted that the teacher is assumed to take a commanding role in developing the classroom team. These authors also highlighted the challenges of the power imbalance between teacher and paraprofessional. They further noted previous research suggesting that teachers may feel self-conscious of observations, to have little control over who was assigned to them, and to be unprepared and challenged by the supervisory responsibilities. Educators rarely receive training on how to use or supervise paraprofessionals (Everett, 2017).

Paraprofessionals themselves report even greater training gaps than teachers, issues with collaboration, and attitudes that are not congruent with positive behavior strategies (Feuerborn, Tyre, & Beaudoin, 2018). Some of the academic deficits observed in students with an EBD are likely due to the significant instruction they receive from paraprofessionals rather than teachers (Suter & Giangreco, 2009).

Communication, decision-making, and role-boundaries often create tension between paraprofessionals and teachers (Mackenzie, 2011). There are frameworks for overseeing and providing feedback to classroom assistants working with students who have an EBD (Maggin, Wehby, Moore-Partin, Robertson, & Oliver, 2009). However, teachers appear to have little time to supervise and direct the work of teacher aides.

Support professionals. There is an issue of teachers in inclusive settings needing to learn how to work "with and through others" (Florian, 2012). Some support services move the control of supporting the student away from the teacher. For example, school social workers may be used to coordinate and manage services to a child and their family (Hunter, Elswick, & Casey, 2018).

Cooper and Cefai (2013) argued that some psychological interventions can be more effectively implemented by a teacher than any other professional, but that the teacher's training and other responsibilities-imposed limits. Rb-Banks and Meyer (2017) suggested that the effects of interventions occurring outside of the classroom, coupled with issues of confidentiality, may leave the teacher feeling excluded from the process. These authors also suggested that teachers may have a poor understanding or biased viewpoints about interventions such as therapy. Likewise, therapists may not appreciate the challenges and expertise of teachers, if they have not been given an opportunity for previous collaboration (Salm, 2017).

Approaches to Teacher Support

For school system leaders and researchers, the solution to inclusive education and students with an EBD has been to provide training and professional support to address

teachers' knowledge and feelings. Efforts have been taken to improve the training for preservice teachers, although many teachers have entered the field with deficits in their preparation and require professional development or postgraduate courses. There has also been interest in understanding the factors that lead to changes in professional practice.

Training and Professional Development

Providing educators with professional development has been one of the primary ways of trying to improve teacher practice. In reviewing the literature on inclusive education, Van Mieghem, Verschueren, Petry, and Struyf (2018) identified professional development as being one of the key factors that needed to be addressed if substantial gains were to be made in this area. This is one way to address a common complaint from teachers of having inadequate training to deal with student emotional and behavioral issues (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011). Through a scan of Canadian teacher training institutions, Rodger et al. (2014) identified most programs as including some content related to classroom management. However, out of the multitude of classes across the nation, only two provided a comprehensive examination of children's mental health, the impact of such disorders in the classroom, and how to promote positive emotional well-being and prevent the development of mental illness.

As a result of this limited preservice preparation, gaining additional information often occurs after teachers are in the classroom. Exposure to knowledge can increase the use of a strategy, such as the finding that teacher training can increase behavior specific praise (Allan Allday et al., 2012). Professional development also has the potential to

change the attitude of teachers, as seen in a study by Haegele, Hodge, Filho, and de Rezende (2016) which was designed to alter physical education teacher's feelings and beliefs about the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Some professionals in the field of EBD have also argued for the need to change how teachers think about a student's behavior (Nash et al., 2015). Greene (2009) developed a collaborative model for teachers and students to work together to meet both teacher and student needs. Similar ideas have been presented by Delaney (2018) in an attempt to help educators understand the defense mechanisms underlying severe disruptive behavior, and have teachers respond more therapeutically. Delaney encouraged teachers to recognize their own emotional functioning, so they could better understand how student behavior influenced their reactions.

Another improvement to passive learning is an approach using collaborative inquiry that is described by Naraian, Ferguson, and Thomas (2012) in their effort to enhance inclusive practices for students with an EBD. The authors maintained that noninteractive exposure to ideas is unlikely to create a transformation in attitudes. Opportunities were given for staff members to discuss specific challenges they were facing, but the authors felt the most critical aspect was the ability to talk and reflect on the emotional consequences of inclusion. The model evolved into using cognitive coaching during the second year of implementation that provided teachers with a framework to solve their own emerging predicaments. Teachers commented positively on the opportunity for reflection in a collective environment as a way to feel less isolated.

Preservice teachers reported less concern about having students with an EBD after they had participated in a course focused on improving relationships and "compassionate behavior management" (Garwood & Van Loan, 2019). Similarly, Gilham and Tompkins (2016) described a preservice course in which students were given material related to the experiences of persons with disabilities; while Naraian and Schlessinger (2017) have developed a course to help teachers reflect upon the social construction of impairments from a Disability Studies in Education perspective. Understanding these situations and disability rights have been found to help education students think more critically about the need for inclusion.

Unfortunately, information may not be retained after a presentation. In one setting, teachers described having little knowledge of PBS and RTI, even though all teachers had received PD on these topics during the study (Dutton Tillery et al., 2010). Finally, PD related to special needs may have a paradoxical effect on inclusive practices, as it emphasizes the differences of students, which has been reported to reinforce notions of a need for segregation and specialized services (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Some teachers may actually have more concerns after receiving further information or may realize the enormous investment of effort required, and continue to want someone else to deal with or cure the student (Bruveris, 2016).

Consultation

Another frequently employed method of supporting teachers is to provide consultation services. Caplan (1970) postulated that individuals seek consultation for four reasons: to gain knowledge, to develop skills, issues of confidence, or an objective

opinion. A range of consultation models exist, but the majority assume that talking with a teacher will be sufficient to change their behavior (Sanetti, Kratochwill, & Long, 2013). In fact, persuasion and assessing motivation are primary tools used in the process (Erchul, 2015). As a result, some recent consultation models, such as Exceptional Professional Learning, have evolved, with the motivation of the teacher being one of the principal components (Truscott et al., 2012).

Consultation research is complicated by varying school settings, wide-ranging needs, and characteristics of both the consultant and consultee (Sheridan, Erchul, Erchul, & Sheridan, 2014). In terms of consultant variables, it is further convoluted as implementation fidelity in consultation requires fidelity to the consultation model and fidelity to the model being introduced to the teacher (Sheridan, Swanger-Gagne´, Welch, Kwon, & Garbacz, 2009). Consultee factors may also create difficult situations. For example, teachers have shown a preference for more subtle approaches; however, although preferred, some educators are not influenced by such "soft" practices (Owens et al., 2017). As a result, being highly directive will increase the fidelity of the teacher's practice, but allowing greater teacher input and choice will result in greater generalization and maintenance of change (Truscott et al., 2012).

The explicit and implicit expectations of the consultee have both been identified as essential to client satisfaction (Chelliah & Davis, 2011). A similar conceptualization is the "psychological contract" — referring to the usually unspoken expectations between individuals in a relationship (Argyris, 1960). Previous professional experiences can influence people's expectations differently (Sherman & Morley, 2015). As consultation

is a relational activity, it can be negatively impacted when the expectations are not met (Newman & Clare, 2016). Sandoval, Lambert, and Davis (1977) cautioned that it takes time for a teacher to learn how to make use of consultation and use the time most effectively.

Knoff (2013) argued that when resistance to consultation occurred, it could be linked to several factors. A lack of understanding or skills could prevent a teacher from following a suggestion. Inconsistency may also make an intervention ineffective. The teacher may have their own deficits that require a modification in the strategy, limitations may occur because of the consultee's level of emotions, and there can be challenges transferring the skill to the setting. Finally, the teacher may lack motivation, or there may be some unique factor that is being over-looked. Guvå (2004) suggested further questioning and an openness to discuss when a teacher requests help but is resistant to the consultation process.

Despite the challenges, consultation has been reported to have a positive impact on teacher strategies. It has been shown to increase teacher's use of praise with students who have an EBD (Briere, Simonsen, Sugai, & Myers, 2015). Consultation has also been demonstrated to support the inclusion of students with EBD as they transition into general education classrooms (Massé, Couture, Levesque, & Bégin, 2013).

Consultation can provide the opportunity for professional conversations in rural locations, where teachers may have limited people to discuss problems and ideas (Pettersson & Strom, 2016). Video conferencing is also an alternative for supporting teachers managing behavioral challenges in locations where consultants are not

physically located (Knowles, Massar, Raulston, & Machalicek, 2016). Similarly, email consultation can bridge the distance to increase teacher's knowledge and reduce their feelings of isolation (Kruger et al., 2001).

Coaching

The role of consultant has taken on coaching as a distinct subskill involving expert advice and feedback to improve the adoption of research supported practice (Schultz, Arora, & Mautone, 2015). Coaching has been shown to improve teachers' use of evidence-based behavior management strategies (Bethune, 2017; Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018; Sutherland, Conroy, Vo, & Ladwig, 2015). It has also been reported to improve classroom climate by changing teacher-student interactions (Cappella et al., 2012). In a review of the literature on coaching to improve teacher's use of social behavioral strategies, Stormont et al. (2015) reported that the vast majority of studies reported positive improvements. This review also noted that all of the studies measured teacher perceptions of the social validity of coaching and all describe a positive response from teachers.

In exploring the factors that affect the success of coaching, Blazar and Kraft (2015) noted that there was considerable variability in the effectiveness of individual coaches, but that a certain intensity of contact with teachers needed to be maintained to result in successful implementation. The findings of Pianta et al. (2014) also confirm the need for a minimum number of sessions to ensure changes in teacher's behavior.

Lohrmann, Martin, and Patil (2013) indicated that their study and others have confirmed administrative support was essential for the work of coaches. These authors

noted that external coaches were more aware of these types of systemic issues, but internal coaches were more aware of subtle personal barriers. The coaches overcame obstacles they identified as related to staff morale, knowledge of the strategy, and administrative support, but the process took several years. Lohrmann et al. found that the personal resistance of teachers was reduced when they observed first-hand the effects of the intervention.

Performance Feedback

Performance feedback is an effective tool that can be integrated into coaching and consultation (Duchaine, Jolivete, & Fredrick, 2011). The teacher training literature has long recognized that only providing knowledge is an inefficient approach to skills acquisition, and that better results are found when there was also opportunity to practice techniques and receive immediate feedback (Joyce & Showers, 2002). A meta-analysis on performance feedback clearly showed benefit in maintaining implementation fidelity after initial training (Solomon, Klein, & Politylo, 2012).

Teacher perceptions about the observer are powerful. Opartkiattikul, Arthur-Kelly, and Dempsey (2016) reported that feedback in coaching needed to be encouraging, as negative feedback resulted in an already frustrated teachers dropping the strategy. In this case, it was suggested that observing the positive benefits of the approach in action, might have moderated the harmful effect of the corrective suggestions.

System Support

The issue of school climate is an essential system-level consideration for those supporting students with disabilities. Hosford and O'Sullivan (2015) reported a

relationship between teacher's perceptions of a supportive climate and their self-efficacy regarding the inclusion of a student with behavior challenges. A supportive climate was seen as having adequate resources, allowing for collaboration, and having positive relationships with students and colleagues. Teachers with higher levels of efficacy perceived events as less challenging and that they had a greater ability to deal with the issue.

Malmqvist (2016) compared the climate and systems in three schools in the same district in Sweden that serve a similar population. One school had only referred a single student to a different setting in ten years, while the other two schools frequently excluded students with an EBD. Malmqvist reported the difference was the first school had a clearly articulated policy towards inclusion, and a climate supporting collaborative work to achieve this goal. Teachers in this school expressed a strong desire for inclusion. It was suggested that the principal had facilitated this positive attitude.

Having time, discussion and a focus for all the team to reflect on mental health has been found helpful in changing staff member's capacity to deal with mental health issues (Green, Malsch, Kothari, Busse, & Brennan, 2012). The obstacle of time has been reiterated in numerous studies exploring factors influencing the adoption of new practices (Bambara, Goh, Kern, & Caskie, 2012; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009). Similarly, time to plan and apply ideas introduced in professional development has frequently been identified as a primary consideration in curriculum implementation research (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007).

Teachers' Perceptions of Support

Recent papers have called for a deeper investigation of the factors that affect how support is perceived by teachers (Newman & Clare, 2016; Sheridan & Erchul, 2014; Stormont et al., 2015). Jull and Minnes (2007) reported that the level and quality of support perceived by teachers was a better predictor of their willingness to include a student than the teacher's general attitude towards inclusive education. Teachers appreciate local support, and the majority are unlikely to read professional book or journal articles to obtain strategies (Shuster et al., 2017).

Reactions to Consultation

Shernoff et al. (2017) reported on a study that found the majority of the teachers felt coaching was beneficial, as it gave them different ways to view the issues and additional strategies. Teachers liked coaching because of the opportunity to observe a technique modeled for them. Witnessing a demonstration was useful, as was receiving feedback when they practiced. Teachers also seek out or appreciate consultation to confirm the appropriateness of their actions (Henderson, 2013; Pettersson & Strom, 2016).

Psychologists have not been viewed as a useful support in implementing inclusion, perhaps because of the emphasis of this profession's role with standardized assessment, (Anderson, Klassen, & Georgiou, 2007). In a thesis study conducted by Craig (2016), limited knowledge was found amongst teachers regarding the services that school psychologists could provide, and staff focused primarily on their assessment role. Teachers reported making referrals based on specific tasks they felt this professional

could perform, rather than on a more general request for help with severe student issues. The study was based on an instrument developed by Gilman and Gabriel (2004), and found similar results, despite the original research having been done in the United States, twelve years prior. Craig suggested that little growth had occurred regarding the understanding of school psychologists as a resource for teachers. However, teachers do feel there is a role for psychologists in direct work with students (Reinke et al., 2011). In this case, teachers believe that they should be responsible for implementing behavioral strategies in the classroom, but that school psychologists should be more involved in teaching social competence.

This issue of perception can influence whether a teacher will choose to try to obtain support. Inbar-Furst and Gumpel (2015) investigated teachers' reactions to problem behavior and suggest that seeking or avoiding help could be divided into four categories. Teachers who avoided assistance were found to either want to solve the problems themselves or feared failure. Those who sought support did so to end the problem or to gain new skills.

Although theories exist for why teachers may resist consultation, Gonzalez, Nelson, Gutkin, and Shwery (2004) reported that when teachers were asked to describe their actual behavior, no obvious characteristics were revealed. Familiarity and accessibility were considered to provide a small level of explanation, as the number of hours a school psychologist was in the building was correlated with the number of consulting referrals. This familiarity echoed the finding of Shernoff et al. (2017), who reported that teachers were concerned that coaches would not appreciate their unique

students and challenges. Similarly, Craig (2016) noted that teachers wanted school psychologists to spend more time in their classrooms to observe what was happening day-to-day.

Thornberg (2014) developed a grounded theory of teacher resistance to consultation that identified professional ethnocentricity as a primary barrier. This model suggests that it is not so much a lack of familiarity, but professional stances that focus on different priorities. For instance, teachers felt that consultants were focused on inclusion with no consideration of alternatives. This finding aligns with a meta-analysis of consultation research that suggested unsuccessful consultation experiences were characterized by a lack of attention to client input and concerns (Newman et al., 2016).

Administrative Support

Administrator beliefs and actions in regard to inclusive education affect staff member's views on this subject (McGhie-Richmond & Haider, 2020; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014). Lohrmann and Bambara (2006) found that teachers believed successful inclusion of students with an EBD required a school culture that promoted a philosophy of inclusion. This type of school included administrators being able to articulate a clear vision of the practice, and finding ways of directly supporting the teachers.

For teachers of students with an EBD, providing appropriate discipline and involving teachers in the discipline process were highly regarded administrator characteristics, as was showing appreciation for the teacher's efforts (Prather-Jones, 2011). An investigation by Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns (2013b) drilled down to identify

what behaviors teachers of students with behavioral issues identified as helpful from administrators. Significant results were reported for leaders who provided opportunities for growth, showed appreciation, and demonstrated trust.

A perceived lack of administrative support has been identified by teachers as a barrier to the implementation of universal strategies (Pinkelman, McIntosh, Rasplica, Berg, & Strickland-Cohen, 2015; Wanless, Patton, Rimm-Kaufman, & Deutsch, 2013). However, the level of support may be connected to the principal's understanding of teacher needs. In a study of rural Alberta administrators, the majority mentioned the value and connection of the professional development they had received about inclusive education on their ability to support this practice (Irvine, Lupart, Loreman, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). This influence may also have been connected with the effective practices identified in this article that included principal ownership of the task of promoting inclusive education and valuing student diversity. Cancio et al. (2013a) have developed a list of research supported factors that administrators can use to reflect on how they support teachers of students with an EBD.

Social Support

Social support is a ubiquitous term that is often used in research to represent many different types of helpful relationships (Williams, Barclay, & Schmied, 2004). For teachers, social support can come from various sources including administrators, peers and family (Yildirim, 2017; Yuh & Choi, 2017). Spouses often have a positive impact on a teacher's professional outlook (Tuna & Aslan, 2018).

In addition, social support is positively related to improved mental health in the general population (Harandi, Taghinasab, & Nayeri, 2017; Holahan & Moos, 1982). Amongst special education teachers, it has been reported to reduce emotional exhaustion and improve feelings of personal success (Langher, Caputo, & Ricci, 2017). Social support has been correlated with increased stress tolerance in teachers (Opeyemi & Donald, 2017). Perceived social support for general education teachers has also been linked with reduced symptoms of burnout (Ho & Chan, 2017; Yildirim, 2017).

When administrators created formal structures for all the adults to support all students, it increased the collective efficacy of the staff (Hewson, 2015). This finding matches Caputo and Langher's (2014) results that collaboration amongst teachers regarding students with disabilities was positively associated with feelings of accomplishment and negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion. Similarly, Berry (2012) noted that support from other teachers in the school was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment in rural special education teachers.

Ebersöhn and Loots (2017) reported that "collectivist coping" can help teachers provide support to one another even in adverse situations with limited resources. Teachers in this study were trained to identify their assets and the resources of the school. This strength-focused approach also increased the teacher's abilities to create positive change. Such findings are consistent with the collective efficacy for inclusive education found in schools where teachers share commitment to inclusion and work together to achieve this goal (Lyons et al., 2016). Similarly, when teacher opposition to strategies

like PBS has been analyzed, a concern that there will not be collective action is one of the perceived barriers (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2016).

Choice and Effort

Giving teachers a choice and considering their preferences improves implementation fidelity (Andersen & Daly, 2013; State, Harrison, Kern, & Lewis, 2017). Witt, Elliott, and Martens (1984/2017) found that teachers' perceptions of acceptability of interventions are influenced by how much time the tactic will take to implement, the level of concern related to the student's behavior, and the type of strategy. Teachers considered how it might affect the other students in the classroom and the level of skill they would require to perform the technique. Additionally, teachers report preferring positive strategies rather than ideas regarding punishment (Baker-Henningham & Walker, 2009; Witt, Elliott, & Martens, 2017).

Judgement and Confidentiality

Shernoff et al. (2017) reported that teachers felt the classroom was their personal space and having an outsider present produced uncomfortable feelings. The study identified worries related to intrusiveness, judgment, and whether observations would be shared with administrators. Easton and Erchul (2011) suggested that teachers are more reluctant to be observed when they are first learning a new strategy or when they feel that they lack the training to perform it correctly. In this study, teachers were more willing to provide self-evaluations and data collections but viewed the process negatively if administrators were responsible for gathering and reviewing this material.

Time

Teachers have shared that time was their greatest perceived barrier to inclusive education (Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). Simply having a regular time for reflection can improve teachers' feelings of efficacy (Schley et al., 2017). Dousti (2016) reported that teachers in British Columbia complained about the lack of time for collaboration and consultation with their paraprofessionals. More time to explore issues and talk with consultants has also been cited as a desire of teachers (Tamworth, 2013). Likewise, a lack of time and administrator support were identified by teachers as two of the key barriers to implementing a behavioral program (Cunningham et al., 2016). Time for planning and collaboration has been viewed by teachers as a form of administrative support for the demands of inclusive teaching (Dev & Haynes, 2015). When administrators do provide time for planning and working together, inclusion is reported to have occurred more readily (Katz & Sugden, 2013).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to teachers' perceptions related to navigating and integrating support when they include a student with an EBD in a general education classroom. Multiple theories consider the social ramifications of segregation but generally do not provide pragmatic direction for actual classroom inclusion. Complexity theory and the concept of wicked problems were presented as a possibly useful perspective when considering many of the contradictory factors affecting inclusive education.

The second section reviewed how beliefs and theory have been reflected in the history and development of practices related to inclusive education and students with an EBD. The movement towards inclusive education has been based on the ideas of social justice and the rights of those with disabilities. While this moral argument is not in question, full inclusion has not been completely successful anywhere in the world, despite decades of attempts. The practice and challenges in Alberta have mirrored those of other industrialized countries.

Whether students with an EBD have been educated in segregated or inclusive placements, the outcomes have predominantly been negative for both the student and their teachers. Students with an EBD often have negative experiences with school, do poorly academically, follow this trajectory into adulthood, resulting in legal and employment challenges (Mitchell, Kern, & Conroy, 2019). Teachers who choose to work with students with an EBD often experience significant stress. This emotional stress appeared to be even worse for general classroom teachers who need to manage students with behavioral difficulties in a regular classroom.

While teachers support the philosophy of inclusive education, they often have serious concerns about the practice. Students with an EBD are often considered the most difficult children in a classroom. Training, support, and teacher personality can influence the degree of teacher negativity. However, teachers' perceptions of the source of the student's behavior can result in viewing the student as "other" than typical children, reduce the teacher's efficacy for managing the situation, and leave them feeling helpless or dependent on expert treatment for the child.

In addition, some research supported strategies do require outside implementation or coaching for the teachers. Teachers tend not to look at research literature and may be confused about the evidence-base for different interventions or the essential components. Teachers may be frustrated with the effort required or choose a strategy that is generally effective, but not for their particular student. Those who frequently work with teachers note the lack of fidelity with which interventions are implemented and that teachers often stop using strategies once support is removed.

Supports for teachers have usually involved training or consultation. Professional development is generally well received by teachers. Consultation is dependent on the relationship and is enhanced with performance feedback. Administrative support in the form of teacher encouragement or providing resources has been identified as being important. However, much of the recent literature does not reveal new ideas. Smith and Smith (2000) reported almost twenty-years ago that teachers felt the barriers to inclusion were training, time demands, need for support, and workload. These issues tended to still be frequently mentioned in current research studies.

In Chapter 3, the methodology for this study is discussed in detail. The general approach for a classic grounded theory is described and the specific study design, target population, sampling methods, instrumentation, data collection, and proposed analysis are explained.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study used a classic grounded theory approach to develop theory regarding how teachers navigate the process of including a student with an EBD diagnosis in their general education classroom. The substantive area of focus was elementary teachers in Alberta schools. Chapter 2 described the emergence and increasing momentum for inclusive education and the dilemma created for teachers working with students who have an EBD. In this chapter, I explore the appropriateness of a classic grounded theory methodology as an approach that has been specifically developed to explore how people resolve their challenges (Glaser, 1998).

This chapter describes the steps that were taken for recruiting and selecting participants, collecting data, and performing analysis. A convenience sample of volunteer participants was recruited to provide interview data. The material collected was then analyzed using a constant comparative method to identify themes and the key issue.

Details are also provided regarding my biases and how those were managed. My experiences in education provided me a wealth of background information but needed to be controlled to avoid influencing my interpretation. Additional ethical issues are discussed, along with the way in which those potential challenges were addressed.

Research Method and Design Appropriateness

This study generated theory regarding teaching students with an EBD in inclusive classrooms and in doing so answered the following research questions:

RQ1: What theory explains teachers' perceptions of support related to the inclusion of students with an emotional/behavioral disorder?

RQ2: What theory explains teachers' choices of strategies and changes in their approach to working with students who have an emotional/behavioral disorder?

Central Concept of the Study

The central focus of study for this grounded theory dissertation was the social processes that occur when teachers are including a student with an EBD into their inclusive classroom. I demonstrated in the literature review that there are multiple conflicting demands placed upon educators in this situation. Grounded theory has been developed as an investigative methodology when a researcher wants to explore the primary problems of subjects in a particular area and how they resolve their challenges and conflicts (Glaser, 1998).

Research Tradition

Although grounded theory methodology emerged from the work of two sociologists, it has been embraced by many other disciplines (Strauss, 1987). It has particularly appealed to "practice-based disciplines" such as business, health, and education (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012). Grounded theory has been promoted as a possible answer to many of the methodological issues in psychological research (Rennie, Phillips, & Quartaro, 1988).

Grounded theory emerged as a research methodology during Glaser and Strauss's work with hospital staff and dying patients (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012). In *Awareness of*

Dying (1965) and *A Time for Dying* (1968), Glaser and Strauss applied the approach, while *Discovering Grounded Theory* (1967) was a book written in response to requests to explain their methodology.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) moved from a science of verification to generating new theory from deductive observation (Carey, 2010). Bryant and Charmaz (2012) argued that the interest in qualitative methodology and grounded theory, particularly in psychology, stemmed from criticisms occurring in the 1960s that the discipline was missing important experiences of people by focusing on experimental approaches. They suggested that part of the appeal of grounded theory was rooted in the pragmatism of 20th-century scholars such as John Dewey and William James.

In his numerous books, Glaser credited the foundation of classic grounded theory to several different sources. The concepts are said to have emerged from ideas developed at the University of Chicago, Sorbonne, University of Michigan, Harvard, and Stanford (Glaser, 1998). The development of inductive qualitative methods by the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University is specifically mentioned (Glaser, 1992), as is Glaser's mentor, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, for the idea that qualitative hypotheses can be turned into mathematical formulas and that numerical results can be explained qualitatively. This idea is expressed in the grounded theory method of generating probability statements on patterns found in the data (Glaser, 1998). Glaser's time at the Sorbonne is credited for his appreciation of the role of "explication" by carefully reading to uncover the true meaning of what the author is trying to communicate (Glaser, 1998).

Glaser (1998) described Strauss as being trained in symbolic interaction by Blumer. Symbolic interaction contributed to looking at the patterns of communications between individuals. This approach also emphasizes that meaning evolves from interaction between people.

Several variations of grounded theory have emerged since its introduction (Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018). Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified themselves as having jointly "discovered" the methodology. However, differences in their approaches were evident to their students almost from the beginning (Simmons, 2011b). Glaser wrote several books on methodology on his own to further clarify his view of the approach. In 1990, Strauss partnered with Corbin to write *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaser (1992) responded with a book critiquing and correcting each chapter of Strauss and Corbin's work. Other variations of grounded theory have included a constructivist approach developed by one of their students, Kathy Charmaz (2000), and a critical realist method credited to Clarke (2003). Glaser continued to reject these modifications to his original procedures as approaches that force interpretation of data (Glaser, 1998, 2012, 2014a).

Common fundamental principles of grounded theory include using a primarily inductive approach (not hypothesis testing or verification), understanding the contextual factors that explain why individuals in similar situations respond in different ways, following an iterative constant comparative process, generating data from memoing about data, and striving to develop an overall theory (Creswell, 2012; Timonen et al., 2018).

Simmons (2011b) emphasized that a primary difference between Strauss and Glaser was the latter's emphasis on avoiding any preconception before examining the data and a positivist approach to the creation of the theory. The choice between classic and constructivist grounded theory approaches is based partially on ontological differences in beliefs about the results. Glaser's method has been described as "critical realism," as opposed to Strauss's "pragmatic relativism" (Howard-Payne, 2016). In addition, Creswell (2012) described Strauss and Corbin as having "systematic procedure." Strauss and Corbin (1990) also suggested differences in analysis and terminology, such as referring to analyzing all the relationships with the core variable as axial coding and using a matrix of conditions. They recommended creating a diagram that identifies all of the relationships. What Glaser referred to as a concluding "hypothesis," Strauss and Corbin referred to as a "proposition." Creswell (2012) indicated that Strauss and Corbin's approach might provide more direct guidance but can lack theoretical strength.

Constructivist grounded theory emerged from the influence on constructivism in qualitative research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012). Creswell (2012) suggested that Charmaz was more interested in the meanings that participants understand in a situation. Charmaz's approach avoids jargon or diagrams that impose an outside understanding of the participant's experiences. The constructivist explains the feelings of participants.

More recently, Clarke (2003) introduced a form of critical realist grounded theory. There is an engagement with preexisting theories and researcher experiences that is contrary to Glaser's notion of letting the data guide the inquiry (Timonen et al., 2018).

Further, whereas Glaser emphasized process, Clarke argued that context was just as important. The approach requires extensive description, which is counter to the direction of Glaser. The emphasis on context means that it has limited generalizability to other settings (Timonen et al., 2018).

Rationale for chosen design. Classic grounded theory was used to generate a hypothesis regarding the processes occurring with teachers when trying to integrate a student with an EBD into their general education classroom. This section moves from a broad rationale for a qualitative approach in this study, to why grounded theory was an appropriate method. Finally, the reasons for considering classic grounded theory are outlined.

Why qualitative? For several years, I have been interested in the topic of general education teachers dealing with students who have an EBD. Throughout methodology classes in my doctoral program, I used this topic when creating mock research proposals. As a result, I considered and tried aligning quantitative, survey, and qualitative frameworks to explore this issue. Qualitative research presented the most appropriate method, as little was known about this area and I wished to explore the key issues, rather than use a quantitative approach that would force data into a preconceived hypothesis (Glaser, 1992).

Why grounded theory? A phenomenological approach was considered, but this method is limited to describing a situation. Creswell (2012) suggested the use of grounded theory when a researcher needs to explain a process. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 regarding teachers involved with inclusive education of students with an EBD

primarily focused on what should happen rather than what is actually occurring. Grounded theory explores what is really happening in a situation (Glaser, 1978). As a result, grounded theory is an excellent method when a researcher aspires to achieve social change. Glaser (1998) noted that grounded theory is one way that most areas can be studied. He suggested that in most situations, there are other research options. However, grounded theory offers a method likely to provide a relevant model for individuals in the area being studied.

Grounded theory has been recommended as an approach for exploring system-level issues (Stillman, 2006). Creswell (2012) also endorsed grounded theory as a method in studies involving many complex factors, especially unique student populations in education. In addition, Creswell (2012) supported a grounded theory methodology when the situation is delicate and the researcher wants to provide some distance from the subjects through abstract analysis. This sensitivity existed in this case for teachers working with difficult students. This can be a sensitive topic because the true actions and relationships of teachers may conflict with their professional and ethical responsibilities.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument. Grounded theory aligned with my background, knowledge, and personality. I had experience supporting teachers with children who had an EBD, but I felt lost as to an overall understanding of the process they were using to cope with inclusion. This meant that I was curious and motivated to understand their primary problems, but I did not want to bring any preconceived models into the analysis. I was also reflective and had considerable internal

dialogue that just needed to be channeled into memos to develop awareness of the pattern of behavior.

Why classic grounded theory? Timonen et al. (2018) argued that the most frequently employed variations of grounded theory have more in common than not and that they all emphasize openness to new ideas. These strands are discussed further in the section on the research tradition. However, key differences influencing the choice of classic grounded theory will be highlighted here.

Glaser (1998) suggested that his approach to grounded theory was just a method and was not associated with a particular epistemology or ontology. However, other scholars have disagreed with this assertion and suggested that the classic grounded theory approach does represent specific research beliefs. Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) contended that the choice of grounded theory methodology depends on the researcher's epistemological or ontological beliefs in terms of knowledge and relationships with the participants.

Timonen et al. (2018) positioned Glaser's approach as having a strong "objectivist" orientation. This objective reality is not written in stone but is modifiable if new data emerge. As classic grounded theory is more firmly based on the data and what is actually happening in a situation, it provides better development of ideas for supporting change (Simmons, 2011b).

In terms of my role and those of participants, I rejected constructivist grounded theory because although I believe that the researcher contributes their background to the direction of a study, I think this can be controlled by continually comparing hypotheses

back to the data (Simmons, 2011b). Classic grounded theory was selected because of the belief that the participants contribute to the development of the grounded theory, but they do not have the whole picture of all of the participants and the theoretical sampling outside their substantive area, so they cannot co-construct (Glaser, 1978). A constructivist approach was considered but was rejected for this reason. This is not to negate the role of participants in the field sharing their primary concern and validating the fit of the grounded theory, only their function in the creation of the hypothesis.

Role of the researcher.

Role. In a qualitative study, the researcher is the instrument used to collect data. The epistemology of classic grounded theory requires the researcher to be an open, objective witness to processes that are occurring (Howard-Payne, 2016). Glaser (1998) cautioned that researchers need to work against their natural inclination to force meaning. The human brain looks for patterns and does not like ambiguity, as can be observed with how people perceive illusions (Sterzer, Kleinschmidt, & Rees, 2009). With classic grounded theory, the researcher needs to be comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty until the theory emerges, rather than create an interpretation to protect against self-doubt (Glaser, 1998). Once a pattern begins to appear, it needs to be constantly compared to confirm that the source of the relationship is grounded in the data.

Theoretical sensitivity. The researcher can choose an area of interest, but without preconceived notions of the difficulties and how they are handled. Glaser (1992) warned that it is not about the researcher's problem in this area, but the participant's dilemmas. Theoretical sensitivity involves being able to identify categories from the data.

Limiting preconceptions and bias. I had experience in the substantive area. My first interview was with myself. I created field notes and memos from this interview as a baseline of the assumptions with which I began the study (Glaser, 1998). This approach also helped to ensure that I took a neutral stance in my role (Howard-Payne, 2016).

Preconceptions and bias during a preliminary literature review. Although Glaser (1998) suggested not doing a literature review, it is not possible in most dissertations to delay this process. The goal then becomes to avoid bias and remain open when analyzing the study data (Timonen et al., 2018). Glaser indicated that "all is data," and that the literature review can be treated as containing data rather than absolute truths. The themes that emerged from the literature review were considered as assumptions by "experts" against which the incidents of the participants were constantly compared.

Methodology

Participant Selection

Participant population. The target population for this study was all elementary teachers in Alberta who had a student with an EBD in their inclusive classroom. While there were no statistics or lists of teachers who met these criteria, a sense of scope could be obtained from other data. Alberta Education listed 43,946 teachers from kindergarten to Grade 12 for the 2017-2018 school year (Alberta Education, n.d.-a). For the same period, a total of 8,587 students from all grade levels were identified as meeting the criteria for a severe EBD (Alberta Education, n.d.-b).

Sampling strategy. Use of a criterion-based convenience sample was the first strategy adopted for this project. Glaser (1998) described a researcher having success by

posting a classified advertisement offering to let people vent about a topic. An invitation to participate in the study was placed in the Alberta Teachers' Association newspaper and the Alberta Teachers—Resource and Idea Sharing Facebook group (please see Appendix A for a copy of the advertisement). The newspaper advertisement included a QR Code that could be scanned with a camera phone and a shortened URL link (as can be done with the Google URL Shortener at https://goo.gl/). These features made accessing the study as simple as possible.

As all public-school teachers in Alberta are required to be part of the Alberta Teachers' Association, this request should have reached the entire population. All members of the ATA receive a copy of the *ATA News* as part of their affiliation. The periodical claims a circulation of 42,500 (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2019). Editions are published 15 times throughout the school year. Unfortunately, the edition in which the advertisement was placed, arrived at schools after they had been closed due to the pandemic in March 2020. No participants responded to this posting.

The Alberta Teachers—Resource and Idea Sharing Facebook group is a closed discussion. To join, participants must answer questions to prove that they meet the membership requirements. "This group is for educational professionals (employed by a school district in Alberta), or those who teach the Alberta curriculum overseas" (Alberta Teachers—Resource and Idea Sharing Group, n.d.). It is acceptable to post requests for research participants, as is demonstrated by previous notices. As of April 6, 2019, there were 10,242 members. While there was good initial response to a first and second posting, the number of volunteers quickly dropped off before saturation could be

achieved. To increase the visibility for more consecutive dates and to target additional individuals, a paid "boosted post" was used to gather additional participants with a third and fourth posting.

Additionally, a request was made to the IRB to revise my recruitment strategy to include snowball sampling. I emailed my personal contacts who are involved in the education field, and who work in other school districts, and asked them to share my participant recruitment information (please see Appendix B for the wording of the email).

Participant criteria. The criteria for participants was kindergarten to grade six teachers who teach a general education class in Alberta. In their class, they must have had a student identified with a severe emotional/behavioral disorder (Alberta Education, 2019). The child must have been in the classroom for at least 50% of the school day and their student for at least one month.

Ensuring they meet criteria. The recruitment advertisement was linked to a Google survey. Potential participants were asked if they met the five criteria listed above (Appendix D). Responding "no" to any of the items resulted in being redirected to a page that thanked them for their interest but indicated they did not meet the criteria. These criteria were also checked at the start of interviews.

Participant recruitment. Participants first viewed a short video that explained the study. This video helped to create the feeling that a "real person" was leading the study and was interested in their thoughts (Lowenthal & Snelson, 2017). After the introduction video (Appendix C), participants were directed to a consent page which contained my contact information, allowed them to read about the parameters of the study, indicate they

agreed, explained they may stop at any point, or could ask for further clarification.

Those who consented to participation were asked about their contact information. Participants were reminded that to enhance confidentiality, they might wish to use or create an email account that did not contain their name. They could choose to use a phone number, or cell phone number and text, if they preferred those methods. They were asked if there was a better time of the day and week to contact them or schedule an interview.

Participants were asked the best method for conducting an interview. Options for contact included phone, Skype, FaceTime, or Google Hangout. They were also asked during these initial questions if they consented to the conversation being recorded, and then again at the time of the interview.

Participants were also asked for demographic details. These details included the number of years of teaching, grade taught, size of the school, rural or urban location of the school, and the number of students in the classroom with an EBD.

Teachers who were selected and participated in an interview received a thirty-dollar digital gift certificate from Amazon.ca. This gift was texted or emailed to them depending on their choice.

Sample size. The actual number of samples for grounded theory studies has been found to range from a half dozen to over one hundred (Guetterman, 2015). Creswell (2012) recommended that researchers should plan for at least 20 to 30 interviews, and this was the anticipated number. However, Glaser (1998) advised that sampling should continue until saturation has been reached and this was the method by which it was

decided when to stop sampling.

Saturation occurs when all of the new incidents become interchangeable with those already collected and coded (Glaser, 1998). There is a saturation of categories first and saturation of the theory later (Glaser, 1978). Bryant and Charmaz (2012) suggested that as the researcher determines the point of saturation, it is incumbent upon them to provide a clear description for the reader of how they arrived at that determination.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Plan

Glaser (1998) cautioned about creating limits to data collection, as it could stifle following where the research might take the investigator. The direction of data collection is driven by the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978). However, Bryant and Charmaz (2012) suggested that in psychological studies, the focus of the sample is often more defined, which is allowable as long as the researcher is open to the issues of the population.

The primary source of data for this study was interviews with the previously mentioned sample of teacher volunteers. Teachers were encouraged to follow-up with an email or phone call if there were additional thoughts or incidents they wanted to share. Participants were also asked if they would be willing to complete a follow-up interview if there were any further points requiring clarification.

Interviews. Participants were given the choice of completing the meeting online (FaceTime, Skype, or Google Hangout) or by phone. Interviews began by asking the grand tour question. Participants were encouraged to share additional information about their experiences, requested to clarify details, or to provide an example. The question of how teachers navigate the process of including a student with an EBD was not asked

directly, as it could have led the respondents answer (Glaser, 1992).

The grand tour question. The purpose of grounded theory is to understand the primary problem of participants in the area of study and how they resolve that problem (Glaser, 1998). It requires understanding the perspective of the participant and their reality. An opportunity must be created for participants to release and voice their experiences and primary concerns.

The "grand tour question" is designed to open the participant to describe the struggle from their perspective (Glaser, 1998). A grand tour question is used in other qualitative approaches, but the purpose in grounded theory is to invite the participant to vent their primary concerns. Rather than phrase it is as a specific question, Simmons (2011a) recommended that it be thought of as a broad "inquiry." The opening question for participants was : "Please tell me about having a student with an EBD in your classroom."

Interview notes and recording. Glaser (1998) advised against taping interviews. He suggested it was a waste of time because multiple examples of the same issue would likely be recorded. Glaser also argued that relevant details would be remembered because they would impact the researcher. However, I chose to deviate from his advice. I wanted to be able to check what I had heard to ensure that my uncertainty and unconscious desires to discover meaning did not alter my memory. Also, while grounded theory is not a method of verification, I believed I should be able to provide accurate examples to describe my process of hypothesis development.

I followed Glaser 's (1998) direction to complete field notes and code them the same day as the interview. Field notes are meant to capture the core of what participants share, rather than providing a transcribed version of the conversation (Holton, 2007). By focusing on the essence of what participants share, the grounded theory researcher is better able to stay at a conceptual level, rather than being mired in description (Holton, 2007).

Follow-up interviews. Teachers were asked if they would consider being contacted for a follow-up interview if further details or clarification was required as I worked through the study. However, no issues emerged that required follow-up contact.

Demographic questionnaire. Participants were asked to provide some basic demographic and situational details when they volunteered to be part of the study (please see Appendix D for specific questions). These details were collected to determine if contextual factors were relevant.

Email follow-up. Glaser (1978) suggested that it was appropriate for knowledgeable participants to be asked to complete a case history or a journal. While volunteers were not asked to keep a journal, they were asked to send an email if they thought of any other details or experiences they would like to share in the month after the interview had been completed. However, no follow-up messages were received other than to thank me for letting them share their experiences and for the gift card.

Data Analysis Plan

Glaser (1998) emphasized that "all is data," indicating that the researcher could consider any source of information that informed understanding of the processes, whether

that was what people said, what was observed in their actions or manners, or written documents. He described five types of data: baseline data, properline, interpreted, vaguing out, and conceptual. Baseline refers to the participants providing a broad description, while interpreted data involves the participants telling the researcher how the information should be understood. Properline information is similar to interpreted data but where a "vested fictions" (p. 88) is the focus of the interpretation. Glaser noted that it can be difficult to tell if participants believe the approved narrative or feel forced to repeat it. However, a greater degree of anonymity reduces participants' likelihood of presenting this type of response. "Vaguing out" occurs with ambiguous descriptions that are unclear and with little specific detail because the participant either does not know what is happening or does not want the researcher to know. Finally, conceptual data is based on jargon or ideas specific to the substantive area.

The incidents within interviews are not coded on a wholistic level, but rather involve examining details. Interviews contain snippets of examples expressed in a few words or sentences (Glaser, 1998). Glaser advocated analyzing and coding each line of data so that one incident might involve several different codes. Glaser suggested transcribing the initial interview and field notes for detailed review. As the process continues and the themes become more evident, it may be possible to take abbreviated notes highlighting these categories.

Constant comparative method. One of the principal techniques introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was the constant comparative method of data analysis. By comparing the data, themes begin to emerge of similarities and differences between the

examples. This process leads to the development of a hypothesis, which is then tested and verified with each additional piece of data. Effort is taken not to force a theory on to the data but to let the pattern emerge on its own.

Coding is conducted by looking at how the participants resolve the primary problems in the substantive area and looking for what explains variations (Glaser, 1992). Coding is also done to see how the actions could be categorized. Incidents are first compared to each other until themes emerge. New occurrences are then compared to the themes (Glaser, 1992). Categories should be representative of multiple incidents so that any example could be substituted for another to still demonstrate the identified concept.

Coding.

Open coding. The first step of analysis in grounded theory is open coding in which the researcher needs to consider each incident to determine what idea is indicated (Glaser, 1992). When looking at the data, questions can be asked about "What category does this incident indicate?" "What property of what category does this incident indicate?" "What is the participant's main concern?" (Glaser, 1998, p.140). It is referred to as "open" coding because the analysis starts without any preconceived categories. The researcher should be creative in coding the data to see what pattern emerges and seem to fit (Glaser, 1978).

"In vivo" coding uses the language of the participants, while "substantive coding" reflects the jargon in the area being studied (Glaser, 1992). Coding tries to capture the actions and uses gerunds to identify processes (Bryant & Charmaz, 2012). The name of codes should provide a vivid image of the behavior and assist with theoretical abstraction

(Glaser, 1978). The names of the codes should also have "grab" and "meaningfulness" (Glaser, 1992). Memoing helps to determine if codes should be combined (Chametzky, 2016).

It should be noted that unlike other types of qualitative research, in vivo codes are not used to provide the participant's voice to their description, they are the words of the participant, but chosen by the researcher to represent several similar incidents arrived at through constant comparison (Glaser, 2002). Additionally, grounded theory labels the actions of people, not the people themselves (Glaser, 1978). Although sometimes the individual is so engaged in the behavior, the boundary between the actions and the person blurs.

Glaser advised trying to find a code based on theoretical concepts which allows the discussion to transcend the specific area being studied. Although, he noted that in vivo codes may be more descriptive and understandable to those in the substantive field (Glaser, 1978).

Selective coding. Once the categories begin to emerge, the researcher no longer codes every bit of data, but begins to focus on incidents that add to the understanding of the themes that have surfaced (Glaser, 1998). The coding becomes focused on just those categories that are primarily focused on the core variable and help create a workable theory (Glaser, 1978). However, care must be taken to not begin selective coding until a core category has surfaced (Holton, 2007).

Theoretical coding. The goal is to generate theory about the overall process and not just about the unit of study (Glaser, 1978). As a basic social process emerges, the

study moves from focusing on the substantive area to these broader social processes (Glaser, 1978). Open codes describe the incidents, but theoretical codes connect categories into a conceptual pattern (Glaser, 1992).

It is an integrative process that ties together substantive coding (Glaser, 1978). This method is primarily an inductive approach, as the patterns emerge from constant comparison (Glaser, 1992). However, it is not without deductive elements such as the choices in theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1998). A cyclical pattern can emerge where induction contributes to the deductive decisions, which then provide material for further inductive reasoning (Glaser, 1998).

Basic social processes can be divided into basic social psychological processes and a basic social structure processes (Glaser, 1978). Glaser provided 18 commonly occurring theoretical aspects that can be considered when comparing how the categories are related. These "families" have traditionally been applied when considering how groups of people solve their problems and transcend specific situations. For example, many theories are based on what Glaser refers to as the "six C's." These include: "Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances and Conditions" (p. 74). Glaser acknowledges that there could be additional types of relationships or a combination of the factors.

Core variable. Properties of incidents are identified and then compared with other occurrences to identify a category (Glaser, 1998). These are "multiple indicator concepts" suggesting they are not based on one incident but explain many examples (Glaser, 1978). As the categories are identified, a core variable should become evident.

The core variable should explain behavior of participants in most situations (Glaser, 1992).

In Glaser (1978) he identified criteria for a core variable. It must be central and frequent in resolving the problem for the participant group. It will likely be a part of the problem. The connections between categories should be obvious and not be strained to make them fit. It should be modifiable in relation to common variables in the setting. The core variable should lend itself to extension into a theoretical concept that would be transferable to other situations. However, as a result of these characteristics, it will take longer to saturate.

Memoing. Bryant and Charmaz (2012) describe memoing as an "analytic conversation with the self (p.47)" and occurs throughout a grounded theory study (Glaser, 2014b). Memoing allows the researcher to document their thinking and the process of conceptual emergence (Glaser, 1998). This technique permits the researcher to record their theorizing about relationships. Memoing also allows the researcher to keep track of the array of ideas and concepts that may appear simultaneously (Glaser, 1998). Memos can be written to reflect on previous memos (Glaser, 1978). It is meant to capture the thinking of the moment and allow the researcher to reflect on the development of that thinking. Glaser (1998) urges memoing as soon as an idea occurs even if it means interrupting coding. Ideas may happen at any time, so the researcher needs to be able to capture the thought before it is lost (Glaser, 2014b).

Glaser (1978) identified four goals of memoing. Firstly, the process takes a concrete description and transforms it into the abstract and conceptual. The boundaries

are determined by developing the properties of the codes. Secondly, it is an intellectually freeing process as the focus is on capturing emerging intuitive ideas, rather than worrying about writing style or grammar. Thirdly, the memos serve as a fund of insights that may extend beyond the present study. Finally, the physical creation of memos should allow them to be cut into parts and arranged to compare possible patterns. Glaser recommended providing them with headings and highlighting key ideas.

Sorting. The process with memos moves from a focus on data to one of "conceptual sorting" (Glaser, 1978). The researcher should ask theoretical questions about the relationships between memos. Glaser cautioned continuing to ensure fit and not force the ideas into a prematurely formed theory.

He suggested it does not matter where in the memos the sorting starts. Secondly, only those categories that have a relationship with the core variable should be included in the sort. One core variable must be chosen as the prime focus for each study. Other important variables are only included as they relate to the core.

The memos are sorted in a way that allows them to be written up. Memoing continues to happen during sorting and helps to integrate ideas. All the key categories must fit into the developing theory, or it needs to be reworked. The goal is theoretical completeness.

Theory development. The final product is the development of a theory. A substantive theory provides an overarching hypothesis that explains how participants deal with their identified problem in the setting of the study. If possible, the researcher should try to develop a conceptual theory that extends to multiple situations and a broader

explanation of behavior related to social processes. The result, in either case, is not a proven fact, but the most likely hypotheses from the data (Glaser, 1998).

Software. Glaser (1998) was critical of using technology in the grounded theory process. He felt that computers force researchers into particular behaviors and did not allow absolute freedom and flexibility. He specifically identified NUDIST, the predecessor of NVIVO, as inappropriate. However, many current researchers argue that qualitative data analysis computer software can assist in grounded theory (Timonen et al., 2018). This suggestion is another minor point where I diverged from Glaser's advice. NVIVO has undergone several revisions and has made multiple additions and improvements since Glaser wrote this critique. I felt that the use of such software helped me with organization and the ability to understand the information I collected.

Issues of Trustworthiness

There is significant scientific rigor to the grounded theory method (Glaser, 1992). The importance of abiding by recommended procedures equates to Kvale's (1994) concept of "craftsmanship" as related to qualitative trustworthiness for qualitative research. The researcher must scrupulously follow the rules of the process to generate the highest quality of results (Glaser, 1998). Creswell (2012) urged researchers to pick one strand of the methodology rather than mixing features of several approaches. Within classic grounded theory, Glaser (1978, 1992, & 1998) identified the five principle aspects of validity: fit, grab, work, relevance, and modifiability. These concepts were integrated into the requirements for qualitative trustworthiness.

Credibility. Relevance is dependent on the results being relative to participants' substantive area. It is partially determined by whether the work of science has been applied to a real problem. The results will be relevant if the real obstacles of individuals are allowed to emerge (Glaser, 1978).

Glaser's idea of "fit" also applies to creditability. Fit implies the theory explains the pattern of behavior in the substantive area. It also refers to the naming of the category to fit the concept. This aspect parallels Kvale's (1994) concept of "pragmatic validity."

Transferability. Glaser addressed the issue of transferability in two ways. The first was in terms of "grab." People will be attracted to the theory because they feel it explains what they are observing in their own substantive area (Glaser, 2002).

The second aspect is somewhat different than the usual concept of transferability. Glaser contended that grounded theory provides only a hypothesis of what is happening and a theory may be shown to be incorrect in some situations. The generated theory must have "modifiability" to change if new data is presented. Grounded theory tries to establish "conceptual specification," not "conceptual definition" (Glaser, 1978). If new data is revealed, the specifications are expanded to include those incidents.

Glaser (1998) encouraged researchers to try to develop theory from a conceptual standpoint. The ultimate goal is to create an explanation of basic social processes that transcends the substantive area. However, Glaser recognized that the practical limitations, such as the time allowed to complete a doctoral dissertation, might limit the generalizability of a theory to the area being studied.

Dependability. Glaser (2002) suggested it was inappropriate in grounded theory to check with participants to confirm if their information had been correctly interpreted because the participants do not see the whole picture of what is being studied. However, the theory should have "workability." This point refers to whether the theory and hypotheses explain the majority of the behavior by the participants in a substantive area to solve their primary problem. Kvale (1994) contended that ideas have "communicative validity" if they can be discussed and found to represent the situation.

Confirmability. Although grounded theory does not require verification of the hypotheses, the written product should demonstrate verification of the methodology. Creswell (2012) encouraged the grounded theory researcher to make sure their process was explicitly described. There should be a clear relationship between the data, the categories, and the final theory. If a researcher tries to force preconceived ideas, they will usually be recognized as inappropriate through a lack of supporting data during constant comparison (Glaser, 1992).

Ethical Procedures

In considering ethical issues that could be a factor in this study, professional standards (Canadian Psychological Association, 2017) and university documents guiding research procedures (Walden University, n.d.-b; Walden University, n.d.-c) were considered. Additionally, guidelines established by research methodologists were reviewed (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

IRB application. The study followed IRB guidelines for Walden University (Walden University, n.d.-a). IRB approval was obtained before any steps were taken to

recruit participants and collect data. The participants for this study were adults who were being asked about their professional experiences. As such, they did not represent a vulnerable population, and their partaking should not have caused undue distress or damage. Possible subjects were unknown, and pressure and coercion were not factors of concern.

Treatment of participants.

Informed consent. Teachers had to take several steps to participate. They were reminded at each point that their involvement was voluntary. Informed consent was also revisited with teachers at the start of the initial interview.

Confidentiality. Contact information (email addresses or phone numbers) were separated from the field notes and video recordings. Each participant was given a number. This list is contained in a password-protected document and kept on an encrypted laptop that no one else uses or can access. This process was used to reduce the possibility of a privacy breach. The email addresses and associated response numbers will be securely erased after the study outcomes have been shared with participants.

Teachers are not referred to by name in the dissertation. Care has been taken to ensure that any contextual or demographic details would not allow the participant to be identified. By sampling throughout the province, there should be little likelihood of a deductive disclosure of identity (Kaiser, 2009).

Adverse events. It was not anticipated that discussing their teaching experiences would cause undue emotional distress for participants. Interviews were open-ended and encouraged conversation, but teachers were not pushed to talk about

information that they did not want to share. In the unlikely event that a teacher appeared to be upset by the discussion, they were to be encouraged to seek counseling support. All public-school teachers in Alberta have access to an Employee Assistance Program and benefits that cover the cost of psychological services. If any adverse events occurred, I planned to immediately contact my supervisor to review the situation.

Ethical concerns—Data. All digital data will be kept on a computer or back-up drive that uses Mac FileVault 2 full-disk encryption (128-bit Advanced Encryption Standard). I am the only person who has the password to access these devices. When the data is erased from the computer, secure erasing will be used as a data sanitization method to completely overwrite all of the stored information. Any physical paperwork that was created is stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. These papers will be destroyed using an on-site shredder. All documents will be kept for five years before being destroyed.

Summary

This study asked what theory explains teachers' perceptions of support related to the inclusion of students with an EBD, and what explained teachers' choices of strategies and changes in their approach. In this chapter, I have described how classic grounded theory was developed to answer these types of questions about how people resolve their primary issues. Interview data from a convenience and snowball sample provided the bulk of the material for analysis. I have identified ways I limited my bias during the interpretation process, as well as the safeguards provided by the grounded theory methodology, and the use of constant comparison to prevent forcing preconceived ideas.

In the end, grounded theory does not provide proof, only hypotheses. As a result, the findings are a suggestion (Glaser, 1978). If the study has been done properly, the acceptance and use of ideas by those in the field will serve to support the theory or result in modification of the findings (Glaser, 1978).

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study used a classic grounded theory approach to develop a theory regarding how teachers navigate including a student with an EBD in their general education classroom, focusing on elementary teachers in Alberta. Chapter 3 described the proposed research design for this study; this chapter will detail how the actual study unfolded and the results of the data collected.

In addition, Chapter 4 reviews the setting and major events during the study that may have affected the findings. I present a description and details of participant demographics and how data were collected. The process and examples of data analysis are provided. The chapter concludes with the results—a theory of striving for homeostasis as teachers maintain optimum functioning by balancing the needs of students with an EBD and the needs of the other children in the classroom.

Setting

Data were collected from Alberta elementary school teachers between February and July 2020. During that period, two events occurred that had significant impacts for teachers within the province. The first was the release of the provincial budget on February 27, which introduced a new model for funding schools (Alberta Government, 2020). These changes and cuts announced earlier resulted in many boards deciding to reduce teaching staff for the upcoming school year (French, 2020; Rieger, 2019).

Even more impactful events for teachers happened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of education, the most significant consequence was the decision by

the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Hinshaw, 2020) to close all schools on March 16. Schools remained closed for the remainder of the school year and the data collection period. This situation created new demands for teachers as they learned to deliver instruction virtually and reduced many of the behavioral issues that they had typically dealt with in the classroom—although variations to these challenges continued to happen even during virtual instruction. The study was designed to include interviews with teachers who currently had a student with an EBD in their classroom, but much of the data ended up being more retrospective than had originally been intended.

Demographics

The convenience sample of elementary teachers was recruited through several methods that likely influenced the demographics of those interviewed (see Table 1). The Alberta Teachers' Association newspaper advertisement was intended to be the primary method of reaching potential participants. Unfortunately, the edition containing the notice did not arrive at schools until many teachers had begun working from home.

Table 1

Recruitment Strategy and Result

Date	Method	Responses	Completed interviews
February 17	Personal Facebook post—Alberta Teachers—Resource and Idea Sharing	8	5
March	Advertisement in the *Alberta Teachers' Association News*	0	0
April 8	Personal Facebook post—Alberta Teachers—Resource and Idea Sharing	2	2
April 23-28	Boosted Facebook post to target population	10	8
May 18	Snowballing sampling email request sent to personal acquaintances	2	2
June 7-14	Boosted Facebook post to target population	6	6

The postings on Facebook received responses within the first day of appearing, but responses quickly tapered off. This decline was likely because posts move down the list of entries as new ones appear and are less visible. Thus, a decision was made to pay for a "boosted" post that guaranteed that it would be one of the first entries that appeared to targeted users for a specified period. The demographic parameters chosen for the boost were residents of Alberta who identified their occupation as "elementary teacher" or "teacher" or who identified an interest in "teaching ideas." For the second boosted post, the age range was narrowed to 21 to 64, to exclude individuals in university or retired. This strategy resulted in 6,323 people seeing the post and 150 following the link to the study website. However, the data provided by Facebook (Figure 1) showed that the

audience being reached was a slightly younger segment of the total target population (Figure 2).

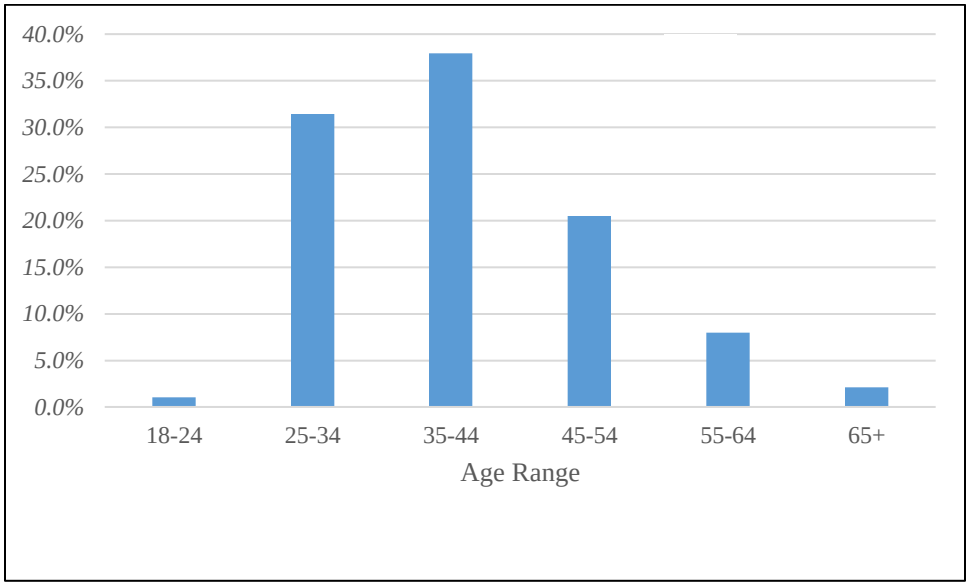

Figure 1. Demographic of Facebook audience reached.

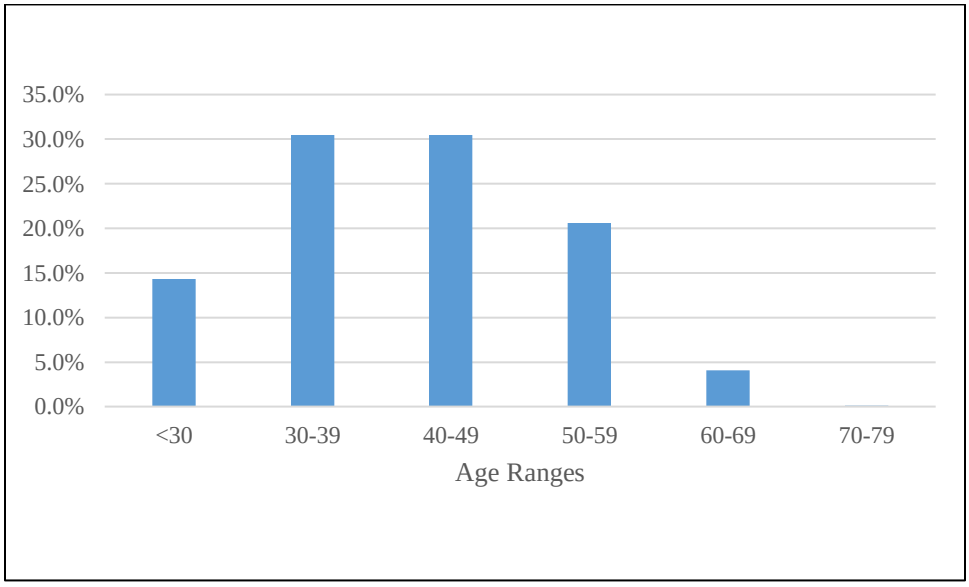

Figure 2. Age of all teachers in Alberta (Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund; ATRF, 2019).

Because most participants were recruited through Facebook, the audience being exposed to the notice likely resulted in a participant sample with a proportionally smaller number of older individuals with greater teaching experience (see Table 2). Few men saw the request for participants, and no men were interviewed; this is not surprising, given the dearth of male elementary teachers. Although a classic grounded theory study does not require a representative sample, a skewed population may impact the transferability of the results. This issue will be discussed further below.

Table 2

Participant-Provided Demographics

Question	Response choice	Number of responses
How many years have you been teaching?	1–2 years	17%
	3–5 years	9%
	5–10 years	30%
	10–20 years	30%
	More than 20 years	13%
What grade do you primarily teach?	Kindergarten	9%
	Grade 1	26%
	Grade 2	13%
	Grade 3	13%
	Grade 4	9%
	Grade 5	26%
	Grade 6	4%
Is your school size ...	Less than 200 students	22%
	Between 200 and 500 students	61%
	More than 500 students	17%
Do you consider your school ...	Rural	39%
	Urban	61%

Data Collection

All interviews were conducted either by telephone or online. All participants agreed to have the conversations recorded on my secure laptop. The conversations were transcribed using Rev.com's computer-automated services and then were reviewed immediately afterward for accuracy. These files were then coded using NVivo. Memos were simultaneously written during interviews, transcription reviews, and coding.

Data Analysis

Although classic grounded theory does not require transcription of interviews, this was done due to my inexperience to ensure that important details were not missed. Coding was initially completed using an open coding approach that named codes after key words used by the participants or jargon from the study's substantive area. Incidents were placed under more than one code if multiple factors were being described. A constant comparative method was used as incidents and memos were collected. For example, two initial codes, "taking out the emotion" and "big heart for kids," were found to relate to the same ideas and placed under a broader theme of "empathizing."

A pattern to the codes and themes was first identified as variations of the problem of balancing competing demands and types of teacher responses. This pattern was visualized using MindNode (Figure 3). MindNode was chosen for this task because it allows multiple connections rather than just linear visualization. As constant comparisons continued, it became apparent that there were numerous connections between codes, some being contexts under which certain conditions or strategies

occurred, and some strategies that appeared to respond to specific aspects of the larger struggle that teachers experienced (as seen in the connecting lines in Figure 4).

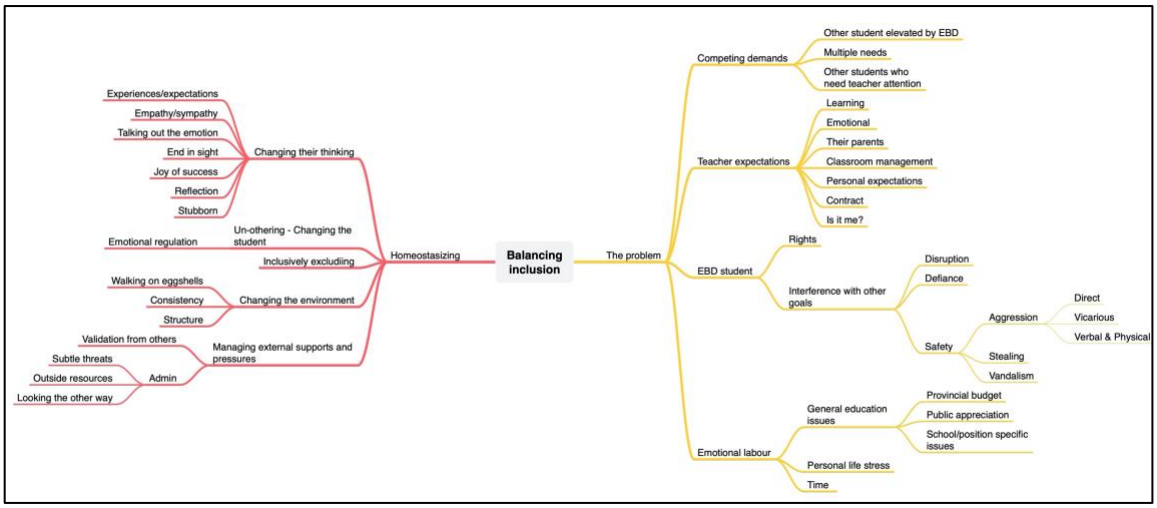

Figure 3. Initial visualization.

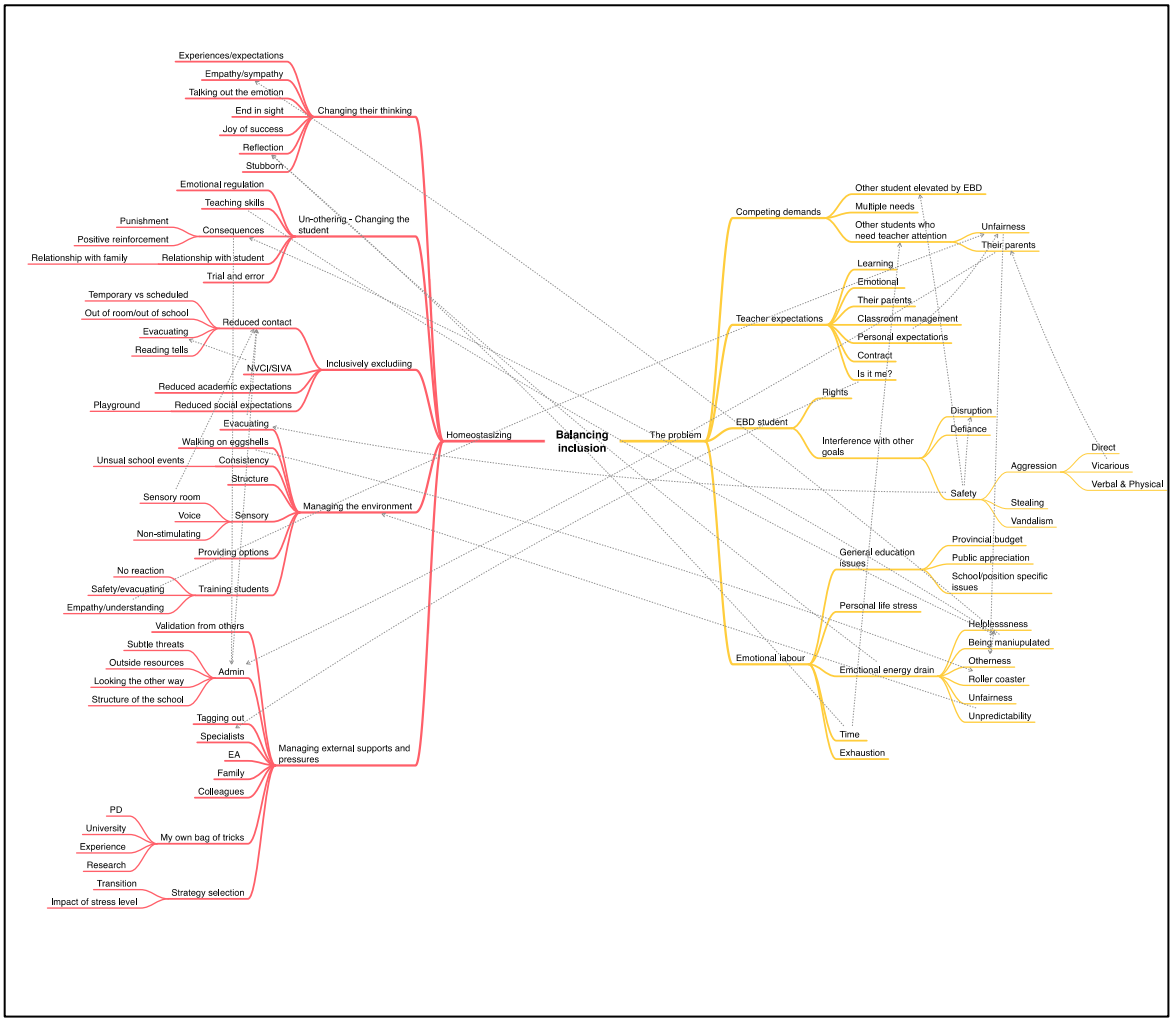

Figure 4. Further developed visualization of themes, codes, and connections.

The 872 incidents collected from interviews were then re-sorted and combined with existing memos or written into additional memos. A snippet of the process is provided in Table 3, showing the transcribed incident, the resulting code, the initial memos created about the incidents, and the subsequent sorting of the memos into an abstract theme, which resulted in the final description.

Table 3

Incident to Code to Memo to Mature Memo Example

Incident	Initial code	Memo	Mature memo
Cause sometimes like I've got a tell when my shoulders go up, I'm frustrated and she we've been working with each other for 4 years. So she knows that about me and when she starts to tap her foot, I know she's getting escalated. Right. So it's about knowing the person that's in with you.	Reading tells	Staff communicate nonverbal clues if they need help.	Optimal functioning can be observed when teacher and paraprofessional "tag out." This is the process of a smooth trade-off between the paraprofessional and teacher when the teacher needs to deal directly with the EBD and reinforce expectations, and the EA needs to take over care of the rest of the class. It also occurs when someone relieves the other if they are having trouble controlling their emotions, often communicated only through nonverbals.
Depending on the situation they would sometimes they would like tag team out with me. If I was feeling overwhelmed or emotional about the situation, they would go and stand in the classroom or watch him from the outside … they would just like eye contact would be a big thing.	Tagging out	Teachers might need to encourage an EA to tag out if they see that both they and the student are getting frustrated and becoming locked in an escalating power struggle. It often helps to have a break and provide the child a different person once they have been triggered.	
We call that "tag out" and sometimes when we're in the middle of deescalating a situation, uh, she'll come over and just tap me on the shoulder and go tag and then I'm out and I'll do the same to her. Cause sometimes when you're in the moment, you don't realize that you're escalated.	Tagging out		
So with that team, we'd tag, sometimes my EA had come in and go tag and I'd go out and be with him and she'd come in and just take over whatever I was teaching.	EA support	Teachers might need to encourage an EA to tag out if they see that both they and the student are getting frustrated and becoming locked in an escalating power struggle.	

The example in Table 3 demonstrates several incidents that all referred to the seamless allying of teachers and paraprofessionals. Balancing the classroom through prior planning and using nonverbal signals, they could relieve each other when experiencing undue stress or when the child would calm more easily with another person.

The Basic Social Process that emerged was one of balancing in relation to the teacher's primary problem of managing competing and often divergent needs in the classroom setting. The memos revealed a theory of striving for homeostasis that explains how teachers maintain optimal balance in their inclusive classroom with a student who has an EBD. Teachers employ strategies of managing inclusion, unothering, inclusively excluding, allying, and conserving energy, while maintaining balance with dynamic student, school, and classroom variables and demands.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Data collection and analysis were conducted with adherence to the prescribed process for classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1998). Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998) has repeatedly contended that if these steps are followed, they will result in revealing a valid theory.

In terms of credibility, I asked few questions, other than for clarification, during interviews. This approach allowed teachers to freely share their struggles and how they resolved them without forcing any preconceived notions. The result demonstrates classic grounded theory "fit," as it explains the pattern of behavior. This ability to explain behavior also speaks to the dependability. Confirmability has been provided by providing a clear explanation of the data collection process, and the way in which codes

and themes were allowed to emerge. Data collection continued until there was saturation of the concept indicators, so that new incidents were just variations of previously identified themes.

Classic grounded theory does not claim to produce an unalterable truth. The transferability of the theory presented is its modifiability. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the sample population contained few older teachers near the end of their careers. The population was also limited to elementary teachers in Alberta. The presented theory is a hypothesis. If these or other factors are found to provide a need for further explanation, the transferability will emerge by the ability of the theory to be adequately modified.

Results

Teachers are engaged in trying to maintain homeostasis in their classrooms to maintain an optimum learning environment while including students with an EBD. Many of the symptoms and characteristics of students with these characteristics are antithetical to student learning, so the teacher must work to balance meeting all their students' needs. It is first necessary to appreciate the situational factors that influence the teacher's responses to understand the process of striving for homeostasis.

Context

To understand the actions teachers take to resolve the problem of having a student with an EBD in their classroom requires appreciating the context of the problem. A number of variable and dynamic factors affect the classroom needs, the degree of the problem, and the available resources.

Classroom composition and demands. The demands of individual classrooms vary considerably. A teacher's finite attention and energy are taxed by larger class sizes, and even more so by those with unique learning demands. Elementary classrooms in Alberta often include a wide range of student academic abilities, from those who have no knowledge of the alphabet, to students reading at a high school level. In addition, there may be English language learners, and students with multiple types of disabilities.

Classrooms can also contain more than one student with behavioral challenges. This situation creates additional demands for the teacher's attention and increases the number of times where the teacher must try to provide individual focus to several students simultaneously. When multiple students with an EBD are in the same classroom, they may trigger one another, sometimes purposely just for the entertainment value of watching their peers react.

Transition into the classroom. Transition issues happen when students are suddenly dropped into a classroom, but also if the teacher is placed in an existing classroom to replace someone else. How the student begins their relationship with the teacher will often determine the trajectory of their behavior. The teacher's ability to apply strategies and prepare is influenced by "knowing" vs. "discovering." Advanced notice means that a well-developed plan can be created so staff will not be responding emotionally in the stress of the moment. If teachers know a student will be in their classroom during the following school year, they can start to take steps to familiarize the student with them and build relationships. The school's structure can also help this transition when opportunities are provided for all students to connect with their new

teacher before the summer holidays or teachers meet to share strategies with the receiving teacher.

Many teachers mentioned students with an EBD who had arrived midyear. It takes time to get access to their school records and see any assessments or planning done at the previous school. Often teachers will contact the previous teacher directly to obtain this information. Translating those strategies into a new school can be challenging as some ideas may have worked because of the relationships in the previous building or the new school may not have the resources to implement the same strategies as the old. Transient students present additional challenges because they may arrive unexpectedly and not give the teacher any time to prepare, gather resources, or build relationships. Teachers also question putting effort into students who seem to transfer schools frequently. Transient students are often very frustrating for teachers because extensive plans may be developed, and then they do not remain long enough to make meaningful changes.

Disruption to learning. Two factors influence the degree to which an individual student takes away from the learning environment. Firstly, the severity of the behaviors, and secondly the frequency. The severity is determined by how it disrupts instruction, affects others, and whether safety is involved. For example, a student hurting the children sitting around them is considered very severe, as it involves all these factors even if it happens rarely. In contrast, calling out in class is considered less severe because although it affects other students' learning, it is a temporary interruption and no students are physically or emotionally affected. However, frequency may be a

consideration. Many students make comments inappropriately in class, but a student with an EBD may do this so often that the flow of instruction is interrupted, and there is a significant disruption to learning.

Resolving the Main Concern

Within the context variables just described, teachers work at resolving the dilemma of having a student with an EBD and maintaining a learning environment by taking one or more of the following focuses.

Managing inclusion. Teachers manage student behavior through the structure and rules of the classroom. Many of these actions could be classified as classroom management, and rewards and consequences. These may be modified to meet the unique needs of students.

Consistency. Routines provide stability for many children. They are helpful for anxious students and those children who have experienced a great deal of chaos in their lives. Students are reassured by predictability in the structure of the daily activities and consistency in the teacher's actions and responses.

> This class was a class where as soon as they came in from recess, I had to have a mindfulness exercise already on display just to calm them down because they weren't used to regularity, because so much drama involved this boy that the kids were all dysregulated as well. They weren't used to having a calm classroom. They didn't have calm houses, the majority of them.

Consistency within school presents an ongoing challenge to teachers. Despite the outward appearance of regularity, the school day is punctuated by announcements and

visitors to the classroom. In turn, the school year is disrupted with preparing and staging major events, such as Halloween, Christmas concerts, and track and field days. Support staff and peers in the classroom may also change during the school year.

When possible, teachers manage these disruptions by ensuring that students are given advance notice and frequent reminders about the changes. The teacher may take time to walk students through the new situation and what will be expected behavior. One teacher left notes for a student with an EBD when she knew she would be absent and have a substitute. These notes were designed to remind him of the upcoming changes, the expected behavior, and remind him of a special job that he was responsible for while the teacher was away.

Preparing. Teachers need to make sure students understand and practice classroom routines. Practicing can take a great deal of the first part of the school year, but many teachers feel it is worth the initial time investment. Teachers believe that students appreciate rules and predictability; however, students with EBD "push back" to determine the extent and perseverance level of the teacher. Regular and gentle redirection is used to get students back to the required tasks. Ignoring may be used for minor disruptions, while the consequences for more severe and persistent actions are discussed below.

The type of classroom activity influences the likelihood of behavioral issues. Unstructured activities and those that involve movement are likely to cause more problems. Teachers may choose not to conduct an engaging lesson if they believe it is too stimulating. One teacher explained how it affected her student with an EBD:

> In classroom chemistry, there's lots of really cool experiments you can do, and the kids find them very exciting. But if I did it when he was at school, he loved the experiments, but probably 90% of the time, immediately after the experiment, we would have a major outburst. So I'm thinking, you know, he just couldn't handle the excitement level.

Teachers frequently put effort into making sure the classroom atmosphere is not overly stimulating or triggering for students with an EBD. They will ensure that their voice is low and calm. Students' seating is important so they are near adults that can support them and away from students that might cause reactions. Teachers create quiet spaces in the classroom, where all students can take a break. Many of these locations provide a visual barrier from the rest of the class and have items suggested by occupational therapists as providing sensory feedback.

Options. While there is a need to be consistent and predictable, it cannot be in a rigid manner that does not allow some flexibility to respond to the emerging needs of the student with an EBD. Teachers provide guidelines as to what actions are required and where the student has a choice. Providing options and choices is one approach that teachers use to manage defiant students. Student choice helps in gaining compliance to start to shape student's behavior. However, it may be difficult to find an option that is acceptable to both the student and the teacher. A "hard no" needs to be used with caution because it is often the trigger for oppositional students. Teachers can create the illusion of choice where they allow the child to choose from two alternatives that both meet the

teacher's goal. Some students will choose none of the options, but their response to not comply can still be presented to them as having made a choice.

> You can sit in the cubby with the pillow or you can sit on the couch. What's your choice? So it's almost, as I like to call it, the illusion of choice. So they're still doing what you want them to do, but you're allowing them some sort of control over how they do it.

Options may result from negotiations with the student. Compromises are much easier to reach for students who can express the reasons for their refusal. Unfortunately, many students with an EBD have language challenges or may have difficulty expressing themselves when aroused.

> He just wasn't very able to express himself if he was upset about something. So sometimes I would have him do like a finger signal. Like if I could kind of guess what he was upset about, I would say, "okay, like, do you want to go for a walk? Show me one finger. Do you want to read a story? Show me two fingers." And then sometimes, depending what kind of day it was, that could kind of get him communicating.

Rewards and consequences. Teachers experience a philosophical dilemma regarding whether to follow behavioral strategies ("carrot and stick") or a more relational self-regulation approach. The reason for choosing a particular approach is also discussed further below with regards to whether the teacher and student are allies. However, rewards and consequences have other associated issues. For example, food meets a basic need and often calms children, but then it may feel like the student is manipulating to get

a reward. It can also be a hard strategy to explain to all team members, and the teacher may receive negative observational comments by peers who are not part of the team who see a student misbehaving and then being given a snack.

Teachers may combine the consequences with options so that they are not as reinforcing. For instance, a teacher may insistent on a student completing work after a blow-up, so a tantrum never results in escaping a task. Another option is to allow all students to take food from a community basket or permit any student to take time in the classroom's quiet space, so an emotional explosion is not required to obtain these potential rewards.

Rewards are usually provided when teachers see that students have made a concerted effort. They endeavor to make a "first/then" connection, so students understand if they do what the teacher is asking, they will get a something they prefer. Rewards are also common when there is compliance or work completion. However, as part of a school-wide positive behavior program, they may also reinforce acts of kindness or helpfulness.

It can be challenging to find a consequence that is a strong enough reinforcer or punishment to make students with an EBD behave in the desired manner. Praise or positive communication is often selected as a reward. Positive praise may need to begin gradually and casually, as students who are often in trouble have difficulty hearing positive comments about themselves. Teachers also need to be cautious about using other motivators because they can then become a new source of conflict, such as when the student needs to stop the reward, particularly with highly engaging activities like

technology use. When points systems are used, many teachers attempt to only ever add points, as the loss of points is generally too much for students with an EBD and triggers an escalation.

Emotional de-escalation. Nonpunitive strategies to deal with behavior usually focus on preventing problems or trying to de-escalate the student. Students are often seen as not having the skills or been taught certain ways of acting by their parents. Frequently skills are targeted that relate to social interactions, emotional regulation, understanding social cues, and problem solving. Lessons in these areas are often beneficial to all students in the classroom, not just those with an EBD. It is also easier to teach all students skills than finding the time and opportunity to work on these with only a couple of students. Teachers may personally model a strategy to show the children that adults use them as well, particularly walking away and disengaging from an argument.

Attempts are made to de-escalate the student as soon as he is recognized as becoming agitated. Students are often encouraged to take a break or go for a walk. For some students, being able to call their parents can be reassuring and help them calm down.

The primary challenge with preventing an "explosion" is intervening soon enough in the cycle. Teachers and their paraprofessionals focus on identifying the "triggers" and "tells." Triggers refer to what situations are likely to cause an escalation in behavior. For example, many students with an EBD also experience academic difficulties. If a student becomes agitated when they need to write, the teacher may shorten assignments or ask

the paraprofessional to scribe for them so that they do not become overly frustrated with the task.

Teachers look for patterns of observable behavior that signal increased agitation—tells. These signs may be changes in facial expressions, rocking, crossing their arms, making fists, or when they stop talking. It can take a large portion of the year to be able to identify and respond to these clues quickly.

> The two months I was there last year, he had no control. I had no clue what was going on …those two months were kind of a write off. And then this year it was probably by mid-October, we figured what some of his triggers were.

Not identifying the triggers and tells means the teacher must deal with highly unpredictable events that can completely interfere with classroom functioning. It places an emotional strain on the other students and school staff. A lack of warning also contributes to teacher's beliefs that the student is different from other children.

> I had one little guy couple of years ago who would just explode violently, and we couldn't generally predict when he was going to explode. The first, I think it was the second week of school, he just turned around and stabbed the child next to him with his scissors. But my [paraprofessional] and I were on opposite ends of the classroom. Neither one of us could get to him fast enough.

Unothering. Teachers often believe that students with an EBD can be "fixed," and other strategies may be rejected if the teacher feels they will not change the student. Fixing the child may also become the focus if the teacher believes they are "not trained" to deal with such students and feels helpless as to how to deal with them. Much of the

effort based on this belief focuses on the medical field, as it is viewed as providing "cures." The teacher advocates for students to be taken to a psychiatrist or be admitted to a hospital. However, even when the child does receive these services, teachers rarely find improvements or useful information.

> Ideally I'd like him to be put into the [hospital] for their longer program, the three to six month program where they could really get his meds sorted out and get a sense of who he is so that when they give you ideas, they're actually useful, you know, cause like to me, three weeks, that's your honeymoon period with a kid … You need them three to six months and then I think, at the [hospital], there's only eight kids in the class.

Medication is often associated with improving children's behavior. Missing medication is questioned as a cause of deterioration in conduct. Similarly, parents adjusting dosages is seen as another reason for increased difficulties. If the child is on medication or parents are considering medication, then teachers see a need for increased communication with the parent to encourage this desired action.

> She plays with meds. That is very frustrating. That's been an ongoing issue for years. So basically what happens is the doctors will get him on meds, they'll be working and she'll be like, "Oh, he doesn't need this anymore." Then she takes him off the meds and then it's a vicious cycle. We usually find out when everything goes haywire and, you know, we'll say like, he needs to have his meds adjusted or not adjusted. They're not working properly. And she'll be like, "Oh well I took him off," or "I took the dose down." Then what usually happens is he

goes off the rail so then she'll like crank the meds up even higher than what the doctor ordered.

Inclusively excluding. Although all participants identified themselves as working in inclusive settings, and the provincial government requires "inclusive education," teachers take steps to exclude students to provide stability to the classroom environment. These acts of segregation are balanced with the tolerance level of parent expectations, and school system rules. Exclusion of students with an EBD primarily occurs in relation to their access to other students and the curriculum.

Targeted exclusion may occur if going to a different setting or class is provoking. For some students, the sensory stimulation of music or physical education's competitiveness may be too provoking. Other times it may just be the teaching style or lack of a relationship with a specialist teacher that makes it difficult for a child to attend a class. In these cases, teachers may choose to involve the child in a different activity. However, as this is usually when the teacher has their preparation time, a less aggravating activity is more likely to be selected if someone else can supervise the child during this time. While this type of exclusion may seem innocuous and a reasonable solution to a problem, it can create friction with parents when they discover that their child will not participate in the Christmas concert because they have not attended music class. One way of managing this issue is to have the child only attend these classes to the extent that it is necessary to participate in the public event.

Teachers will push the child to get the maximum amount of academic work done before behavior "bubbles over." However, students may have almost no level of

tolerance for frustration. In some cases, this may mean allowing them to do no learning tasks, if what the student is doing does not interfere with others.

> It was a win if he just wasn't destroying things, if he were sitting in the corner and just drawing whatever he wanted to draw or flipping through a comic book instead of bothering or harming other children or pulling things off the wall or ripping up other people's work.

Significantly reducing academic demands usually causes other problems. If the student finishes early or is not doing academic work, they often engage in inappropriate activities. So if the student can only tolerate very small amounts of work, it often has to be done somewhere else and limits the student's time in the classroom.

Students in “inclusive settings” in Alberta may be out of the classroom for most of the day. This segregation may be purposefully planned and documented in their individual program plan or may be a spontaneous response to the student's behavior. While this method is highly effective at restoring order to the classroom, it is balanced with the challenge of needing someone to simultaneously supervise the removed student and the rest of the classroom. The strategy also requires the availability of a different physical location for the student.

A paraprofessional assigned to the classroom makes exclusion much more manageable. The paraprofessional may be given the direction and responsibility to remove a child as soon as they observe any behavior escalation. This authority is especially likely if the child responds well to a change in tasks and a movement break, such as going to get a drink of water in the hallway. The teacher may also choose to

leave the paraprofessional to monitor the classroom while going out of the room to talk to the student.

When a student's behavior is extremely dangerous or disruptive, the teacher often has no choice but to physically remove the student from the classroom or evacuate the other students. These are final alternatives when no other options are available, but both may involve considerable costs. Actually participating in physical restraint can be emotionally and physiologically draining. It opens the teacher to accusations of physical abuse from the child, either because of bruises or the child's perception of the incident. Teachers may have access to a school-based team of trained individuals or personal training in managing violent students and physically restraining them. If others are available to physically move a student, this option is preferred because it helps preserve the teacher's relationship with the child.

Teachers may opt to remove the other students instead because of parent wishes, personal beliefs, or the logistics of trying to remove a violent struggling student through a crowd of their peers. Evacuation works more smoothly with preparation and practice. The teacher needs to have a place to take a large group of students and a way to keep them occupied while the student with an EBD calms down. Teachers may have the students rehearse leaving the room when they give a signal and take their reading books with them. Evacuation is an option that is also more efficiently performed if there is an additional adult in the class who can either remain with the student with an EBD or can accompany the other children. If they remain with the student, the teacher needs to determine how they can monitor to ensure safety, while at the same time not provoke

further aggression towards themselves. A class evacuation results in significant loss in instructional time while the student calms down, and the other students process having witnessed a potentially disturbing interaction.

Allying. Teachers work at identifying and developing trusting relationships with useful allies in their environment who can assist them with these complicated needs and strategies. Teachers need to consider who is available and what they have to offer. They also need to communicate to have an effective relationship.

Schools vary by the staff resources that are available to support teachers. Although all public schools receive similar funding throughout the province, districts may choose to prioritize differently. This means that some schools can provide paraprofessionals to work directly with students who have disabilities, and every student identified with a severe EBD is assigned individual support. In other classrooms, the teacher may receive no support or may need to use a teacher's aide to assist several students. A similar inconsistency exists for accessing professional support such as psychologists or occupational therapists. This variability applies not only to the type and quantity of assistance but to the quality and experience as well. The implications have been seen in the implementation in other strategy areas, but also play a role in who teachers will choose to ally with and for what purpose.

A school administrators' value is judged by their understanding of the classroom needs and teacher stress, their ability to provide paraprofessionals and access consultants, and to follow through on commitments. Teachers frequently described school administrators as to whether "they've got your back." This is a description of trust and

support from their supervisor. It refers to the degree teachers will be supported if parents complain or push the boundaries of typical professional practice.

Families present an even wider range of values in-terms of supporting students with an EBD. Teachers often blame parents for not providing the necessary skill development as the child was growing up or providing a nurturing environment, although most are recognized as "doing the best they can."

Student. The first and primary consideration for an ally is the student themselves. The teacher must develop a relationship with the student and create a partnership to work together on behavior and strategies that will allow the classroom to continue to function. The teacher's degree of flexibility in this area is dependent on the characteristics of the teacher, which will be discussed further below. The danger of not developing a partnership is that they will become enemies in an ongoing conflict.

Relationship with the student with an EBD. Many teachers prioritize developing a relationship with the student with an EBD and getting to know them. The initial relationship is essential, but so is maintaining it. Teachers may find that a relationship is the only thing that makes a difference for a child. Some students with an EBD are desperately seeking an emotional connection, and some are very guarded about connecting with anyone. It helps to share details about the teacher's life as it models self-disclosure and helps find commonalities. It involves talking to students individually and getting to know their interests, strengths, likes and dislikes. Teachers will consciously schedule opportunities into the day that allow one-on-one conversations. It can also mean making connections and attending events that the student is involved with in the

community. Students with an EBD, especially those from trauma, are often very attuned to sincerity and honesty. Most children are aware if adults are really interested in listening to them. In contrast, the situation is considered to have reached a critical stage if the opposite result occurs, and the child and teacher actively dislike one another.

Students sense whether the teacher feels they are "a bad kid." Relationship is improved when teachers try to present students with a face-saving way of ending an incident. It also helps when they communicate that "each day is a new day." They are starting fresh every morning and the previous incidents are forgotten.

*"Figuring out" the student and a response***.** When presented with a child who displays behavioral challenges the teacher attempts to "figure out" the student's motivations and what will change their conduct. The choice of strategy is often dependent on a dichotomous decision. If the teacher believes the student is "choosing" or "manipulating," they will employ a reward or punishment. If they believe the child's behavior is a natural result of their circumstances or an uncontrollable response, they will promote self-regulation. This dichotomy can be seen in the opposing views of these two teachers.

> The problem that I keep having is this little boy has figured out, have a massive blow up, get what I want, and it works every single time.
>
> I've worked with other just behavior kids before. I think that what made this student different is that he had lost his mom…I am also a mother, so I just recognized more a hurting kid, which I have found much easier to deal with than the kids who seem to be just a dick, like it's different.

If the teacher is unsuccessful with strategies and the situation continues to deteriorate, it creates feelings of helplessness for the teacher. The perception of their own ineffectiveness further drains the teacher's energy to deal with the situation. The characteristics of students with an EBD, such as defiance and aggressiveness, predispose them to be seen as a threat to the teacher. Many of these students have been victims themselves and are very adept at identifying weaknesses in others, such as threatening to punch a pregnant teacher in the stomach. As a result, it is very easy for the teacher to personalize the student's behavior. Expressions of remorse by the child decrease the amount of personalization felt by the teacher.

> I said, we need to sit up honey. Cause he was taking up the whole carpet space… "You know, honey, you need to sit up." And he stood up and he looked at me and he said, "everybody says, you're nice, but you nothing, but [a] fuck'n bitch," right in my face. Then he walked out and then all the kids went "oh" and I went, "well, you know what? He didn't mean that he's just mad right now. He's mad, sad. So it's okay." And then he burst into tears at the door and said," I'm really sorry. I actually didn't mean that. I just didn't want to do what you asked."

Table 4

Perceptions and Feelings in Relation to Strategy Choice

	Enemy	Ally
Perception and feelings	Helplessness	Success
	Personalize	Empathy
	Expectation of compliance	Expectation of challenges
	Student manipulating	Student reacting
Choice of strategy	Punishment	Reward
	Exclusion	Relationship
	Fixing the student	Regulation

Table 4 shows the influence of the student being an enemy or ally and tendency for choice of strategy. However, teachers' responses may fluctuate depending upon the specific pressures of the moment. Some responses of the teacher may be spontaneous, and they may quickly realize that they are ineffective, for instance, a teacher may catch themselves yelling or chasing a child around the room. Other times, approaches may be used in a more trial-and-error fashion, where they chose to grab onto a strategy or see a serendipitous opportunity and try it to see if it will work. If it improves the behavior, they will continue. If not, they may quickly move on to something else.

All teachers may allow the "natural consequences" of a child's actions to unfold to help the child learn from their behavior, however, there is a greater tendency to use punitive punishment if the teacher feels the actions are deliberately being done to get a reaction. This choice is particularly true if the teacher personalizes the child's actions as being designed to make them miserable. A negative cycle can develop where the teacher

reacts in a hostile manner to the child, which then results in more misbehavior and more personalization of the situation.

Teachers may abandon strategies if the child begins to do much better and feels that they no longer need that support. The partnership may be forgotten. This can cause some difficulties due to the waxing and waning of the behavior symptoms. Teachers are sometimes worried that behavior is suddenly regressing, or they may have reassigned the paraprofessional to support other students and feel frustrated that the student is again requiring attention. As a result, they may choose a harsher response to try to quickly quell the sudden change, rather than the previously successful approaches.

Paraprofessionals. Paraprofessional support is highly valued in managing the competing demands in a classroom. Teacher's aides are natural allies of the teacher to some degree by virtue of struggling with the same student. However, the degree that each will support the other is determined by communication, and understanding and alignment of a plan.

The quality and value of these aides can vary considerably, from those who are experienced teachers to individuals with only a high school education. Less formal training is more likely to be the case in rural settings. However, many paraprofessionals may receive coaching or training once they are on the job.

Paraprofessionals are often given significant autonomy in daily actions to help manage the students with an EBD. They can help to coregulate the student when they are triggered. They encourage the student to use strategies or tools to help their behavior.

As mentioned, a paraprofessional is often an essential component if the teacher wants to separate a child from the rest of the class even within the room.

Teaching is often a solitary endeavor but adding a teacher's aide turns the practice into a team activity. Teachers do not receive training in university on how to be a team leader. It can often be daunting when the paraprofessional is significantly older and with years of experience. However, teachers are most successful when they can regularly communicate their expectations and reflect on incidents and strategies. Teachers recognize they are the decision-makers, but understand that there needs to be an open and honest partnership that functions "seamlessly" to maintain the classroom functioning. It can be difficult if the teacher and paraprofessionals have different philosophies about how to deal with students. Teacher's aides who engage in power struggles with a student may create more work for a teacher who must then intervene and mediate.

An example of optimal functioning can be observed when teacher and paraprofessional "tag out." This is the process of a smooth trade-off between the paraprofessional and teacher when the teacher needs to deal directly with a student to reinforce expectations, and the aide needs to take over caring for the rest of the class. It also occurs when someone relieves the other if they are having trouble controlling their emotions. This need is often communicated only through nonverbals.

> We call that tag out and sometimes when we're in the middle of deescalating a situation, she'll come over and just tap me on the shoulder and go "tag" and then I'm out and I'll do the same to her. Cause sometimes when you're in the moment, you don't realize that you're escalated. So it's about just getting a fresh face and

> sometimes the munchkins with exceptionalities are mad at you, right? Maybe because you're the one that told them to do something or not to do something. So you might be that trigger without even knowing that you are. So, it's about taking help in those situations and giving the child and yourself a breather.

Administrators. As can be seen by the various strategies, the teacher benefits or requires the cooperation and coordination of those in charge of the school. Efforts must be taken to recruit school administrators as allies. Generally the principal, but sometimes the vice-principal may be courted, depending how duties at the school are structured, if the teacher has a better relationship with one of them, or if one seems more sympathetic to the situation. Regardless of whom the teacher selects, it is easier if the administrator "has your back."

Administrators control many of the school resources such as the assignment of paraprofessionals. They may also be the gatekeepers to access specialists. Additionally, segregation requires administrator support if a separate space is being created in the school, if the teacher wants the student suspended from school, or if there is no one else to supervise the student when they are not in the classroom. Employing this option or not may mean tipping the balance in the classroom and result in complaints to the school administration about the teacher (see Figure 5).

More inclusion preferred

More learning preferred

	Inclusion	Segregation
Learning (including safe environment).	Ideal state. All stakeholders are happy.	Parents of student with EBD are often unhappy. System leaders may not approve. Requires school administrator support.
No Learning	The majority of parents are unhappy, Requires school administrator support.	Nobody is happy. The teacher is not fulfilling major responsibilities.

Figure 5. Effects of changes in inclusion or learning.

If the administrator is reluctant or does not "have their back," teachers must "make enough noise" or "wear them down." The teacher may also call the principal to their room or send the student to the office, so the administrator experiences the child at their most extreme. Pressure may be exerted on the principal if the teacher is replacing another person who is on a medical leave because of the situation. Teachers know that the threat of a second educator abandoning a classroom will cause unwanted attention for the principal from parents and central office supervisors.

Parents of typical students may be subtly directed to put pressure on the principal to provide a teacher with more resources or influence the boundaries of inclusion. Professional standards do not permit a teacher to actively recruit parent support in this way. However, if a parent complains about the classroom, a teacher may highlight the lack of support in the classroom and identify the principal as the person who makes these decisions in the school.

> Parents would get pissed off because they're like, “why doesn't he have his own EA [paraprofessional]? Why doesn't he have somebody that helps him with every minute of every day? Because Ms. X is one person.” So basically what they did was complained to the principal and the principal finally got the behavior specialist and then we got an EA as well.

Teacher aides may be changed during the year if there are conflicts with the students or they seem to lack the necessary skills, but changing teachers is rare. Teachers themselves will not ask administrators to move the child to a different classroom because that would be seen as passing on problems to a colleague and hurt peer relations. However, they may push for the student’s permanent transfer out of the school. This is less personally threatening for the teacher because it does not imply someone else has the skills that they lack. On rare occasions when students are moved to a different classroom after the start of the year, it is because a new classroom is created due to increased enrollment, or because two students with an EBD are unexpectedly escalating each other.

Communication with administrators is especially important as there is often a disconnect between teachers’ expectation and administrators’ responses. Teachers lose control of a situation when they send a student to the office. Teachers may send a student to the office because they have reached their limit, expecting the student to be sent home, only to have them return to the classroom. The opposite may occur when the teacher just wants the student to have a brief break and then feels the relationship with the student has been damaged because the principal suspended them. Administrators also need to build their own relationships with students, but these efforts may further frustrate teachers.

> He would go to the principal's office and get candy from the principal because that was like the, that was like the type of learning environment/school that they were. So like she was very understanding of like the types of home lives that kids have. And like that was kind of like her whole school motto is just like "every child has a chance" and like "you just need to listen to that chance." But like sometimes I found it like backfired because basically X would be really bad and then he would go to the office and come back with a handful of candy. And so I was like, "Oh, awesome. You just like pinched my hand in the door. But you got candy now. So that's great."

In especially desperate circumstances, teachers may exceed their authority in an attempt to prevent a completely unbalanced situation. This may include calling parents to come and get students during the day (Alberta legislation limits this power to principals), insisting that students not return until they have been medicated by a doctor (a decision controlled by parents), or forcefully urging parents to transfer to a segregated program (a central office and/or parental decision). Principals may passively allow such behavior, particularly if they have no better alternatives to offer.

Families. Parents and guardians tend to respond in four ways, although their responses may vary depending on circumstances. The perceived response to the teacher will determine whether they are actively recruited as allies.

1. Parents may be highly supportive of the teacher and want to know about what is happening at school. Those willing to talk to their children at home, enforce consequences based on school behavior, take their children to medical

appointments, and agree to medication are viewed as collaborative. Teachers will actively communicate with these parents and work to align their plans.

2. Some parents are considered a neutral influence. They either make themselves challenging to communicate with or agree to actions but do not follow through. Teachers may attempt some initial communication, but these taper off as the effort is not rewarded.
3. A third group is actively hostile towards the teacher and blame them for their child's problems at school. These parents are sometimes understood to feel like they are being blamed and turning things around in avoidance. This can be particularly frustrating if they deny any behavioral issues, but the teacher has observed them struggling with their child. Teachers often avoid communication with these parents or request administrator's assistance.
4. The final group are those who are known or suspected of being abusive to their children. These parents may threaten and intimidate school staff as well. Teachers fulfill their legal obligation to report child abuse to government offices. However, with physical abuse, and particularly emotional abuse, teachers often feel like Child and Family Services does not respond. Because of fear of repercussions to the child, they chose only to report the most extreme behaviors or those that involve an elevated action.

Teachers may try to develop relationships with neutral and blaming parents by being nonjudgmental. They may also try to find common bonds and show understanding if they have experiences as a single parent or the parent of a student with disabilities.

Teachers can show they are open to communication if the parent has any concerns or even if they want to talk about their frustrations.

Regardless of the type of parent, the likelihood of conversation increases if the teacher worries that the student will inaccurately describe events from school. This communication happens proactively to prevent the parent from becoming hostile or more hostile. This may involve phoning the parent before the child goes home or having the child phone and explain the incident in the teacher's presence.

Specialists. While consultants are envisioned to be a source of new strategies, teachers appreciate them for just being someone to whom they can share and reflect. They can reinforce that teachers are doing the correct things (Ashworth, Demkowicz, Lendrum, & Frearson, 2018). Specialists can reassure teachers they are not to blame, and the less teachers blame themselves (or worry others will blame them), the more open they are to having other adults come into their classrooms to provide support.

Many specialist supports are only available for very brief consultations, which is too infrequent to be helpful. Unless a specific time has been set aside, they may spend more time talking to the paraprofessional than the teacher who is looking after the class. There are also frequent changes in external support personnel, and many people move to a new position before trusting relationships can be formed. Additionally, the teacher often has no choice of what professionals they access, and the quality and experience can vary greatly. As time and energy are limited, teachers quickly evaluate the degree a consultant is likely to be helpful.

> I would just nod and smile. Cause that's another conversation that I don't have time for. Like, you know, either you're here to help or thanks for your suggestions, move along.

Typical students. Other students in the classroom can be trained or may volunteer to support the student with an EBD. They can be encouraged to ignore misbehavior so that their response is not reinforcing. Students who are empathetic and have known the student with an EBD for several years may help the teacher understand the reason for an escalation or provide ways of supporting and solving the issue.

In other cases, empathy and understanding must be developed. Children may be anxious or avoid the student with an EBD because they are nervous about aggressive outbursts or controlling behavior during play. However, ostracizing or conflicts can lead to explosive escalations. Teachers try to explain.

> We had a big class meeting where we came back from lunch and didn't shy away from it and said that was really scary and that was not okay… And we're just doing our best to keep everybody safe and calm. And you should know that S gave us a really hard time, but it is also because he's having a really hard time [inaudible] so they could have a little empathy about it. And then yeah, interesting things came out when they shared it. They just wanted to talk about what they saw and heard and we just held space for them to be able to share about that.

> I told the class, I was like, "you know, and sometimes people have different feelings, and everybody has different feelings. The way that T deals with his feelings is not the same as yours or yours, it's just he's having a hard time. Sometimes when people come from different homes, like their feelings are different as well."…They would come up to me too with like their own personal questions like, "Oh is like, is T okay? Like is he going to be fine?" And I said, "yeah, he's fine. He's just having a hard time like organizing his emotions." Cause like I taught a whole unit on like emotions and feelings and so I thought that would be like a good thing to do.

Maintaining a learning environment requires emotional safety. Debriefing with students is particularly vital after incidents in which a student has needed to be physically restrained by staff or has been aggressive to adults. Teachers have open communication about how the students feel so that they can address specific fears. As one teacher said, "after watching the principal get beat-up, who's safe?" However, students have less anxiety if they know that there is a plan to protect everyone.

Colleagues. Teachers often find offers of support when their peers have observed them dealing with a particularly challenging student. Teachers who have previously taught the student and have a good relationship may allow them to come and visit their classrooms when they need a break. Teachers may offer their room as a place to send a class when there is an evacuation. Occasionally teachers will have a paraprofessional that is not fully utilized and volunteer to "send" the teacher's aide to another classroom.

Colleagues are also a source of support and ideas. The degree of collaboration is dependent on personal relationships and the culture of the school. In some schools, there is a designated schedule for discussion and an expectation of group problem-solving. Other times teachers may informally seek support during breaks or after school. The convenience of access often makes other teachers the first source of support that teachers seek out.

Advice is particularly valued if teachers have taught the student in previous years or knows the family. However, the person may only be able to offer a wish of "good luck." While this sympathy is appreciated, it can also be disheartening if they only have "horror stories" to share. Hearing the situation is considered hopeless does not increase a teacher's emotional energy.

Energy and resource conservation. The degree of emotional drain is dependent on how teachers interpret and perceive the demands placed on them and is a function of their background. These characteristics are discussed to understand how they prioritize their finite energy and resources. Many teachers find the demands so taxing that they have no energy left to consider or implement other options. Teachers may cry on the way to work and the way home, or not even have the energy to talk to their spouse in the evening. Often it is not the lack of desire and the intention to act, but the lack of time. As one teacher said, "it's a blur, your whole day is a blur and sometimes your whole week is a blur."

Characteristics of the teacher. The teacher's expectations, experience, and personal circumstances influence their appraisal, knowledge, and energy (Delorey, 2020).

Teachers who have experienced trauma or had behavioral issues as children view students with an EBD differently than those who have not. Individuals who have taught in different schools or at a different point in their career are also likely to vary in evaluating classroom circumstances (Ritter, Wehner, Lohaus, & Krämer, 2019).

Teacher expectations and knowledge. The teacher's expectation for the learning environment will determine the classroom conditions they try to create. The teacher's prior experiences help shape their beliefs about acceptable student behavior. The acceptance of a wide range of students' behaviors is more likely to be present if the teacher has previous experiences with students with an EBD, such as a sibling with a disability or teaching in an inner-city school.

Background influences how the teacher self-evaluates their actions and progress. Teaching is often a time consuming and solitary activity with little opportunity for reflection or feedback based on observation. This is particularly difficult for those new to the profession who do not have a range of experience to provide perspective when they have a negative experience with a student. As a result, teacher's self-evaluations may range from entirely blaming themselves to "it ain't me."

Background also affects the teacher's breadth and range of strategies. Teachers talk about developing a "bag of tricks" from which they can draw when they encounter difficulties with students. This knowledge comes from personal experiences, observation of others, conversations with peers, and training.

Teachers also adjust their expectations for their classroom based on the feedback they receive from others. Teachers receive judgmental messages from their

administrators, peers, and parents about how well they are perceived as meeting these other people's perceptions of an appropriate learning environment.

Personal circumstances. Teachers strive to keep their professional and personal lives separate, but the two invariably affect each other. Teachers have less energy to devout when they have problems with their marriage or are experiencing health problems. They may also feel profession related stress when they read "teacher bashing" posts on social media or when there are educational funding cutbacks (as was occurring at the start of this study).

Fluctuating needs of the student with an EBD. Teachers report feeling a vast range of emotions over the course of a year when working with a student with an EBD. A teacher may report that they are doing all right one day and feel like quitting the next. Part of this is due to the nature of mental illness for which symptoms can wax and wane. There are some weeks with many emotional outbursts and then periods of no incidents. Similarly, the effectiveness of strategies can change or differ in effectiveness over time.

Even when events happen regularly, there is an element of unpredictability. For a student who has daily outbursts, it is wondering when in the day the event will occur. Teachers describe being "constantly on edge," "walking on eggshells," "always on guard," or "tip toeing around" the student. Constantly being alert and intervening at the slightest sign of trouble takes an emotional toll. Teachers are also concerned about the emotional stress on typical students.

Unfairness. Teachers also feel dissonance between meeting the needs of the student with EBD and all the rest of the students in their classroom. As mentioned, when

describing the broader context, classroom composition can often be very complex, particularly in urban areas where classes can have most students who are English language learners or who come from low socioeconomic households. A student with uncontrolled diabetes may need blood tests and monitoring at fixed intervals, while the teacher is trying to deal with a student with EBD who has needs that must be addressed at random moments. The student with an EBD is prioritized for attention before other students. Teachers struggle with the fairness of investing so much energy and resources to specific students at the expense of others.

When teachers feel conflict with selecting segregation to maintain balance, they focus on the issue of unfairness. The justification for limiting the inclusion of students with an EBD are usually preceded by the phrase, "I've got twenty other students …" Unfairness is also seen in the discrepancy between their current situation and their image of teaching as a profession.

> I would really struggle with the fact that like at work I'd get like sworn at and called names and get bit and get spit on and get scratched and punched and kicked and whatever…Sometimes you don't want to, you don't want to go to work and I can't say I ever imagined being like, I'm going to have a job where I get sworn at every day and spit on and kicked and stuff.

Empathy and understanding. In contrast, energy for weighting the balance of effort toward the student with an EBD usually comes from empathizing. They recognize that children had often experienced or were currently experiencing stressful and traumatic situations. They describe not being able to imagine what life has been like for the child.

Meltdowns are understood to be just as traumatic for the EBD child as everyone else involved. One teacher commented:

> We can't fail again. Like we need to get this right because it destroys that little boy a little more every time this happens, you know, because usually after these massive outbursts, he's pretty devastated by it.

Others derive energy from reflecting on the joy of success. Experienced teacher may feel rewarded by having students demonstrate the strength of their relationship by coming back to visit them. Seeing success and improvement gives teachers additional emotional energy to continue their work.

> The funny thing is this being the hardest class that I've ever had to manage in my career. I also put in the most work that I ever had in my career and into this classroom. And with the added effort that I put in when I started to see reward from it, as a result of that, it made me want to keep doing it because I was so invested and I was invested emotionally into it. So I really threw myself into this particular position. I mean, I had been in difficult classes before. I couldn't wait for the school year to be over, but, this one I really tackled it head on. Every little success was a major good positive reinforcement for me, but it really required an incredible amount of commitment. I mean one where I feel like it goes above and beyond what most teachers would have to do or should have to do. I found it to be really exhausting, but I did feel like I was making a difference and that was what made me continue.

For many, the focus that keeps them at work is knowing that it is a time-limited situation. Although teachers frequently express positive feelings about their students with an EBD, almost none want to continue to be their teacher the following year. They may be sticking with the job with the belief that the next year will be better with a different class. For others, it may be getting a permanent teaching certificate for teachers who are new to the profession (which requires positive administrative evaluations for two different years) or getting an ongoing contract with a school division.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to discover a grounded theory of how teachers navigate challenges and select strategies when they include a student with an EBD in a general education classroom. The results revealed a theory of striving for homeostasis that explains how teachers resolve the problem of including a student with an EBD and managing other classroom demands (Figure 6). Teachers have multiple demands to consider when allocating their limited resources and energy, including both work and personal stresses. These demands are dynamic and ever changing, which requires continual decisions about how and where to deploy resources and energy. Personality, background, teaching experiences, and feedback from others influence the teacher's expectations for the classroom functioning and the degree of inclusion. The expectations about whether they are adequately meeting these demands may fluctuate, particularly based on the feedback they receive from administrators, peers, parents, and students.

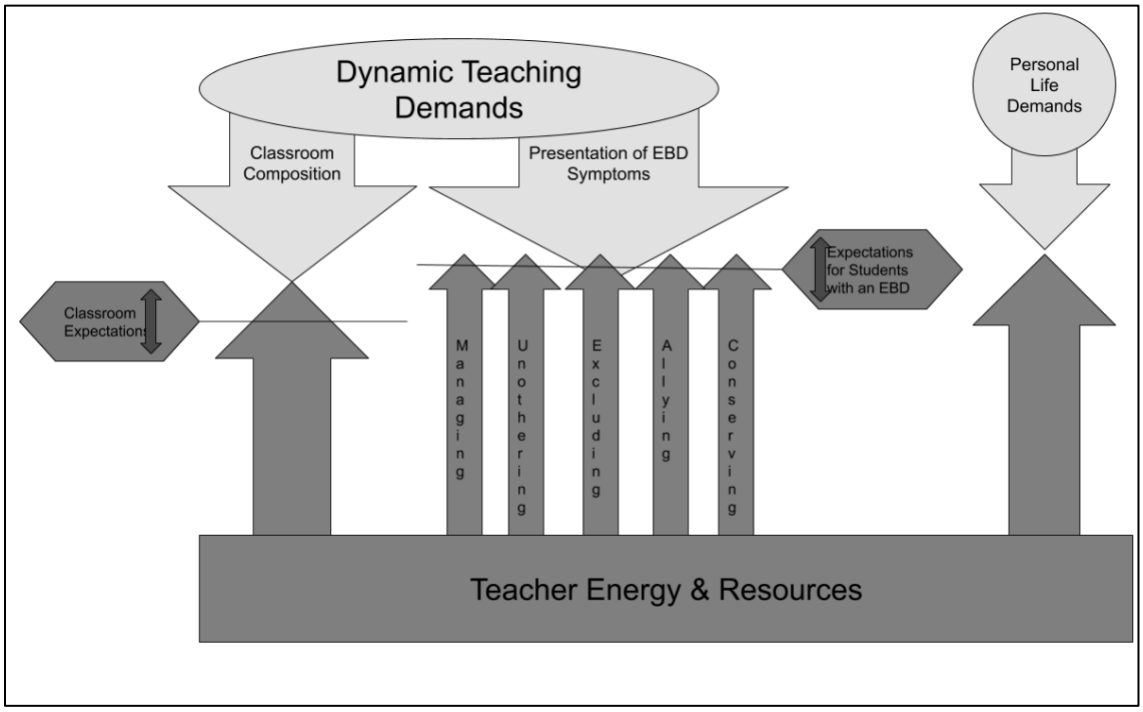

Figure 6. The theory of striving for homeostasis.

Teachers use management strategies for all students, including those with an EBD. However, the symptoms of an EBD can be so frequent or severe that they interfere with classroom functioning. If the classroom functioning expectations fall below the level the teacher considers acceptable, they move to other means to maintain optimal functioning in the classroom. These strategies include trying to find ways to fix the student so they are not "other" than a typical student, excluding the student with an EBD, finding allies to reduce the demands or support the needs, and conserving their resources and energy. Actions are chosen based on the quality and availability of the required resources, the teacher's energy level to enact the strategy, and the degree of success observed.

The results of the study imply directions for future research. The findings also suggest implications for changes in practice amongst those who seek to support teachers and support a greater degree of inclusive education. The next chapter will further explore these propositions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The first chapters of this dissertation outlined the moral and pedagogical arguments for greater inclusion. As a result of these arguments and general societal opposition to segregation, governments have legislated inclusive education (Alberta Education, 2016b; Odom et al., 2011). Although there have been policy changes, students with an EBD continue to have particularly poor academic outcomes, despite generally typical intellectual ability (Bradley et al., 2008; Goodman et al., 2014; Malmqvist, 2016). In addition, teachers find this an extremely difficult group of students to include in the classroom and experience significant stress in managing the challenges of inclusion (Gidlund & Boström, 2017; Gilmour & Wehby, 2020; Wood et al., 2014).

Studies have explored various support methods for teachers, such as professional development, consultation, and coaching (Gable et al., 2012; Massé, Couture, Levesque, & Bégin, 2013; Stormont et al., 2015). While these are usually received quite positively by teachers, there is a significant "research to practice gap" (State, Simonsen, Hirn, & Wills, 2019). Previous research has revealed evidence-based strategies, but implementation has often had limited success in real-world settings, where teachers often are unaware of these techniques, fail to apply strategies with fidelity, or stop using proven techniques once support is withdrawn (Kamps et al., 2015; Long et al., 2016; Reinke et al., 2013).

The present study was designed to answer the call for a more in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions by providing clarity on their problem conceptualization and

attempts to resolve the most significant challenges regarding students with an EBD (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016; Harrison, Soares, & Joyce, 2019; Newman & Clare, 2016; Sheridan & Erchul, 2014; Stormont et al., 2015). Classic grounded theory was used as the research methodology to frame and analyze interviews with Alberta elementary teachers within inclusive classrooms to answer the following questions.

RQ1: What theory explains teachers' perceptions of support related to the inclusion of students with an emotional/behavioral disorder?

RQ2: What theory explains teachers' choices of strategies and changes in their approach to working with students who have an emotional/behavioral disorder?

A theory of striving for homeostasis emerged that answers these two questions. The theory explains that teachers are engaged in an ongoing attempt to balance all students' needs in their classroom and maintain optimum functioning. The specific mechanisms of striving for homeostasis are explained below and compared and contrasted with the existing literature. This chapter also includes a discussion of the limitations of the present study. The paper concludes with a discussion of recommendations for future research, as well as pragmatic and theoretical implications of the findings.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study provides further support for the conceptualization of schools as complex adaptive systems (Fidan, 2017; Hawkins & James, 2018). It exemplifies how individuals in one part of the system resolve their primary challenges in relation to the

inputs and demands from other parts of the larger organization. It also demonstrates how system-level policy decisions are implemented at the classroom level and supports arguments for exploring all levels of the educational system in order to understand practice (Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2014).

These results support previous assertions that inclusive education research needs to address the practical issues of implementation (Amor et al., 2018; Materechera, 2020; Slee, 2007). Regardless of the school system's philosophical orientation, there is a disconnection between educational policy on inclusive education and the application of that policy in practice, which further validates the conceptualization of inclusion of students with an EBD as a wicked problem (Armstrong, 2017, 2018). Teachers encounter many practical struggles when including students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006; Tiwari et al., 2015). This study provides an extension to these previous studies by more specifically focusing on these challenges as they apply to students with an EBD.

The theory of striving for homeostasis explains how teachers resolve meeting classroom demands and the often competing or contradictory demands of students with an EBD. A teacher's level of expectation for successfully meeting these needs is unique to the individual and varies based on experience and the feedback that the teacher receives. Actions taken to maintain balance include managing, unothering, inclusively excluding, recruiting allies, and conserving energy and resources. These aspects of the model are explored below in relation to previous research.

Managing

A plethora of research indicates the value of processes that teachers use to create classroom structure and organization (Gettinger & Kohler, 2013). The use of evidence-based, quality classroom management improves all students' academic outcomes, including those with an EBD (Garwood, Vernon-Feagans, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2017). The present study reinforces the notion that while classroom management may not be sufficient to deal with all challenging students, it is a necessary component.

However, the present study highlighted the unique nature of all students and their reactions. Students with an EBD may react differently than typical students to management strategies. Their reactions may also vary depending upon the day or circumstances. Teachers described a need to identify a student's specific emotional triggers and read the nonverbal "tells" that the child was emotionally escalating.

Unothering

Not surprisingly, given previous research, this study found that when teachers experienced difficulty managing students' behavior, they conceptualized them as "other" than typical students (Lalvani, 2013; Pérez-Parreño & Padilla-Petry, 2018). The findings extended this previous research by describing how teachers may attempt to "unother" students with an EBD. The theory that emerged demonstrated a strategy that can involve increased and persuasive communication with parents to convince them of the necessity of different schooling, hospitalization, and pharmaceutical treatment.

This study's findings also extend previous research by presenting a model that explains how teachers might vacillate between diametrically opposing views (Stanforth & Rose, 2020). Nash, Schlösser, and Scarr (2015) reported that most teachers in their investigation believed that EBD children had control over their behavior. While children with an EBD may be seen as being other than typical children, they can, at the same time, be expected to exercise and control their behavior to the same degree expected of their classmates. This paradox can be understood as a function of the teacher's need to justify strategies to preserve classroom functioning.

Inclusively Excluding

The literature indicates numerous definitions and dimensions of inclusion (Loreman, Forlin, Chambers, et al., 2014). Power and Taylor (2020) identified hidden forms of exclusion that occur in supposedly inclusive systems. The current findings provide additional description of subtle actions of exclusion within the Alberta school system.

Teachers in this study found paraprofessional support to be very helpful. However, the findings also align with Giangreco's (2010, 2013) arguments regarding the adverse effects of paraprofessional support on inclusion. While additional adults can help address teacher and pupil needs, the presence of these adults also means that a student can be more easily isolated from other students or removed from the classroom.

A lack of academic success for students with disabilities in inclusive settings has been tied to teachers' beliefs about these students' potential and resulting expectations and engagement in learning (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Jordan et al., 2010). While this

may be the case for students with other types of disabilities, this study's findings suggest a stronger relationship to how the teacher believes the academic tasks or classroom activities will agitate a student with an EBD. Many students with behavioral challenges may not receive the full curriculum to avoid any type of frustration that could trigger an incident.

Research has been generally positive about the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities, suggesting few negative, and possibly positive results for typical students (Huber et al., 2001; Kalambouka et al., 2007; McDonnell et al., 2003). However, recent research has found that the inclusion of students with an EBD may not be benign (Fletcher, 2010; Gottfried et al., 2016; Gottfried & Harven, 2014). There has also been criticism of previous studies lacking adequate rigor to make definitive statements about these effects (Dell'Anna, Pellegrini, & Ianes, 2019). Teachers have an underlying fear of their classroom slipping into uncontrollable chaos (Aas, 2019). In many cases, teachers in the present study felt that exclusion was the only alternative in the best interests of their other students.

Allying

Botha and Kourkoutas (2015) argued for a coordinated partnership of all stakeholders who support students with an EBD. The present study extended these findings by illuminating some of the challenges that teachers encounter in creating collaborative and goal-aligned relationships.

The relationship between student and teacher affects the way that children behave. Students with an EBD are likely to respond aggressively when they perceive rejection or

unfairness (de Leeuw et al., 2018; Pereira & Lavoie, 2018). Teachers in the present study identified the importance of developing a positive relationship and strategies that could be employed to achieve this goal. Similarly, Ross Greene (2009) argued that it is often impossible to punish some students into behaving correctly. Teacher interviews described using aspects of Greene's collaborative problem solving in an attempt to find options that would meet both their needs and those of their students.

Administrators have been identified as having a strong influence on teachers' inclusive practices (Cancio et al., 2013a). Comments of being in a supportive environment in the present study were strongly correlated with perceptions of support and quality of communication with administrators. The current results support previous research that found that teachers wanted administrators to involve them in the discipline process for students with an EBD (Prather-Jones, 2011). Alignment was also found for previous results suggesting that teachers value administrators who demonstrate appreciation and trust (Cancio et al., 2013b). The present study extends these findings to explain that teachers may subvert typical administrative processes when these factors are not present or may create alternative options that do not involve the school's administration.

Teachers reported feeling much better able to deal with severe behavioral difficulties when there was another adult in the classroom. When a paraprofessional was not available, efforts were taken by teachers to lobby the school administration to provide such assistance. When paraprofessionals were present in the classroom, they frequently figured into teachers' strategies that allowed additional management or redirection of

students with an EBD. Teacher aides were also able to support exclusion of the student if the severity of issues escalated. Teachers described paraprofessionals as especially valued in providing balance when their roles and expectations were clearly understood, when they were responsive to the teacher's preferences for classroom functioning, and could read their nonverbal communications.

Previous research has promoted parent participation in supporting students with disabilities (Buchanan & Clark, 2017). Government documents also direct schools to involve students' families as partners in their education (Alberta Learning, 2003). However, teachers in the present study indicated that the degree to which they communicated and collaborated with parents was dependent on their perceptions of the parent's responsibility for the child's difficulties and the parent's ability to be helpful. Little contact was attempted if teachers felt that the parent was to blame for behavior problems, or if the parent was struggling and just "doing the best they can."

Conserving Energy and Resources

Teaching involves "emotional labor" (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). Teachers invest significant energy and effort into supporting the success of all their students (Mäkinen, 2013). However, there is a struggle and drain on teachers when they feel responsible but are unsure how to support students, as is often the case for those with an EBD (Ekornes, 2017; Gidlund & Boström, 2017). The present study's results expand on the findings of Adera and Bullock (2010) relating to the stress that teachers can feel in maintaining classroom safety when working with violent and aggressive children.

Teachers suffer negative emotional consequences when they are unsuccessful in managing classroom challenges (Fernet et al., 2012; McCormick & Barnett, 2011). They are likely to blame themselves and experience reduced efficacy when their interventions do not change behavior (Gidlund & Boström, 2017). The current findings offer greater detail on these situations and indicate how such feelings are likely to influence and direct the teacher's choice of strategies and coping.

The numerous demands placed on teachers throughout the day and the "blur" of activities that the teachers in this study described may also contribute to the adoption and maintenance of strategies. Recent research suggests that individuals may first be attracted to an action based on the perceived reward but then make decisions about actual follow through based on the amount of effort (Ludwiczak, Osmana, & Jahanshahi, 2020). Teachers may have good intentions and wish to help their students but have no time or energy to act.

The availability of resources has been tied to teachers' perceptions of inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011; Monsen et al., 2014). This study described ways that teachers may negotiate or lobby for additional resources. It also explained ways that teachers may work with each other to share and supplement supports when there are gaps in the official structures. Peers may offer their classrooms as a space for a student to take a break from their regular classroom or as a refuge for an entire class if they need to evacuate a room. Colleagues were also recognized as a conveniently accessible source of emotional support and strategies. There is value in teachers reflecting upon and discussing classroom challenges (Green et al., 2012; Naraian et al.,

2012; Schley et al., 2017). Educators would like more time to discuss students and possible alternatives (Tamworth, 2013). The experiences of teachers in the present study were consistent with previous findings.

Other educators in a school were often viewed as having the most realistic understanding of what the teacher was experiencing. Teachers often feel that others do not understand the challenges and uniqueness of their classrooms. Similar to the results reported by Shernoff et al. (2017), teachers in this study valued outside consultants, but only to the degree that they understood the nuances of specific students and their classrooms. The present study provided some insight into the consultation relationships that Newman et al. (2016) argued needed to be explored through qualitative study. The current findings expand the understanding of these issues by suggesting that a teacher's unwillingness to engage may be a factor of extreme stress and limited energy. This limited energy may even reduce the likelihood that they will share the specific reasons for their rejection of collaborative assistance.

Teacher Expectations

The results of this study reinforced the connection between beliefs regarding students with an EBD and the role of a teacher in a general education classroom (Gidlund, 2017, 2018a; Specht et al., 2016). Some teachers have a mission and desire to help troubled children (Prather-Jones, 2010). The present study found both factors present in Alberta teachers and resulted in different strategy choices depending upon the individual's conceptualization of what it meant to be a teacher and what variety of students they expected in a classroom.

Teacher goals for their classroom and the inclusion of students with an EBD were fluctuating standards. Students with mental health issues may experience a worsening of symptoms despite a teacher's best efforts. Teachers may receive feedback from other parents or administrators about the other students in the classroom. The individual may experience stress or illness in their personal life. These types of ever-changing variables mean the teacher needs to continually determine and adjust their expectations. Strategies are then implemented using the limited resources and energy to meet the optimum functioning level and maintain the classroom homeostasis.

Many studies have explored teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding inclusion, including those with an EBD (Armstrong, 2013; Subban & Mahlo, 2016). Previous studies have identified the influence of experience and training (Lohrmann & Bambara, 2006; Sokal & Sharma, 2017). However, the present study suggests negative experiences involving extreme and highly stressful incidents could negatively affect teacher's predispositions (Armstrong, 2013; Chang, 2013). It offers an explanation of why those teachers who maintain unwavering lofty expectations for their students also experience the highest rates of burnout (Stormont et al., 2015). It can be extremely stressful for teachers when there is dissonance between their professional identity and their actions to maintain classroom functioning.

Limitations

There are some limitations produced by the study design and circumstances occurring during the data gathering process. Although qualitative grounded studies do not endeavor to obtain a random sample of the population, a biased group could still

influence the results. Recruitment of voluntary participants through one form of social media could have resulted in interviewing only those with specific characteristics. Similarly, choosing to focus on elementary teachers in Alberta, could suggest conclusions that are not applicable to other populations of students.

The Covid-19 pandemic also may have influenced the results of the study. The study design had proposed interviewing teachers who were actively dealing with students. As a result of school closures, most participants were describing what they remembered doing, rather than what they were currently doing. While the study design meant there was going to be some degree of retrospection, the gap in direct contact may have created greater memory distortions.

This decision to focus on current teachers also predisposed the study and limited the theory to teachers who were successful in the inclusion of students with an EBD. Situations in which the student was permanently removed from the inclusive setting or where teachers chose to remove themselves from this type of assignment were not included in the study. While the presented theory may still be useful in understanding these unsuccessful scenarios, different mechanisms could be operating that may require further elaboration beyond this study's findings.

Recommendations

The primary direction for further study can be divided into three areas of focus. Firstly, further investigation needs to consider how we support teachers to provide the best program for all students. Consideration should be given to support structures throughout the system. While this study focused on teachers, further information is

required about other key stakeholders' experiences and how they can function better as a cohesive team. Secondly, research needs to continue to provide directions for teacher training, professional development, and support positions. Theoretical ideas need to be understood and integrated into the realities of daily teaching experiences. Finally, inclusive research and policy needs to have methods of more clearly defining and measuring inclusive education and may require more granular analysis of disability subgroups.

As mentioned previously, the literature examined in Chapter 2 included a review of the moral and social justice arguments in favor of inclusion for those with disabilities (Artiles & Kozleski, 2016; Boyle & Anderson, 2020; Slee, 2001). Adverse academic and social outcomes were described for most students identified with an EBD (Gage et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2019). Negative emotional consequences were also detailed for teachers who struggle with teaching and including this group of students (Adera & Bullock, 2010; Martfeld, 2015). The recommendations and implications discussed below reflect these challenges and are based on the assumptions that the education system should work towards more comprehensive inclusion of students with disabilities, greater success in school for students with an EBD, and ways to help teachers cope with the stresses they experience. While these assumptions are beyond the scope of this study, this caveat is intended to provide an understanding of the lens through which the study's results have been applied. The recommendations have been focused to where further information and changes in practice could produce these results by affecting how teachers resolve having a student with an EBD in their classroom.

An Interconnected System

The present study demonstrated that teachers' choice of approaches is partially mediated by their perceptions of available supports and other individuals within the system. Further investigation should explore the perceptions and actions of students, parents, consultants, and administrators. Significant improvements to the school system would need to consider the primary concerns of all stakeholders and a better understanding of how they resolve these issues.

Numerous studies have identified the importance of administrators on inclusive education practices (Katz & Sugden, 2013; Jahnukainen, 2015). The present study highlighted the direct effects that principals might have with teachers and students when the issue is an EBD. Such direct interaction when assisting the teacher with a crisis in the classroom or through office referrals means the administrator is often more directly involved than with students who have other disabilities. Teachers voiced particularly strong feelings related to the actions that administrators took. Teachers may also search for alternative actions or subvert school procedures when they feel supervisors are not responsive. Further investigation is suggested to explore teacher and administrator communication and goal alignment regarding students with an EBD.

Communication and goal alignment also appears to be an issue for other individuals who support teachers in classrooms. Research on consultation has attempted to answer these questions (Sanetti et al., 2013). However, further studies would help uncover how this process can be enhanced, given teacher's finite time and energy. Such an effort seems supported by the actions of some teachers in this study that showed it is

often easier to “smile and nod” than to explain why they are not finding the suggestions of outside consultants helpful.

Further investigation also seems warranted regarding how to create a greater alignment of parents and teachers. It should provide better support for students with EBD when their parents and teacher work together. However, the attempts to “unother” the child can lead to a negative discourse between teachers and parents that can harm the development of a collaborative relationship (Reeves, Ng, Harris, & Phelan, 2020). In addition, teachers often attribute a student’s behavioral difficulties to their home situation (Broomhead, 2014; D’Souza & Jament, 2015; Stefan et al., 2015). In the present study, teachers suggested that they were less likely to develop parents as allies when they had such a perception.

Expanding the “Toolbox”

Much of the literature has focused on having teachers become aware of evidence-based strategies and implement them with fidelity. However, Kamps et al. (2015) showed that even when teachers clearly know how to apply an intervention and have observed the benefits of its use, many will still discontinue the use of the strategy after support has been removed. The findings of this study suggest that the teachers’ energy to implement strategies, and the priority of demands placed on them will influence classroom techniques. Teachers mentioned using ideas that had been presented to them in the past to respond to new situations. Future research should consider how to help teachers reflect on their “toolbox” of strategies when they are in stressful situations and

how to remember the key components of strategies if they decide to implement them in the future.

Rodger et al. (2014) found that most university education programs provide some focus on classroom management. However, participants' reflections in this study suggested their training was woefully inadequate compared to the demands they experienced when they entered classrooms. Greater information would be beneficial related to children's mental health and the challenges of behavioral disorders. Also, given the influence symptoms of behavioral disorders can have on teacher's perceptions, teacher training curriculums should also explicitly explore and make future educators aware of the development of an "otherness" perspective and how this type of thinking can influence their decision-making.

Research should also explore whether perceptions of "otherness" could be more effectively managed through more cohesive school teams. Ebersöhn and Loots (2017) reported that "collectivist coping" can help teachers support one another even in adverse situations with limited resources. Teachers in the present study reported positive perceptions when they felt supported by other team members. There would appear to be benefits from understanding how to reduce teacher's feelings that they are trying to deal with a child with whom they feel unequipped to manage, and increasing the feeling that there is a cohesive team that will be collectively responsible for handling, and developing the skills to deal with a student (Powell & Gibbs, 2018).

Research should also consider whether there may be more practical and productive ways for teachers to conceptualize students' unique needs, other than

otherness (Stanbridge & Mercer, 2019). Teachers in the present study appeared to maximize inclusion with the minimum drain on their energy when they could attribute student behavior as external to the student, but not as being beyond their capabilities and placement in a regular classroom. Moore (2020) has produced online videos and podcasts to help teachers reframe from this type of thinking and they have been positively received by teachers. However, research is required to determine if exposure to these ideas endure when teachers face challenges in the classroom and lead to improved outcomes for educators and their students.

Additionally, the present study's teachers described experiencing a range of emotions while having a student with an EBD in their classrooms. Many teachers admitted to having days where they felt like quitting and this is reflective of the literature that indicates greater levels of burnout amongst teachers working with challenging students (Chang, 2013; Gilmour, 2017; Gilmour & Wehby, 2020; Hastings & Bham, 2003). As a result, we know stress will be unavoidable for many teachers, and that it can have significant work and health impacts on their lives, which will then negatively impact the learning of all students and the functioning of the school system. Future research should consider ways to strengthen teachers' skills in managing these emotions. For instance, there is growing interest in the value of providing stress-inoculation training to troops before engaging in combat (Doody et al., 2019). Reviews of resiliency training have also found that this strategy is much more effective when provided to mentally healthy individuals before they experience severe stress (Brassington & Lomas, 2020). While teaching hopefully is less traumatic than warfare, it still is clearly stressful, and

educators would benefit from having the tools to deal with these emotions prior to experiencing them. Recently graduated teachers in the present study identified few experiences during their university training that prepared them for having a student with an EBD. Training in managing stress and physiological reactions to stress could be one-way postsecondary institutions could help prepare their graduates for the challenges new teachers will experience in many classrooms.

Refining Inclusive Education Research and Policy

Variations in the definition of inclusion and inclusive education were discussed in the introduction and in further detail in the literature review (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017; Timpson, 2019; Willmann & Seeliger, 2017). Not surprisingly, this conundrum appeared during the present study. One strategy employed by teachers was inclusively excluding so that students were excluded to the degree permissible within supposedly inclusive schools. This is not to argue that the teachers' decision to employ these strategies was improper, but rather to highlight the difficulties in understanding and evaluating what is happening when language does not match actions. Further research and an alignment of bureaucratic definitions would ensure greater rigor for future studies and allow governments to measure whether policy directives are resulting in greater inclusivity.

Future research should also consider that students with disabilities may not be a homogenous group. While some research can consider inclusion as a whole, there might be a need to explore the needs and issues associated with specific groups. Aggregated data has suggested no harmful effects of inclusion; however, recent research indicates

possible negative effects with students who have an EBD (Fletcher, 2010; Gottfried et al., 2016; Gottfried & Harven, 2014). The present study certainly provided anecdotal examples of harmful incidents for students and staff. This is not to suggest that inclusion is not justified for this group, but to argue that when teachers do not have sufficient support, the consequences may be more drastic than with other disabilities, and lead to a host of negative consequences. Given the potential impact, a more in-depth examination is undoubtedly necessary.

Implications

This study provides a model to explain the choice of strategies when teachers include a student with an EBD in a general education elementary classroom. The model provides directions for actions that can be taken to support teachers from negative outcomes, and in turn, allow greater opportunity for success for a disadvantaged group of students. This theory contributes to the existing body of knowledge related to inclusive education's practical challenges and the grounded theory work on occupational balancing.

Positive Social Change

As mentioned during the introduction to this chapter and in previous chapters, extensive literature provides a social justice argument for inclusive education. Students with an EBD are a disadvantaged population due to the extreme likelihood of experiencing academic failure (Siperstein et al., 2011). The education system as a whole also experiences negative outcomes due to disruptions in learning and the greater likelihood of teachers to experience burnout and exiting the profession (Ronfeldt, Loeb,

& Wyckoff, 2013). The results of this study provide practical implications of how the educational system can support more positive outcomes. From a theoretical standpoint, the present study contributes to the literature on the struggles and processes that occur in systems that must balance two competing and sometimes opposing goals.

Practice Recommendations

The following suggestions are focused on activities and changes that could be made within the educational system and those whose role is to support teachers. These changes would allow teachers to focus more of their energy on supporting students rather than recruiting, aligning, and correcting miscommunication with their allies. Recommendations are also provided related to training that could help build teachers' "toolboxes," and use this knowledge more effectively.

Administrators need to understand the critical role they play in inclusion and supporting teachers with challenging students. Teachers reported reduced stress and more efficient collaboration when there was open and transparent communication. Cancio et al. (2013) have developed a list of research supported factors that administrators can use to reflect on how they support teachers of students with an EBD. Administrators could use this document to reflect on how they are supporting their staff. This list could also serve as a discussion tool with teachers to engage in a conversation about how the teachers perceive support from their administrators.

Consultants and coaches need always to be aware of teacher's feelings of vulnerability when being observed dealing with a difficult student and the finite time they have to collaborate. Teachers are also affected by the variability of their student's

behavior that may frequently fluctuate, leaving many with periods in which they may feel demoralized and ready to quit. Consultants need to check where teachers are emotionally during every contact and understand how this may have changed their priorities and openness to ideas. A teacher who expressed an interest in reading an article the week before may not be as receptive if an incident has occurred during the interim that has left them fielding phone calls from other parents and considering a new occupation.

The transition of students with an EBD into the classroom should be planned and supported (Mays, Jindal-Snape, & Boyle, 2020). Teachers described more successful inclusion of students when they had adequate time to plan strategies and develop a relationship prior to the child coming into their classroom. While not all students will change schools during school breaks, it may be helpful to slow the entry process down to ensure that there is a successful start when entering a new building.

A successful start is also crucial for teachers entering the field. Teachers in the present study who had recently graduated indicated that their university training had done little to prepare them for the challenges of having a student with an EBD in their classroom. While instructors would not want to scare individuals away from entering education, it would benefit graduates to understand the full range of possible classroom behaviors and responsive strategies (Garwood & Van Loan, 2019). Many teachers talked about the practical strategies and beliefs that they acquired during their inclusive practicum placements (Rusznyak & Walton, 2017). Additionally, educators rarely receive training on how to use or supervise paraprofessionals (Everett, 2017; Yates et al., 2020). This means that communication, decision-making, and role-boundaries often

create tension between aides and teachers (Mackenzie, 2011). A basic understanding of their role in working with paraprofessionals would benefit teachers before finding themselves responsible for directing these individuals.

Many less experienced teachers in this study talked about wanting to "prove" themselves and not appear incompetent. In addition, beginning educators are in an awkward position where their continued employment is dependent on demonstrating adequate skills, such as classroom management, to the administrators from whom they should also seek help. It would be beneficial during teacher training to provide an understanding of what types of behavior are beyond typical challenges. It would also help for school districts to provide their new teachers with peer mentors who can furnish nonjudgmental guidance as to when further assistance should be sought.

Teachers need to understand how to incorporate evidence-based practice into their routines and typical ways of conceptualizing challenging students. Whether or not a teacher believes a student's behavior is under the child's conscious control has been shown to affect the types of responses an educator will make (McMahon & Harwood, 2016). Teachers need to be aware of how they think about a student and ways to challenge their thinking. These strategies need to be built into a teacher's regular reflections as such contemplation is harder to manage under stress and with limited time during the day. Many teachers talked about "figuring out" student behavior, but the process by which they did so was less clear.

Teachers discussed reasons why they thought a student acted in a certain way, but while alluding to the functions of behavior, none framed it that way. Previous studies

have highlighted the benefits of teachers understanding functional behavior assessment and behavioral principles (Walker, Chung, & Bonnet, 2018). Again, teachers need to integrate these types of tools into their daily routines, or at least have ways of being reminded to return to their use when necessary. In the present study, teachers reported trying multiple strategies, often in a desperate "trial and error" attempt to find something that would help. Under a stressful situation, a teacher may not appreciate that an "extinction burst" is actually a sign a strategy is working, or that behavior change can be shaped in small approximation of the desired goal.

Finally, teachers should continue to be encouraged to integrate mindfulness and self-regulation strategies into their regular whole-class instruction. These strategies have previously been shown to help all children (Dunning et al., 2019). However, the present study hinted at a serendipitous benefit where adults also became more aware and skilled at these techniques for themselves while teaching these methods to others.

Theoretical Recommendations

This study's findings support the need for research to continue to explore the disconnection between educational policy and practice. Laboratory type research in educational psychology is important to refine specific nuances of theory. However, it needs to be combined with an understanding of the pragmatic processes and realities of teachers.

This study also contributed to the grounded theory literature on the basic psychological process of balancing. Balancing has been shown to be occurring in how individuals resolve their primary concerns in other situations that present competing

demands. For example, relatives of cancer patients need to find an equilibrium between their emotional needs and the care of their family member (Thulesius, Håkansson, & Petersson, 2003; Sandén et al.,2019). Similarly, mothers need to find ways to balance their caregiving duties and their professional roles (Mubeen & Karim, 2018).

The present study is particularly applicable to considerations of occupational situations that involve finding the optimum balance of potentially harmful, but unavoidable factors. Although seemingly disparate practices, there are commonalities in the processes by which Scottish social workers balance the need for a relationship with parents while not always being able to trust them (Kettle, 2018), and the way Brazilian male sex workers reduce their risk of HIV while practicing a risky profession (Phua, & Ciambrone, 2020). Comparing and contrasting how individuals deal with these competing demands will provide a greater understanding of this basic psychological process. It may also allow cross-field fertilization of strategies that help individuals in one situation into those in another. While the limits of the present study only permitted the development of a substantive theory related to elementary teachers in Alberta, it provides another example of balancing and should aid in the future development of more formal theory related to this psychological process.

Conclusion

Social justice dictates that we move towards greater inclusion, while teachers' experiences highlight the challenges of having students with an EBD in a general education classroom. Chaos theorists define a wicked problem as a complex problem that cannot be avoided or solved; the best option is to find solutions that create the least

harm and most benefit (Armstrong, 2018). The present study outlines the theory of striving for homeostasis to explain how teachers choose strategies to maintain classroom balance to address this wicked problem. These findings suggest potential points of intervention to implement and for further investigation to improve the outcomes. Such action will not eliminate the problem, but should lead to greater success in school for students with an EBD, and reduced stress and burnout for their teachers.

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Appendix A: Advertisement for Recruiting Participants

Facebook Post

I am conducting a doctoral study on how teachers include students with an emotional/behaviour disorder in their mainstream classroom. I have been a teacher in Alberta for thirty-years and spent much of that time trying to support teachers. I would like to contribute to improvements in the help that can be provided.

I am looking for grade one to six teachers who teach a general education class in Alberta. In their class, they must have a student identified with a severe emotional/behavioral disorder (Alberta Education code 42). The child must be in the classroom for at least 50% of the school day and must have been their student for at least a month.

Participants can remain anonymous.

Please register your interest by going to (link to screening survey). Participants who are selected will be asked to participate in an interview for about an hour, with the possibility of some follow-up questions. Interviews can be scheduled by phone or online, at a time of your convivence. Those teachers selected for an interview will receive a $30 Amazon gift card as a token of thanks.

Further questions can be directed to Rob McGarva, XXX-XXX-XXXX or xxxxx.xxxxx@waldenu.edu

Advertisement for ATA Newspaper

Teachers of Students with an Emotional/Behaviour Disorder

I am conducting a doctoral research study on teacher's experiences of including a student with an emotional/behaviour disorder in their mainstream classroom. I have been a teacher in Alberta for thirty-years and spent much of that time trying to support other teachers. I would like to contribute to improvements in the help that can be provided to educators.

I am looking for grade one to six teachers who teach a general education class in Alberta. In their class they must currently have a student identified as having a severe emotional/behaviour disorder (commonly identified by the Alberta Education special education code 42). The child must be in the classroom for at least 50% of the school day and must have been their student for at least a month.

All information gathered about participants during the study process is private and will be kept confidential.

Participants who are selected will be asked to participate in an interview for about an hour, with the possibility of some follow-up questions at a later date. Interviews can be scheduled by phone or online, at a time of your convenience. As a token of thanks, those teachers who participate in an interview will receive a $30 Amazon gift card.

Please register your interest by going to **www.ebdteacher.ca** or following the QR code link above.

Further questions can be directed to Rob McGarva, 780 or @waldenu.edu

Appendix B: Snowball Sampling Email Invitation

I am conducting a doctoral dissertation research study on elementary teacher's experiences of including a student with an emotional/behaviour disorder in their mainstream classroom. I would appreciate it if you could pass this information along to any teachers who you know that would fit the following criteria and be willing to share their story.

- Kindergarten to grade 6 teachers who teach a general education class in Alberta.
- Had a student identified as having a severe emotional/behaviour disorder (Alberta Ed code 42).
- All information gathered about participants is private and will be kept confidential.
- Up to a 1 hour interview, possibility of some follow-up questions.
- Interviews can be scheduled by phone or online, at a time of their convenience
- Token of thanks to those teachers who participate in an interview is a $30 Amazon gift card.
- Further information, full consent form, and to register at www.ebdteacher.ca

Questions are welcome. Contact Rob McGarva at XXX-XXX-XXXX
or xxxxxx.xxxxx@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Introduction to the Study

Text of Video Introduction and Greeting

Thank-you for your interest in my study. I've been a teacher in Alberta for thirty years. I have seen how hard teachers work when they are trying to include a student with a severe behavior disorder. The goal of my study is to better understand what it is like for teachers in this situation to help improve the support that is provided.

The next screen contains "consent information." It is important that you understand your rights and protections, if you agree to be part of the study. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. As the consent information will remind you, you have the right to stop and withdraw at any time.

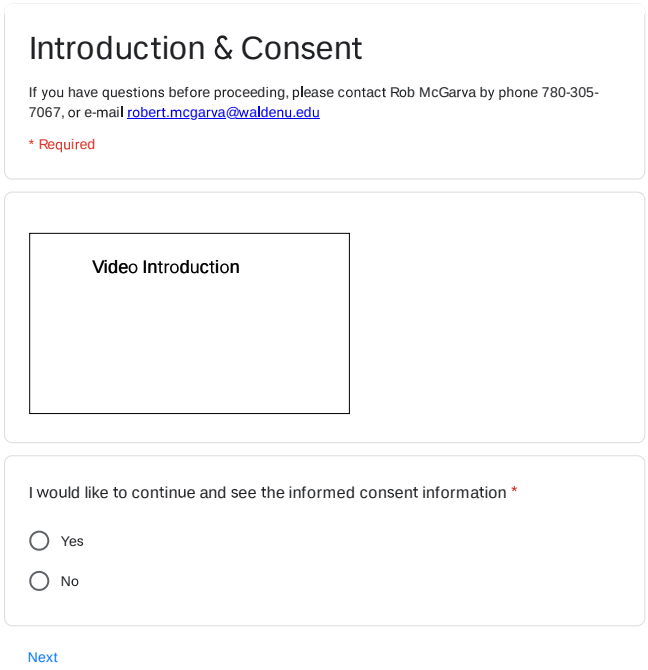
Teachers who are selected will be asked to take part in an interview that will last approximately an hour. You may also be asked if you would be willing to complete a follow-up interview if I have more question.

You will be asked for a way to contact you to set up a time and method that we can talk. In order to ensure you confidentiality, I would suggest not using an email address that includes your name. However, you can choose the way whether you would like me to contact you by phone, email, or text.

I appreciate that teachers are very busy. While I cannot compensate you for the true value of your time, I would like to send you a $30 amazon.ca gift card as a thank-you after you have completed the interview.

Again, thank-you so much for your interest in this study. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. My contact information appears below this video window.

Introductory Screen



Appendix D: Contact and Demographic Information

Introduction & Consent

* Required

Inclusive EBD Study

Are you a classroom teacher in Alberta? *

- Yes
- No

Do you teach in grades one to six? *

- Yes
- No

Do you have at least one child in your classroom who has been identified with a severe emotional/behaviour disorder (Alberta Education code 42)? *

- Yes
- No

Is the student in your classroom for at least 50% of the school day? *

- Yes
- No

Has the student been in your classroom for at least one month? *

- Yes
- No

Contact Information & Demographics

How would you like to be contacted by the researcher? Please provide an email address or phone number. You may wish to use an email that does not contain your name to increase your privacy. If you provide a phone number, please add whether texting is acceptable. If you live within 150 km of Barrhead, a face-to-face meeting is also possible. *

Your answer

How many years have you been teaching? *

C e

What is your gender *

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary

What grade do you primarily teach? *

- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6

Is you school size ... *

- Less than 200 students
- Between 200 and 500 students
- More than 500 students

Do you consider your school ... *

- Urban
- Rural

Back Next