

2016

Training and Experiences of General Educators Who Have Students With Externalizing Behaviors

Sheila Ruann Lachelt
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Sheila Lachelt

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Training and Experiences of General Educators Who Have
Students With Externalizing Behaviors

by

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M.A., Azusa Pacific University, 2006

B.S., California State University Long Beach, 1991

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2016

Abstract

In California classrooms, general education teachers have experienced stress due to an increasing number of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). This study used a hermeneutical phenomenological inquiry approach to explore teachers' perspectives of their pre-service professional development (PD), in-service PD, and classroom experiences with students who have externalizing EBD. The theoretical framework centered on social constructivism. Research questions addressed the teachers' perceptions of their pre-service and in-service PD on students with EBD and their experiences with students' externalizing behaviors. Twenty California general education teachers, each from a different school district, volunteered to participate in face-to-face interviews. Stratified purposeful sampling was used to compare perceptions of teachers whose students ranged from preschool through high school. NVivo was used to organize the data and highlight significant themes. Findings included specific areas of PD needs based on students' grade levels, as well as areas of concern across the grade levels. Teachers of all grade levels need PD on how to address aggressive and unsafe behaviors, issues with families, and disruptions in the classroom. Links between the teachers' PD experiences and classroom experiences were inconclusive due to various influences. Findings and conclusions on pre-service and in-service PD needs were presented as textual descriptions. Results of this inquiry may lead to areas for further research, such as how to foster personal characteristics of teachers who have positive experiences with students who have EBD. Implications for positive social change include addressing the specific areas of PD need. Addressing these target areas may lead to California teachers having increased success with students who have externalizing behaviors.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to educators of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Therefore, this work is presented in honor of *all* teachers. May you have the support that you need in order to love your work.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express heartfelt appreciation to the participants who graciously shared their firsthand experiences, knowledge, and needs in order to advance the provision of effective professional development for supporting students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

To my entire family: Thank you for your patience and encouragement! May each of you follow-through and do whatever God puts in your heart. I love you so very much!!

To my mother: I could never have accomplished my academic hurdles without your assistance. You have helped me raise children, helped me care for grandchildren (your great grandchildren), and helped with innumerable life tasks. In addition to being my mother, you are my beloved friend.

To my daughter, Kolina: I know it was difficult to edit my dissertation while getting through your own doctoral program. Your support along the way has been deeply appreciated; and I admire your burgeoning career. You are, without a doubt, a breath of fresh air to individuals who struggle with mental and emotional well-being.

To Bruce: Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your encouragement, grammatical expertise, and technical know-how as I wrapped up this journey.

To my knowledgeable and efficient committee members, Dr. James LaSpina, Dr. Jerita Whaley, and Dr. Rollen Fowler: I was fortunate to have worked with each of you. Thank you so very much.

Most especially, I would like to thank God. This work is my nod of understanding that, to Him, every person is immensely precious—including our most challenging students.

To know wisdom and instruction,

To perceive words of understanding,

To receive the instruction of wisdom,

Justice, judgment, and equity;

To give prudence to the simple,

To the young man knowledge and discretion,

A wise man will hear and increase learning,

And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

Proverbs 1:2-5 (NKJV)

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

The incidence of students who display emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) has increased in California schools and classrooms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Davis, Culotta, Levine, & Rice, 2011; Kerr & Nelson, 2006; Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). Teachers who have students with severe, persistent EBD consider this to be their greatest professional frustration (Landers, Alter, & Servillo, 2008). There are many effective, evidence-based strategies for working with students who have EBD (Cheney, 2011; Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010; Jolivette, Conroy, Lane, Nelson, & Benner, 2010). At the same time, there has been a lack of adequate professional development (PD) to inform general education teachers of current the evidence-based strategies (EBS) for supporting students with EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Strauss, 2010).

This qualitative study used phenomenological inquiry (PI) to determine whether there was a link between general education teachers' perceptions of their experiences with PD on EBD and general education teachers' perceptions of their firsthand experiences with their students who have EBD. This study has been used to increase the knowledge on how to best support general education teachers who have students with EBD. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge for future research, and to improved outcomes for students with EBD.

Incidence of EBD

Researchers have shown a rise in the numbers of students with EBD (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011; Davis et al., 2011; Kerr & Nelson, 2006; Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen (2012) estimated the prevalence of children with serious, ongoing EBD as ranging from 6% to 10%. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Education (2010) conveyed that less than 1% of school children are identified as emotionally disturbed (ED) and provided with special education services to address their educational needs (Landrum, 2011). This lack of services in the schools extends to the mental health system, where there is also an insufficient provision of services (Hallahan et al., 2012). Between the educational and mental health entities, only 20% of children with EBD have received services (Hallahan et al., 2012). This is significant, considering that most adult mental health conditions first present during childhood (Costello, Egger, & Angold, 2005).

Definition of EBD

The term EBD is relative because the definition of normative behavior varies (Landrum, 2011). Students who qualify for special education as emotionally disturbed (ED) meet the eligibility criteria based on (a) problems learning that have nothing to do with sensory issues, intelligence, or physical state; (b) problems with appropriate behavior during typical, everyday situations; (c) problems with sustaining relationships; (d) behavior or feelings that do not relate to the current situation; (e) somatic conditions or fears. The student's symptoms must impact his or her education and have been present

to a significant degree for an extensive period of time (IDEA, 2004; Landrum, 2011). In addition to the students who qualify for special education as ED, there are students who may have behavioral excesses that coincide with other disabilities. There are also students with EBD that is related to ED or another disability but who have not yet been found eligible for special education services. Finally, students considered to have EBD may be socially maladjusted (SM), with conditions such as conduct disorder (CD) or oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). Regardless of how a student with EBD is categorized, teachers with students who present externalizing behaviors related to EBD have the challenging task of managing both the behavior and the learning of all students. As such, this study will be used to consider the perceptions of general education teachers who have students with EBD, regardless of whether their students have or have not been determined to have ED, another disability, or SM.

Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors

The characteristics of EBD include internalizing behaviors such as specific phobias, anxiety, and depression (Mayer & Van Acker, 2009). Characteristics may also include externalizing behaviors such as: (a) attendance problems (e.g., tardiness, truancies, excessive absences); (b) being off task (e.g., talking, drawing, inappropriate use of electronic devices); (c) noncompliance and opposition; (d) difficulty with transitions; (e) disrespect to teachers and classmates; (f) aggression (e.g., verbal abuse, fighting, choking, cruelty to people and animals); (g) classroom disruptions (e.g., tapping on things, getting out of his or her seat, interrupting, yelling); (h) not accepting responsibility for behavior; (i) not accepting consequences for behavior; (j) difficulty

making and maintaining relationships; (k) out-of-control behavior; (l) not respecting the rights and property of others; (m) passive resistance, and so forth (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010; Davis et al. 2011; Landers et al., 2008; Pierangelo & Giuliano, 2008; Walker, Ramsey, Hill, 2004). Landrum (2011) summarized externalizing characteristics to include aggressing that is verbal or physical, including property defacement. Hallahan et al. (2012) stated that students may have both internalizing and externalizing conditions. For example, a student with the internalizing condition of anxiety may demonstrate aggressive externalizing behavior toward others as a result of feeling anxious. Because internalized states cannot be directly observed, I focused this study on the experiences of teachers with students who had externalizing behavior.

Students With EBD in General Education

Many students with EBD are eligible for Special Education services due to their designation as ED or as having other disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the mandates stipulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEA], Section 1412 (a)(5), 1996). According to IDEA (1996), each disabled student will be educated in the general education classroom of his or her local school unless this is deemed inappropriate by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. The preference to have students with special needs served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as determined based on each child's unique educational needs (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004), extends to students with EBD who have been formally identified under IDEA. Yell and Katsiyannis (2004) cited a 1994 decision on LRE, *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel*

H., by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The court decided that placement determination should include consideration of any likely detrimental impact a disabled student's presence may have on the general education classroom. Despite this protection for the education and well-being of students in general education, it takes time to determine if supplementary aides and services will be sufficient for the academic and social success of a student who has a disability that includes behavioral challenges.

California Students With EBD

The local setting for this research focused on 20 teachers from 20 different school districts in northern and southern California. Teachers in California have an especially challenging task due to a lack of fiscal support for children with EBD. Between 2009 and 2011, for example, California's expenditures for mental health services decreased by \$587.4 million, which amounted to 16% of the state's general fund (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2011). Consequently, during 2009-2011, there was a decrease in the provision of mental health services for 130,069 Californians (SAMHSA, 2011). For the sake of comparison, the state with the next highest rate of decrease in individuals receiving mental health services was New Jersey, with 23,779 fewer people who received care (SAMHSA, 2011). These statistics included adults as well as children. Still, it is clear how dramatically California's mental health system has been impacted and, therefore, how crucial it is for children to be properly served through the schools.

General Education Teachers of Students with EBD

Hallahan et al. (2012) found that teachers are usually effective at determining which children have EBD. Although educators are adept at recognizing which students have EBD and are at risk for poor outcomes, they generally do not have the expertise for adequately supporting the academic and social success of students with EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). This study was undertaken to explore the perceptions that general educators have of their pre-service and in-service training on EBD, in the hopes of learning how the teachers' training has impacted their classroom experiences with students. A related investigation by Blake and Monahan (2007) involved the perceptions of novice special education teachers, who reported that pre-service training was not as useful as firsthand experience combined with support from colleagues at their school sites. In another study, prospective general educators had more positive feelings about including students with differences when their induction programs included students who had various disabilities (Swain, Nordess, & Leader-Janssen, 2012).

Focus of the Study

For this qualitative study, I used phenomenological tradition to inquire about the teachers' perceptions of their pre-service and in-service training for students with EBD (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Because teachers' greatest professional frustrations often involve students who have persistent, overt misbehavior (Landers et al., 2008), the 20 teachers who participated in this study were also asked about their experiences with students who presented externalizing behaviors. A comparison was made between the

teachers' perceptions of their PD experiences and the teachers' perceptions of their classroom experiences. Themes emerged regarding how teachers' classroom experiences have been impacted by their PD. The teachers were provided with a list of specific examples of externalizing behaviors as listed in Appendix A. This list of behaviors eliminated the potential for participant subjectivity, while also increasing the feasibility for future replication of this study.

Stormont, Reinke, and Herman (2011) emphasized the lack of knowledge that teachers have regarding evidence-based practices (EBP) and the need for PD in the field of EBD. Blanks (2013) found that the PD itself should be presented in an evidence-based manner, with ongoing coaching in the classroom to glean optimal success with students who have externalizing behaviors. This PI resulted in inferences on the specific areas of PD needed by noting the strengths, frustrations, and problems expressed by the teacher participants. For example, there were teachers who had PD but not with ongoing follow-through support (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). It was informative to compare the experiences of teachers who have had follow-through support to teachers who have not had mentoring and coaching in their classrooms.

Results of this study will be available to be used for the designing and provision of PD that will answer the problems of the teachers' lived experiences as conveyed through their interviews. It is not likely that policy makers will readily fund PD for teachers of students with EBD. For pre-service training, it is the responsibility of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) to oversee what information and experiences are provided for prospective teachers. For in-service training, it is the

responsibility of local school districts to provide PD. To initiate sufficient training on EBD, it may require action from local unions, the California Teachers Association, and the media. This is where the advocacy/participatory paradigm is meaningful, because the findings of this study can be used toward initiating policies for PD improvements with the potential to benefit a broad range of stakeholders (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009; Alter, 2010; Hammeken, 2007; Harris, 2009; Jolivette et al., 2010). Social change may result as teachers become more knowledgeable, more confident, and more effective with students who have externalizing behavior problems. In addition to teachers having increased expertise and professional satisfaction, it is hoped that positive outcomes will result for the students with EBD.

Problem Statement

There has been a problem in the local school district with a lack of sufficient PD for teachers who have students with EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). According to Wei, Darling-Hammond, and Adamson (2010), teachers rated training on discipline and classroom management as the second most significant PD needed followed only by training in their specific curriculum areas. In the local school district, there has been annual training which includes behavior management as one aspect of PD on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The PD on ASD is designed for general education teachers who are typically accompanied by special educators from their school sites to allow for collaboration. These sessions are required of the district due to an agreement that was negotiated with the teacher's union. Following the annual training session for teachers of

students with ASD, the educators may reconvene if they take the initiative to meet on their own time; additional time is not provided during the school year. As such, there are varying degrees of follow-up that extend to the classrooms. It is important to note that these trainings have information that pertains specifically to students with ASD. Therefore, information on EBD has been limited to behaviors that are commonly manifestations of ASD.

In December of 2015, an email went out at the local school district to announce that there will be training for general education teachers who have students with IEPs and behavior disorders. The training will begin in 2016. This training has not yet been offered for the teachers of students who are in the process of being evaluated to determine if they qualify for special education. Likewise, training has not been offered to general education teachers who have students with externalizing behaviors that seem unrelated to a disability.

In the State of California, there has been limited in-service training for EBD. For example, on March 15th-17th, the 69th ASCO Annual Conference and Exhibit Show was held in Los Angeles, California. The event covered a broad range of educational topics; however, only three out of more than 400 sessions addressed students with behavioral needs. Sessions related to EBD included: (a) "Accountability Concepts: Control Behavior by Teaching True Accountability," (b) "Turning Your Toughest Students Into Your Closest Allies," and (c) "Causes and Cures of Academic and Behavior Problems." In addition to the limited PD on EBD at this Los Angeles conference, there was little likelihood that districts throughout California would pay for teachers' registration, travel,

accommodations, and substitute teachers to allow for attendance at these sessions. Other possibilities for PD include online training. Examples of online training are: the “National Association of Special Education Teachers” (see www.naset.org), the “Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support” (see www.pbis.org), and the “Council for Exceptional Children” (www.cec.sped.org/). Unfortunately, online learning alone does not allow for the intense, ongoing learning that is found in highly collaborative, effective school communities (Wei et al., 2010). For example, in other countries with highly effective schools, teachers are allotted 15-25 hours per week for collaboration, lesson planning, analyzing their work, observing other teachers, and research (Wei et al., 2010).

This study was inspired by teachers in the local school district; however, research is not allowed in this district. The study was, therefore, broadened to include 20 teachers from 20 different California school districts. The teachers’ comments during interviews for this study lead to inferences on the relationship between PD and their experiences with students who have EBD. Special education teachers were delimited from this study, seeing as there is a consensus among general and special educators about the need for general education teachers to have additional PD (Allison, 2012). There is an understanding that training for general educators is directed on curriculum and content (Niesyn, 2009), whereas training for special educators centers around the academic and emotional requirements of students who need individually tailored, specialized strategies (Zigmond & Kloo, 2011). General education teachers are often not equipped to provide the instructional and behavioral techniques that are effective for children with EBD (Abrams, 2005).

Students with EBD need support beyond school-wide discipline, such as small group interventions or individualized intervention plans (Sugai, 2010). They require scientifically validated EBS, including frequent progress monitoring (Nelson, Benner, & Mooney, 2008). EBS are available; however, general educators are not receiving adequate pre-service or in-service training to support their students with EBD (Bickel, 2010; Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivet et al., 2010; Nelson III & Schultz; 2009; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Strauss, 2010). Through this study, knowledge about the teachers' specific PD needs will be available for advocacy to promote effective PD. The hope is that this study will contribute to eventual improvement for (a) the teachers of students with EBD (Alter, 2010; Hammeken, 2007); (b) the students with EBD (Mazzotti, Rowe, Cameto, Test, & Morningstar, 2013); (c) the students' general education classmates (Hammeken, 2007); (d) the students' families (Oppenheimer & Goldsmith, 2007); and (e) society (Alliance, 2009; Harris, 2009).

Following the interviews for this research, the general education teachers' responses were analyzed for common themes from which inferences were derived. It is expected that this work will lead to increased awareness regarding the need for PD on the specific topics that the teachers emphasized as areas of concern. If teachers advocate for PD, and if administrators realize the potential impact of providing effective PD, teachers will likely have an easier time with students who have EBD. Ultimately, teachers who have a positive sense of efficacy will have students with higher achievement, increased

motivation, and a stronger sense of their own belief that they can overcome obstacles to meet success (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Nature of the Study

Research Questions

Questions for this research were inspired by the poor short- and long-term outcomes, both academic and social, for students who have EBD. Short-term outcomes include disproportionate rates of absenteeism, retention, academic failure, office referrals, more restrictive academic settings, expulsions, pregnancies, young mothers losing parental custody of their children, juvenile justice commitments, and elevated high school dropout rates (Alliance, 2009; Boreson, 2006; Harris, 2009; Zhang, Hsu, Katsiyannis, Barret, & Ju, 2011). Long-term outcomes experienced disproportionately by individuals with EBD include high rates of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, recidivism, the commission of murder, and being victims of murder (Boreson, 2006; Harris, 2009; Zhang et al., 2011). The prevalence of children with severe, persistent EBD ranges from 6% to 10%, with only 20% of these students receiving special education (Hallahan et al., 2012).

In California, the local setting for this study, a prominent organization that promotes research, policy development, and advocacy for the state's youth is *Children Now*. In 2011, *Children Now* determined that 53% of children ages 2-17 have not been receiving the mental health assistance that they need. As such, general education teachers have the monumental responsibilities of managing their classrooms and educating each child while simultaneously juggling the intense needs of children with

severe behavior. There is consensus that effective and ongoing PD is necessary for teachers to become increasingly successful with students who have EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivet et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). This is especially true, considering the difficult fiscal circumstances of today's California schools (Children Now, 2011; SAMHSA, 2011).

The central question involved direct inquiry to ascertain what the general education teachers' perceptions were regarding their education to support pupils who have externalizing behaviors related to EBD. A subquestion was used to explore the teachers' perceptions of their firsthand experiences with students with externalizing behaviors. These questions were designed to determine if there is a link between PD and the teachers' experiences with students who have EBD. For example, specific conditions under which teachers experienced successes and challenges were considered. This information can be considered in creating or refining PD for teachers who have students with EBD.

Landers et al. (2008) reported students with severe, persistent misbehavior to be the greatest cause of professional discontent among teachers. Student misbehavior leads to teachers who experience ongoing negative feelings, burnout, and a lack of passion for their work (Chang, 2009; Espelage et al., 2013). When teachers leave the profession, it is more often due to burnout from student misbehavior than any other reason (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Chang, 2009). Teachers' discontent may partially be a result of not having sufficient PD regarding students with EBD, because the lack of effective PD for teachers with EBD students has been clearly established as an area of need (Bickel, 2010;

Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Nelson III & Schultz, 2009; Strauss, 2010).

In this qualitative study I used phenomenological tradition (Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2013; van Manen, 1997) to allow the teachers' expression of their personal experiences. Twenty teachers each participated in an interview wherein the central question was: What are your perceptions and experiences of the pre-service and in-service training you have had regarding students with externalizing behavior related to EBD? A subquestion followed: What are your perceptions and experiences with students in your class who have externalizing behaviors? This subquestion is intended to shed light on the actual implementation of what teachers learned through PD, emphasizing their successes and frustrations. Probing follow-up questions were included based on topics that the participants conveyed. This input lead to meaningful inferences and descriptions of the teachers' perceived experiences with PD and EBD.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this PI was to explore the perceptions that general education teachers had of their pre-service and in-service training for educating students with externalizing types of EBD. Their PD experiences were compared to descriptions they gave of classroom experiences with students who have had externalizing behaviors. This allowed for inferences to be made on what teachers need in terms of PD (Moustakas, 1994). These results will be available to shape future PD for California teachers. To date, it is apparent that the teachers have had pre-service and in-service training, but rarely with ongoing mentoring in the classroom as recommended by Fixsen et al. (2005).

The findings from this study may be useful in leading to improved outcomes for children with EBD. That is, the information from this study may lead to improved outcomes *if* teachers assert their need for comprehensive training. Administrators of school districts are confronted with financial, political, and social agendas that reflect the values of society and dictate how resources will be utilized (Gallagher, 2006). Since students with EBD are often unwelcome in the classroom, their needs are routinely ignored (Kauffman, Mock, Tankersley, & Landrum, 2008). This constitutes discrimination (Kauffman et al., 2008); therefore, PD on behalf of improved outcomes for students with EBD is expected to require advocacy.

In California, the target area for this study, schools and districts recognize LRE mandates which require students with disabilities to be taught in general education classrooms of their neighborhood schools whenever appropriate (IDEA, 2004; Kauffman & Hallahan, 1997; Rozalski, Miller, & Stewart, 2011; Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004). As such, general education classrooms have had increased numbers of students with EBD (Nelson et al., 2008; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). This served as a motivation for selecting general education teachers as research participants, to learn about the perceptions teachers have of their experiences with PD on EBD and of their experiences with students who have EBD.

Conversations with teachers during the interviews for this study provided participants with an opportunity to speak out on their most prevalent source of professional dissatisfaction: educating students with severe, persistent behavioral challenges (Landers et al. 2008). Having students with EBD is difficult for any teacher;

however, there are varying degrees of frustration expressed by teachers. Examples of factors which impact teachers' feelings included (a) classroom teaching experience during induction programs (Blake & Monahan, 2007); (b) coaching and mentoring for novice teachers (Quick et al., 2009; Swain et al., 2012; Quick et al., 2009); (c) thoughtful matches between the personality characteristics of teachers and students with EBD (Landrum, 1992); (d) administrators establishing safe environments where teachers can freely discuss challenges they are facing (Burnard & Yaxley, 2008; Drago-Severson, 2008); (e) opportunities to brainstorm solutions with colleagues in a manner that promotes recognition of teachers' strengths (Burnard & Yaxley, 2008); (f) administrative support with the provision of teaming and mentoring (Drago-Severson, 2008); and (g) ongoing in-service PD that includes practice in authentic settings (Quick, Holzman, & Cheney, 2009).

By allowing teachers to voice their perceptions of experiences with students who have EBD, common learning needs of the teachers emerged. The teachers' perceptions and concerns will be available for the provision of more effective PD. Having training on EBD that is more readily available and designed based on the self-described needs of educators is expected to enhance the professional lives of teachers. Increased PD opportunities are also expected to positively affect students with EBD. For instance, Fixsen et al. (2005) researched PD that allowed for the learning of new skills to be followed by practice and coaching. This research related to effective PD that would likely be effective for any profession.

The primary focus of this study involved the PD needs of general education teachers. At the same time, the hope of improved outcomes for children with EBD is also integral to this research. If teachers are provided with PD that entails evidence-based information and sustained PD over time, the academic and social successes of students with EBD is expected to flourish (Diekstra, 2008; Payton et al., 2008). Moreover, the effects will likely extend to the families and society (Alliance, 2009; Harris, 2009; Oppenheimer & Goldsmith, 2007).

Conceptual Framework

I am a special education teacher whose general education colleagues expressed their greatest concern to be students who have EBD. This is consistent with the literature, wherein teachers identified their greatest professional dissatisfaction as working with their students who present externalizing behavior (Landers et al., 2008). In the local setting of California, there has been a decrease in mental health services which has exceeded that of all states (SAMHSA, 2011). In the schools of California, funding for mental health services has also been impacted (Children Now, 2011; SAMHSA, 2011). Meanwhile, more students with exceptionalities have been participating in general education classrooms (Niesyn, 2009; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008).

General and special educators agree that PD should be provided for general education teachers, so they will have increased understanding on how to best serve students who have disabilities (Allison, 2012). General education teachers need not have the same educational background as special educators; however, all teachers should be trained on how to recognize emotional trouble, how to de-escalate potential crises, and

how to respond when behavioral emergencies occur (Espelage et al., 2013). Knowledge and experience contribute to teachers who feel more confident. Sutherland, Denny, and Gunter (2005) surveyed fully licensed special education teachers with an average of 15 years' experience and emergency credentialed special education teachers with three years' experience. Sutherland et al. (2005) compared the two groups of teachers and found significant differences regarding their efficacy for two components: instructional planning and classroom management. Based on their research, Sutherland et al. recommended mentoring and in-service PD for the novice teachers.

Qualitative methodology is ideal for obtaining a depth of information to explore a new phenomenon (Creswell, 2013) which, in this case, was the teachers' perspective of their own learning needs. For this study, interviews were conducted with each participant by using phenomenological tradition. *Phenomenology* refers to making discoveries regarding the essence of participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Describing individual lived experiences occurred based on each participant's unique perspective. According to Burkitt (2012), perception is the body's use of his or her senses (or intuition) to take in information and become conscious of it. Perception is influenced by cultural influences, shared ideologies, and personal emotions about a given topic.

The 20 teachers each had an opportunity to answer questions in an open-ended manner, with the understanding that their concerns would likely veer from the original questions and included additional ideas which also needed consideration (Babbie, 2013). This highlights the emergent nature of phenomenological research, wherein interviews

are fluid and themes that were not previously anticipated by the researcher may surface. Potentially, these teachers' experiences may be valuable in guiding the future creation and refinement of PD for general education teachers of students with EBD. If teachers are provided with PD on topics that they, as adult learners, determine as their own needs, it stands to reason that their sense of professional efficacy will improve. How a teacher feels about his or her perceived success is related to experience (Burkitt, 2012; Sutherland et al., 2005). As the teachers become increasingly effective at educating students with EBD, positive behavioral and social outcomes often follow (Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Lane & Menzies, 2010; Nelson et al., 2008).

Operational Definitions

Special terms associated with the problem include: Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), California Youth Authority (CYA)/California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Disability, Emotional Disturbance (ED), Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Evidence-based Practice (EBP) or Evidence-based Strategies (EBS), Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), Inclusion, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Manifestation Determination (MDR), Out-of-School Factors (OSFs), Perception, Response to Intervention (RTI), School-wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS), and Socially Maladjusted/Social Maladjustment (SM).

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

Based on IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i)(2006), positive intervention strategies are a requirement for students whose behavioral excesses impede

with their own learning or with the education of others. If this is the case, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is conducted to gather information about student's behavior; then a BIP is to be designed and implemented (Bateman, 2011).

California Youth Authority (CYA)/California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

CYA is an obsolete term for what is now referred to as DJJ. However, there were two participants in this study who had training and experience through the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) before starting their teaching careers in general education programs through regular school districts. These teachers, therefore, refer to "CYA." As such, in this study, DJJ is sometimes referred to as CYA.

Disability

For educational purposes, a disability must prevent a student from accessing the curriculum without accommodations or modifications. There are 13 categories under which a student may qualify as disabled for educational purposes: (a) Autism, (b) Specific Learning Disabilities, (c) Intellectual Disability, (d) Visual Impairment, (e) Hard of Hearing, (f) Deaf, (g) Deaf-Blindness, (h) Traumatic Brain Injury, (i) Orthopedic Impairment, (j) Other Health Impairment, (k) Emotional Disturbance, (l) Speech or Language Impairment, (m) Multiple Disabilities (IDEA, 2004). The notion of no longer categorizing disabilities is now being promoted in special education programs at the university level; however, categorization continues to be useful for research and for determining best educational strategies to use for individual students (Pullen & Hallahan, 2011).

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD)

Experts generally prefer the reference of EBD over ED because it is more inclusive. EBD includes individuals who qualify for special education as ED and individuals who have externalizing behaviors but may be excluded from special education (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009).

Emotional Disturbance (ED)

To qualify as having ED for educational purposes, a student must present with one or more of the following: (a) difficulty learning unrelated to sensory problems, intellect, or physical condition; (b) difficulty behaving appropriately under normal circumstances; (c) difficulty maintaining relationships with others; (d) behavior or emotions that are inappropriate in light of circumstances; (e) inappropriate physical symptoms or fears. Moreover, the condition must be present for an extensive time period as well as to a discernible degree (IDEA, 2004; Landrum, 2011).

Evidence-based Practices (EBP)/Evidence-based Strategies (EBS)

These are research-based strategies that have deemed effective for addressing academic or behavioral needs (Cheney, 2011; Vannest, Temple-Harvey, & Mason, 2009).

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

FBA's are used to collect behavioral data which will help identify a student's (a) problem behavior(s), (b) environmental factors that are reinforcing problem behavior(s), and (c) the function of his or her behavior(s) (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010; Turton, Umbreit, & Mathur, 2011). Information gleaned from the FBA is used to develop a BIP.

Inclusion

When a pupil who has a disability is part of the general education classroom and learns with his or her peers, it is referred to as “inclusion.” The student is provided with customized accommodations, modifications, or both accommodations and modifications to promote success with academic, social, or behavioral needs (Hammeken, 2007; IDEA, 2004).

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

According to IDEA (2004), when a disability impacts a student’s education, a team convenes to develop an IEP. The team includes parents or guardians, an administrator, a special educator, and at least one general educator. The IEP team may also include other relevant professionals (e.g., psychologist, speech and language pathologist, occupational or physical therapist, technology specialist, mental health professional, etc.). Other participants may include the student, attorney(s), advocate(s), or anyone else who may have pertinent contributions. The IEP team makes decisions about accommodations, modifications, and services. These decisions become legally binding but can be revised when agreed upon in subsequent IEP meetings (IDEA, 2004; Rozalski, et al., 2011; Wright & Wright, 2009).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 C.F.R. § 300.*(c)(4)(2004) consists of a variety of laws affecting students with disabilities, including mandates pertaining to discipline of students with disabilities.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Section 1412(a)(5) of IDEA, 2004 outlines how students who have disabilities are entitled to education (a) in the same schools as other children in their neighborhoods, (b) in the same classroom as children their age, and (c) with the same curriculum materials as their cohorts, and (d) as much as possible based on what is deemed appropriate.

Exceptions can be made if a child's IEP team decides that an alternate placement would glean better results (IDEA, 2004; Wright & Wright, 2009).

Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)/Manifestation Determination (MD)

According to Hallahan et al. (2012), if a child's placement is being considered for change as a result of misconduct, the student's IEP team must review the records and determine if the disability had an underlying impact on the behavior. If the misbehavior was related to the disability, the team must agree upon a change of placement before such a change is allowed. Specific procedures must be followed prior to a change of placement, such as conducting an FBA or updating a BIP that is positive and designed to prevent misbehavior rather than respond after the fact (Landrum, 2011). There are exceptions wherein a student may be moved to another setting for a maximum of 45 days without going through a MDR, provided that his or her behavior involved a serious physical injury, drugs, or weapons (Turnbull, Huerta, & Stowe, 2006).

Out-of-School Factors (OSF)

OSFs impact students' academic progress and success with behavior, for better or worse. OSFs that may have a detrimental effect on behavior include low birth weight or other neonatal factors; a lack of medical, dental, vision care; toxins in the air, water, or

food; poor nutrition or lack of enough food; poor neighborhoods; and, stress within families (Berliner, 2009). Attending to OSFs, including community programs for children, has shown to have promising results for students (Espelage et al., 2013).

Perception

In qualitative research, perception is generally referred to as the process by which a person constructs views of reality based on his or her experiences and interactions with other people (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Perception occurs via our senses and intuitive feelings, leading to our conscious awareness (Burkitt, 2012). Similar to Burkitt (2012), Smith et al. (2013) explained that perceptions occur automatically when we see, remember, and wish. For this study, it is understood that the teachers' perceptions may be based on incomplete information, since individual teachers cannot have every possible experience. As a researcher, my perception of the teachers' responses led to inferences that were based on "critical, informed judgment" as opposed to mere opinion (Thomasson, 2008). My own experiences and ideas were intentionally suspended in order to avoid opinion and convey the teachers' perceptions rather than my own judgments.

Phenomenology

Smith et al. (2013) explained that when we consciously turn our attention from objects or experiences to consider our perceptions, we are being phenomenological. Phenomenology involves intentional reflection on what we have seen, thought about, remembered, and heard.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI resulted from IDEA's 2004 reauthorization and requires that research based strategies be used to promote progress when students are having difficulty in school, including students whose behavior requires intervention in order to access the curriculum (Cheney, Flower, & Templeton, 2008).

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS)/School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS)

Rather than relying on punitive, aversive, and exclusionary measures, SWPBS/SWPBIS promotes school-wide strategies for preventing misbehavior and addressing behavioral challenges (Snell, Voorhees, Berlin, Stanton-Chapman, & Hadden, 2012).

Socially Maladjusted/Social Maladjustment (SM)

In the field of EBD, the notion of SM is considered to be a political tool used by administrators to exclude students from receiving services as ED (Merrell & Walker, 2004). There is a common practice of interpreting SM as CD to deny special education for students who technically qualify as ED. This practice has been refuted because (a) IDEA did not provide an operational definition of SM; (b) there is no procedure to assess a distinction between ED and SM; and (c) students with behavioral challenges are likely to qualify as ED based on the criteria of having difficulty maintaining relationships with others (Merrell & Walker, 2004; Whitcomb & Merrell, 2013). Prominent attorneys in the field of Special Education, such as Bateman (2011), contend that there is no legal basis for denying services to students whom are deemed SM.

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations, and Scope

An assumption was made that if a student with a disability which included EBD was served in general education classroom, this was the best possible setting. This supposition is based on the fact that the educational program for each student with a disability is determined by his or her IEP team. An IEP team must consist of at least one administrator to represent the public agency, a special educator, at least one general education teacher, parent(s)/guardian(s), someone who can convey the school's evaluation findings and recommendations, and others who may have relevant input about a student's education (Bateman, 2011). In addition, based on goals that have been agreed upon, it is required that the IEP team consider various service options and the percentage of time a student should spend in and out of general education (Bateman, 2011; Turnbull et al., 2006).

This PI had a limitation related to its relatively small sample size. Having a small sample size limited the ability to generalize this study's findings. To determine the ideal sample size, research by Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) recommended gauging the sample size based on similar research. Three Walden University dissertations in ProQuest were used as a means of comparison. The studies were qualitative and related to teachers of students with EBD. One had a sample size of 9 (Pressley, 2013); the second study had a sample size of 10 (Watson, 2013); and the third study had a sample size of 10 (Bell, 2012). In addition to recommending the same sample size as used in similar studies, Marshall et al. (2013) mentioned that notable methodologists generally recommend 6-10 participants. My study used a sample size of

20 participants. This study used a stratified purposeful sample in order to represent subgroups of teachers who have had experience with students of different ages. As such, the larger-than-usual sample size was necessary in order to reach theoretical saturation, which was indicated when no new themes arise in the last interviews (Marshall et al., 2013).

PI is itself a limitation, since a third person interpretation is required to systematically consider the experiences of others (Smith et al., 2013). In order to prevent bias, the researcher must make every effort to bracket his or her experiences to accurately interpret the participants' responses. It is impossible to fully ignore one's own experiences (Hatch, 2002). Further, the participants expressed their perceptions as recalled from past experience. Phenomenological research involves translating the insights of participants, which may be forming and adapting as they consider their responses to research questions (Smith et al., 2013).

The primary delimitation, or characteristic that bounds the scope of this study, includes the problem statement which relates to the general educators' need for PD to confidently and effectively manage challenging behaviors. The underlying concern is for the long-term well-being of students with EBD, which inherently includes society's welfare. This study will be used to address the need for PD; however, the need for PD is but one aspect of a complex issue with contributing factors beyond a teacher's realm (e.g., a student's genetic predisposition, family dynamics, religion/spirituality, characteristics of the community, culture, socioeconomics, support or lack of support from the school as a whole, medication effects, and so forth). Therefore, the scope of this

study was limited to offering teachers a voice on their perceptions of their EBD training and experiences with students who have EBD. The intention of conducting this research was to infer what teachers need, since there will be no empirical data to be observed or measured.

A second delimitation of this study was that Special Education teachers were not included as participants. The focus was exclusively on interviews with general educators. This was because special educators presumably enter the field with an understanding and passion for working with students that are exceptional. Moreover, pre-service training for special educators in the United States, including the local setting of California, centers around information on how to develop intervention strategies for students' individualized, unique needs (Zigmond & Kloo, 2011). By contrast, general educators throughout the United States, including California, receive training that is focused on curriculum for typical learners (Zigmond & Kloo, 2011). In California, Senate Bill 1209 mandates that pre-service coursework and experience cover four components: Health, Technology, Special Education, and English Language Learners (Fesperman & Clark, 2006). These are basically introductory courses with limited practical experience.

A final delimitation for this study involved students who have internalizing behaviors, such as anxiety, phobias, and depression. Teacher participants were asked to focus on students with overt, externalizing behaviors. This will eliminate subjectivity and speculation on internal states and feelings that could not be quantified. It will also allow for ease of replication and increased reliability in future research.

Significance of the Study

At the local level, general education teachers have not had sufficient PD opportunities about EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). The literature indicates that both general and special educators consider additional PD to be a need for general education teachers (Allison, 2012), so this study will be used to determine what topics are of greatest need. General education teachers of students with EBD will surely have much to express regarding the essence of their experiences.

It is also hoped that participation in this study will inspire the teachers to advocate for sufficient and adequate PD. When teachers have the knowledge and support they need, there will likely be a positive impact on students with EBD. One possible improvement, for example, would be an increase in the [less than 50%] rate of students with EBD who graduate from high school (Alliance, 2009; Mayer & Van Acker, 2009; Zablocki & Krezmien, 2012). Community stakeholders who might be interested in this research include school administrators in California, the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD), the California branch of CCBD, the California Department of Education, and the California Teachers' Association.

Summary and Transition

Since 2004, students who receive special education were required to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) established through Title I of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). George and Vannest (2009) determined that almost half of the students with EBD did not take state accountability assessment, making it difficult to monitor

progress and determine which programs are having the most success, or lack thereof. In the interest of LRE, students with EBD are often served in the general education classroom although they might benefit most from additional specialized support (Landrum, 2011). Whether it is fair or appropriate, general education teachers have increasing numbers of challenging students. As such, there is strong agreement that the teachers need PD to effectively educate students with EBD (Bickel, 2010; Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Nelson III & Schultz; 2009; Strauss, 2010). This study will, therefore, be used to determine the teachers' perspectives of their PD experiences and needs to enhance their success with their students who have EBD.

This study may be used to work toward improving the professional experiences of general education teachers who have preschool through high school students with externalizing behaviors. As teachers receive support, behavioral challenges may decrease. This could lead to students who experience increased self-esteem and motivation (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). In turn, as the students experience success and improvement, teachers are likely to become increasingly motivated. It is anticipated that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge on PD needs for teachers, which will benefit the teachers, students with EBD, and society.

Transition Statement

Section 2 will include a thorough literature review that will expound upon topics mentioned in Section 1 and examine additional issues related to the study at hand. There will be an overview which outlines the section's organization. A review of related

literature will be linked to the problem statement and research questions. The literature review will compare and contrast differing points of view, how the study relates to previous research, and why particular choices of data collection and analyses were selected. Important subconcepts will be examined, with reasons given for why a certain conceptual framework was selected for the study. There will also be a literature-based description of themes that have emerged and perceptions of these themes. A discussion of the literature resource choices will substantiate selection of sources used for this study. There will be a review of literature related to the methods, including methodologies that differ.

Section 3 involves the research methodology, wherein the design for the study will be outlined. There will be an account of how the design for this study derives from the problem. The choice of qualitative tradition will be explained, followed by the reasoning for not selecting the other paradigms. The research questions and subquestions, which were first presented in Section 1, will be reiterated.

Also in Section 3, the content for the study will be described and justified. Serious consideration of how participants were protected in an ethical manner will be discussed. There will also be a description of the researcher's role, including previous experiences that could have potentially influenced data collection, data analysis, or the presentation of results. An explanation will be given on the stance that was taken to protect the study from undue bias. Once the researcher's role is clarified, the criteria used in selecting participants will be presented. Data collection will be explained in detail, followed by information on how the data were analyzed. There will be a

discussion on how the validity of the study was established and maintained. Section 3 will conclude with a discussion of how this research relates to the larger study on what general educators of students with EBD need in terms of PD.

Section 4 will be the presentation and analysis of data. Patterns, relationships, and themes will be outlined with an analysis of the findings. Triangulation of the data will be explained. There will be a discussion of how procedures were followed, with evidence presented in the appendices.

The study will culminate with Section 5, the summary and conclusions. This is where recommendations will be made for action and subsequent study. There will be reflection on my experiences involved in the research, including any biases, ideas, or values that might have impacted the study. There will be a concluding statement that summarizes implications for teacher leadership and social change.

Section 2: Review of the Literature

Content, Organization, and Research Strategies

This qualitative study will be used to address a gap in the literature on the perceptions that general education teachers have of their experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors related to EBD. Using phenomenological tradition, the teachers will share their perspectives during interviews wherein the central question will be: What are your perceptions and experiences of the pre-service and in-service training you have had regarding students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD? A subquestion will follow: What are your perceptions and experiences with students in your class who have externalizing behaviors? This subquestion, and follow-up questions, will illuminate the teachers' concerns and difficulties with their students who have EBD. Inferences will be made on the relationship between the teachers' PD experiences and their experiences with students who have had EBD. Information obtained from this study will prove helpful in identifying which PD topics may be most useful for general education teachers. In addition to researching what the teachers need to learn, the literature review will examine evidence-based practices for PD compared to educators' typical pre-service and in-service experiences.

Participants in this study were general educators who have had students from various age groups, ranging from preschool through high school, with externalizing behaviors. The teachers' comments lead to common themes that indicated their learning needs. Also, some of the teachers expressed direct comments about what they wanted to

learn. Adult learners should have a say in determining their own learning needs (Briggs & Coleman, 2007; Zepeda, 2012).

The search for sources involved using search engines such as the Academic Search Complete, EBSCO, Educational Research Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Google Reference Seek, Google, ProQuest, and Web of Knowledge. Key words, relevant topics, and notable authors in the fields of EBD and PD were used. Key words included *emotional and behavioral disorders, mental health disorders, externalizing and internalizing disorders, prevalence of EBD, organizations for EBD, characteristics of EB, professional development for teachers of students with EBD, professional development for general education teachers of students with EBD, evidence-based practices for professional development, evidence-based practices for educating students with EBD, evidence-based practices for educating preschool students with EBD, evidence-based practices for educating elementary students with EBD, evidence-based practices for educating secondary students with EBD, pre-service training of general education teachers, pre-service and in-service training of special education teachers, experiences of general education teachers of students with EBD, qualitative research, phenomenological research, hermeneutics, and paradigm assumptions*. Relevant topics that were searched included special education, special education law, EBD, teachers' perceptions on the inclusion of students with EBD, teacher attrition, strategies to educate students with EBD, behavior intervention, mental health status with California children, professional development for teachers of students with EBD, and professional development of general education teachers who have students with EBD in California.

Notable authors were determined by purchasing current books on EBD and PD then matching authors who repeatedly wrote on specific topics. Authors were also located through the references that were cited during research.

Sources that met the search criteria were dated from 2008 to 2015, with the exception of studies that constituted seminal work. Criteria for the rejection of resources included research conducted prior to 2008, unless the information was uniquely relevant. Also rejected were studies on the experiences of administrators, the experiences of special educators, and internalizing behaviors/states related to EBD. The search results turned up peer-reviewed research journals as well as other types of sources with information that pertained to the academic research. The additional sources include: organizations, online resources, information from PD sessions on crisis intervention, a dissertation, books, peer-reviewed journals, and conferences. More detailed information on authors and sources will be presented later in Section 2, Resources for the Literature.

The organization of this review begins with summaries of the literature to substantiate the rationale for this study. The need to provide teachers with PD on EBD will be addressed. EBD will be defined and clarified, with information on students who may or may not meet eligibility for special education as ED. Historical information on the special education qualification of students with EBD will be presented. This will provide a framework for understanding current laws and practices. There was also an explanation of how students with ED have unique legal protections. Research on the present outcomes for students with EBD will then be highlighted, including societal costs for failure to effectively educate students who have EBD. Research-based strategies for

working with students who have EBD will be presented along with the current lack of implementation due to insufficient PD for teachers.

In addition to underscoring the societal importance of doing well with students who have EBD, this study will be used for a secondary marginalized group: the teachers who have students with EBD. The literature review will also include a research basis for the methodology to be used in this study. Since this PI is for the exploration of teachers' reflections regarding their perceived experiences, literature on PI will be used to substantiate the use of interviews by comparing alternative methodologies that were not selected. There will also be a literature-based description of the themes and perceptions that will be explored.

The literature review will be used to explain the philosophical assumptions of this qualitative study to explore the perceptions of general education teachers in relation to their lived experiences with PD and their experiences with students that have externalizing behaviors related to EBD. The main paradigm, or worldview, that will influence this study is social constructivism. Constructivism is typically used to understand a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). Constructivism is also ideal when a study has multiple participants with varying perspectives based on their unique experiences (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000). A secondary influence for this study will be derived from the advocacy/participatory worldview, since this research involves a marginalized population. When research is empowering, issue-oriented, and intended for social change, advocacy/participatory research is well suited as a research design (Creswell, 2009). Briggs and Coleman (2007) describe educational

research, and research on PD in particular, as that which calls for action research. This is due to the professionalism and values that educators tend to possess, as well as their natural tendency for reflection and critical consideration of what is best.

Participants in the study consisted of twenty California teachers of preschool through high school students. Each teacher had experiences with students who exhibit externalizing behaviors. Data were collected by conducting interviews to ask the teachers questions about their experiences with PD on EBD and their experiences with students who have externalizing EBD. The data were then be coded and examined for emergent themes. Descriptions of interviews followed, with each teacher's comments included. Conclusions were inferred based on recurring themes, with discussions on the possible links between the teachers' PD and their classroom experiences. Recommendations were made, based on the teachers' inferred and expressed needs.

Literature That Substantiates the Rationale for This Study

The Need for Professional Development and Teacher Input

There is strong consensus that general education teachers have not received sufficient PD to effectively address challenging behaviors in their classrooms (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). Moreover, there is no indication that the teachers are being asked what information would be most beneficial. This is the case despite the facts that (a) there has been an increasing prevalence of students with EBD (Nelson et al., 2008; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008); (b) most students with EBD spend the majority of their school day time in the general education classroom (Epstein et al., 2008); and (c) teachers cite students with serious,

frequent behavior problems as their most prevalent source of job satisfaction (Landers et al., 2008).

Effective training on behavior management is needed to support teachers and ultimately improve outcomes for students with EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivet et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Strauss, 2010). Regrettably, however, PD provided to general education teachers has been focused primarily on curriculum without addressing strategies for managing students who need emotional and behavioral support in addition to academics (Niesyn, 2009). When effective behavioral interventions are used in tandem with evidence-based academic instruction, the result has been increased educational success (Crone et al., 2010; Epstein et al., 2008; Ryan, Pierce, & Mooney, 2008).

The Prevalence of EBD

The prevalence of EBD is important to establish because this relates to how many students should be receiving services (Kauffman, Simpson, & Mock, 2009). Statistics on the prevalence of EBD vary according to demographics and diagnostic criteria (Davis et al., 2011; Kauffman & Landrum, 2009). Behavior that is considered atypical for one culture may be acceptable in another (Davis et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is clear that there has been an increase in children who need professional support. In 2006, Kerr and Nelson reported that approximately 1% of children have mental health issues. In 2008, Pierangelo and Giuliani reported the incidence of emotional disorders to affect approximately 8% of students with disabilities and 1% of all students. By 2009, Kauffman and Landrum estimated that up to 20% of children should have been receiving

support for EBD. In 2011, Davis et al. reported that 17-18% of the United States' children had severe social, behavioral, and emotional challenges. These findings were supported by subsequent research wherein moderate to severe levels of EBD were found in around 12% of students and mild levels of EBD in 8% of students (Forness, Freeman, Paparella, Kauffman, & Walker, 2012). These statistics refer to point cases, or children who have EBD at a specific point during childhood or adolescence. When cumulative prevalence was researched, it was determined that 38% of children have EBD sometime during adolescence (Merikangas et al., 2010).

Despite the steady increase in children with EBD, the majority of these students are not receiving mental health services (Davis et al., 2011). For example, 80% of those with EBD have symptoms that onset during the school years, yet there is an average of 10 years before services are initiated (Forness et al., 2012). In the schools, the law provides that students with behavior problems are to be provided with interventions before being deemed eligible for special education as a disabled student; however, interventions in general education are not always provided in a meaningful way (Zirkel & Thomas, 2010). Moreover, when students with EBD are determined eligible for special education, they are often qualified as having a learning disability, speech and language impairment, or other categories of disability rather than ED (Forness et al., 2012; Freeman, Paparella, & Stickles, 2009).

Kauffman et al. (2009) determined that only 1% of students were classified as having ED. The primary reason students are often identified under eligibility categories other than ED is to avoid the stigma (Pescosolido et al., 2008). Unfortunately, this results

in a lack of services that are specified to intervene on students' emotional and behavioral needs (Bussing, Mason, Bell, Porter, & Garvan, 2010). Service delivery gaps also result in a lack of funding to provide the necessary services and a lack of training that would help educators differentiate when students' academic difficulties stem from emotional needs. Ultimately, it is the students with the most severe EBD who tend to receive the proper services (Forness et al., 2012).

In California, the state to be considered for this study, 53% of the 2 to 17 year-olds who need mental health assistance were not receiving services (Children Now, 2011). As for school age students who have disabilities and require mental health services per their IEPs, former Governor Schwarzenegger repealed Assembly Bill (AB) 3632 in October 2010. AB 3632 had ensured the funding of \$133 million for California's school-based mental health services for the previous 25 years (Children Now, 2011). The state's current incumbent, Governor Jerry Brown, has supported the restoration of funding for the mental health services at school for children with disabilities who need counseling work toward IEP benchmarks. This was intended to restore California back to its previous level of support, wherein an estimated 53% of children ages 2-17 years were exempt from school-based mental health services they needed. Unfortunately, California has been ranked as the last state in the nation in terms of counseling provision for students (California Department of Education, 2014).

The Definitions of ED

The criteria for diagnosing mental disorders are different from the criteria that qualify students for individualized, specialized services under the category of ED.

Diagnoses of mental disorders are typically guided by the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxxii). The DSM-IV-TR bases mental disorders on clinically significant emotional, cognitive, and behavioral patterns associated with an individual's current distress or "significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxxii). A person's symptoms must not be related to typical, culturally expected responses, such as grief over the death of a loved one (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxxi). In addition, behavior that is abnormal would not be considered ED unless it was a manifestation of a mental disorder as described above (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

According to IDEA 2004 Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300, the following criterion qualifies students for special education services under the category of ED:

- (4)
 - (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 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 addition, before a student qualifies for specialized services under the ED category: (a) he or she must meet the above listed IDEA eligibility criteria; (b) the student's disability must be negatively impacting his or her educational performance; and (c) it is determined that there is a need for specialized instruction and related assistance (Davis et al., 2011; IDEA 2004; Wright & Wright, 2009).

Landrum (2011) detailed the vague components of the federal definition for ED. When defining the criteria for ED, 34 C.F.R. § 300 (4)(i) of IDEA 2004, it is stated that a student's condition should be present for "a long period of time" and to "a marked degree" without specifying either criteria. There is also confusion on limiting special education to students whose educational performance has been adversely affected. However, it is unclear whether "adversely affected educational performance" refers strictly to academics in the educational setting, or also to behavioral issues that impede the student's education. Additionally, the impact a student's behavior has on the learning and well-being of classmates warrants further investigation.

Another eligibility matter involves the hotly debated issue of not finding students eligible for special education because they are considered SM—a term which has no scientific foundation (Hallahan et al., 2012). If a student has not been determined to have

a specific mental health condition, districts often consider the child's misbehavior to be oppositional or conduct-related and, therefore, SM. However, these students with behavior would likely qualify as having ED under one or more of the five criteria for ED (Landrum, 2011). For example, students with EBD, whether referred to as ED or SM, would likely experience "inability to maintain satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers" or would likely have "inappropriate behavior and feelings under normal circumstances" (Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, 2009, p. 194). Many notable professionals believe that students with SM inherently have emotional difficulties which manifest as misbehavior (Davis et al., 2011; Kauffman & Landrum, 2009). Therefore, it is questionable how IEP teams can reliably determine a student to be SM. The notion of excluding students with SM from receiving special education has been an area of ongoing debate (Davis et al., 2011) with many in the field of EBD refuting the practice (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Landrum, 2011).

In 2015, students from Compton, California (a city where the murder rate is generally five times that of other cities in the United States) filed a class action suit contending that trauma is a disability and students are therefore entitled to accommodations rather than punishment such as suspension and expulsion (Turner, 2015). Turner (2015) authored a news article which has links to (a) the complaint; (b) videos of students recounting their traumatic experiences; (c) the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, with information on the impact that trauma has on students' learning; and (d) the court's decision. U. S. District Judge Mitchell Fitzgerald found that trauma can cause disability, but emphasized that traumatic events do not necessarily

result as such. The judge also denied that enough students were impacted to establish a class action suit. The students' request for teachers to have PD on trauma was denied. (Compton Unified School District has PD; however, the plaintiffs claimed that it was not sufficient.) Plaintiffs planned to move forward with the lawsuit, although there is also the possibility that this matter will be resolved through a settlement agreement between the school district and the plaintiffs.

The History of Special Education Qualification for Students with EBD

In 1960, Eli Bower designed a protocol that has been used in California for determining whether students have severe emotional challenges that should be addressed through special education (Merrell & Walker, 2004). In 1975, Eli Bower's protocol for defining the special education eligibility of Emotionally Handicapped (EH) students was adopted by Congress as Public Law 94-142. Congress made two important revisions to Bower's EH qualification. First, students qualified for special education only if their emotional condition adversely affected academic performance (Merrell & Walker, 2004). Second, special education was not extended to students with SM. Advocates in favor of providing special education for students with SM also emphasize that there are no reliable tools to differentiate ED from SM (Davis et al., 2011), nor has SM ever been defined in federal law (Merrell & Walker, 2004). As such, interpretation has been left to each state, each local educational agency, and each IEP team (Merrell & Walker, 2004). Students who are considered SM often include those with behavioral disorders related to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), or Conduct Disorder (CD) (Merrell & Walker, 2004). Considering the

aforementioned conditions, students who have ADHD are generally considered the least culpable of willful externalizing acts related to SM. Children with ODD and CD tend to be considered SM, but may be recognized as having an overlap of ED (Merrell & Walker, 2004).

When a pupil has EBD and is deemed eligible for special education services, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) may be conducted to determine what is reinforcing his or her behaviors. The school psychologist makes recommendations that are individualized to maximize a student's strengths and minimize his or her challenges (Sugai, 2011). If a BIP has been in effect, but a student continues to have behavior problems, the IEP team reviews and modifies the plan (Wright & Wright, 2009). Beyond strategies to be used in the classroom, an IEP team may refer a student for mental health services that are provided at school. If a student with severe behavioral challenges requires additional support, he or she may also have wraparound services. This entails professional intervention to establish and maintain a cohesive behavior program between home, school, and other relevant settings. A student with needs at this highest level of the continuum may have a psychiatrist and may be taking prescription medication. Students who need this tertiary level of support may receive instruction in general education until it becomes evident if a BIP, counseling, medication, or any combination thereof, make it possible for a child to succeed without a change of placement. There have been increasing indications that mental health support, sometimes in conjunction with medication, has had positive effects on students' success in school (Jacobs et al., 2010; Molina et al., 2009).

Wright and Wright (2009) addressed placement by explaining that if a student with an IEP is being educated in general education but is not responding to the supplementary aids and services provided, his or her IEP team may consider alternate settings for any percentage of the school day that seems reasonable. Since students with disabilities have a range of needs, public educational agencies must provide a continuum of services. Possible educational settings include general education classrooms, pull-out programs, self-contained classes, nonpublic schools, hospital settings, residential settings, correctional settings, and in-home settings. Special education programs usually have a higher ratio of adults to children. Many school districts have classes wherein all students have ED, with teachers and paraprofessionals who have specialized training. In severe situations, residential treatment and correctional institutions may be appropriate. Transitions to such settings are mandated by social services and the court rather than an IEP team. Nevertheless, any time a student moves to a new setting, his or her educational program should continue as prescribed by the previous IEP team. Within 30 days, the new IEP team is to convene and agree to continue the IEP as written or make changes as needed.

When students with EBD are in the process of being evaluated, special educators and related service providers have been helpful at setting up positive behavioral supports in the general education setting (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). Teachers with well-managed classrooms have students who experience greater academic success (Epstein et al., 2008). When teachers address their students' emotional needs, children behave better and have an 11% increase in academic achievement (Strauss, 2010). Nevertheless, it

takes expertise to adequately support students with EBD while simultaneously ensuring that all students are learning. Jolivet et al. (2010) named teacher preparation as the number one need in the field of EBD. There is strong consensus that general educators need training to effectively support students who have EBD (Bickel, 2010; Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Nelson III & Schultz; 2009; Strauss, 2010). Despite this need, there is a stark deficiency in the literature on the general education teachers' perspective regarding their own learning needs.

Outcomes of Students with EBD

There has been much research on the lack of academic and social progress made by children who have EBD. Morgan, Frisco, Farkas, and Hibel (2010) evaluated the progress of students with EBD and determined that there was no benefit from special education; if anything, there may have been negative academic and behavioral results. Siperstein, Wiley, and Forness (2011) conducted a study wherein students with ED were evaluated over a two year period and did not make significant academic or social progress. This study examined the impact of (a) schools considered high income verses low income, (b) the types of goals students had, and (c) which programs were provided. None of these factors resulted in a significant difference (Siperstein et al., 2011). What has been found effective, however, is evidence-based instructional practices (Benner et al., 2010) combined with evidence-based behavioral practices (Burns & Ysselydyke, 2009). Although evidence-based practices (EBP)/evidence-based strategies (EBS) are available, they have not been adequately conveyed to teachers (Epstein et al., 2008;

Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010). General education teachers of students who have EBD have not had sufficient PD opportunities (Chong & Ng, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010). As a result, these productive EBS are not used enough to have a far-reaching impact (Lane & Menzies, 2010).

The need for PD is paramount in California, the state to be considered for this study (Children Now, 2011). For teachers in general, the greatest source of profession-related stress and job dissatisfaction was determined to be students with ongoing and severe behavioral challenges (Landers et al., 2008). Teachers want to know how to effectively work with students who have severe behavior (Landers et al., 2008). In addition to an overall lack of PD, there is little follow-up support, which likely contributes to the lack of effective strategy use even when training has been provided (Tillery et al., 2010). It stands to reason that this void has contributed to teachers who are not content with their work (Boe et al., 2008), sometimes to the point of leaving the profession altogether (Chang, 2009). Miserable teachers, and teachers whose frustration levels are high, may aggravate the negative short and long-term effects for students with EBD. Insufficient PD for teachers has also contributed to severe personal and fiscal repercussions endured by the families of these students, as well as to their communities, counties, states, and the federal government.

Short-term effects of EBD include a greater likelihood of absenteeism (Harris, 2009), retention (Harris, 2009), academic failure (Boreson, 2006; Harris, 2009), more restrictive educational settings (Harris, 2009), expulsion (Boreson, 2006), multiple early pregnancies for females (Boreson, 2006), young mothers losing custody of their children

(Boreson, 2006), disproportionate involvement in the juvenile justice system (Harris, 2009; Zhang et al., 2011), and an elevated high school dropout rate (Alliance, 2010; Harris, 2009). Beyond issues that result in a poor quality of life, sometimes the outcomes for children with EBD are tragic. Bhargava and Gandhi (2010), for example, reported that 10-15% of children who have bipolar disorder committed suicide before adulthood. Fifteen percent of California's high school students seriously contemplated suicide last year (Children Now, 2011). Also in California, 33% percent of 11th graders, 32% of 9th graders, and 29% of 7th graders felt sad and without hope for at least two weeks, to the point where they did not participate in their routine events (Children Now, 2011).

Throughout the United States, there have been well publicized incidences of violence committed by adolescents with EBD. For example, children who have poor bonds with school, close ties with delinquent individuals, poor school achievement, traumatic life events, and harsh parenting are more likely to display aggressive behavior (Cheung & Cheung, 2008). Children who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from exposure to violence at home, sexual abuse, dangerous neighborhoods, and other traumas may eventually use violence to resolve problems or control other people (Harris, 2009).

When compared to adults with other disabilities, Boreson (2006) found that individuals with EBD include having the highest rate of unemployment and homelessness four years after high school. Individuals with EBD also have disproportionately high rates of incarceration and recidivism (Zhang et al., 2011). The former District Attorney of San Francisco, Kamala Harris, discovered an inverse relationship between minors who graduated from high school and murder rates. For example, from 2004-2008 in San

Francisco, high school dropouts were responsible for 94% of the murders that were committed by individuals younger than 25 years-old (Harris, 2009). Likewise, there were a comparable percentage of murder victims under 25 years-old who had dropped out of high school (Harris, 2009). With a dropout rate greater than 50% for students with EBD (Mayer & Van Acker, 2009), the importance of effectively addressing the students' needs is evident.

In addition to the negative long-term outcomes which directly impact individuals with EBD, financial and emotional consequences are suffered by society (Alliance, 2009; Harris, 2009). The adult effects begin with a high school dropout rate greater than 50% for students with EBD (Mayer & Van Acker, 2009). From there, the public ultimately pays for unemployment, welfare, healthcare, and other social services (Alliance, 2009). There is also the issue of crime, the emotional impact to the victims, the victims' loved ones, and the perpetrators' families. In addition to the personal consequences suffered by victims and families, there are societal expenses for public defenders, court hearings, incarceration, and parole (Belfield & Levin, 2007). In 2006, the federal government spent more than \$36 billion; states spent more than \$69 billion; and local governments paid \$109 billion on criminal and civil justice (Harris, 2009). In California, approximately 30% of students failed to graduate on time (Belfield & Levin, 2007); approximately 120,000 students drop out of California's high schools annually (Children Now, 2011). The costs resulting from students dropping out of school is estimated to be \$46.4 billion, or 3% of the state's annual expenditures (Children Now, 2011). Although these figures include all students who drop out, not exclusively students with EBD, the

Children Now (2011) data provide an overall perspective of the situation in the target state for this study.

Successful Strategies for Working with Students Who Have EBD

When considering components that lead to the improved success of children with EBD, working with the families of children from infancy to 5 years-old is an effective place to begin (Reynolds et al., 2001). Proactive intervention at a young age is important because children who continue to have behavioral challenges beyond 8 years of age tend to require ongoing support for chronic academic and behavioral challenges (Nelson et al., 2008). There is extensive research on effective strategies for educating students with EBD; however, this information has not been provided to educators in an effective or sufficient manner (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al. 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). According to Cosmos (2010), the Department of Education provides funds for training general educators who have students with emotional challenges. Bickel (2010) asserted that all school staff should have mandatory training in techniques for conflict de-escalation to prevent or defuse crisis situations. Such training should be ongoing and should include practice sessions (Bickel, 2010).

In California, there are in-home and center-based infant programs for children from birth to 3 years-old. These programs are state funded and provided by vendors of local regional centers. Based on an infant's need, there is speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavior programs, developmental intervention, and the like. These services are earmarked for infants with developmental disabilities, infants who are at risk due to premature birth, and typically developing infants if a parent has a

developmental disability. In addition to the above mentioned services, families may qualify for respite support, parenting classes, and counseling for any family member. Such services may be requested by an infant's family, recommended by a pediatrician/physician, or ordered by the court if social services or law enforcement has been involved. Requests for evaluation are directed to local, state funded regional centers. From there, an infant is assessed and a determination is made regarding qualification for services. If an infant qualifies for regional center services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (ISFP) is developed. The ISFP is similar to an IEP and managed by a Service Coordinator at the infant's regional center. Service Coordinators decide which vendors (service providers) to hire on behalf of an infant with a disability. Vendors of the regional centers are responsible for (a) conducting ongoing assessments, (b) developing and working toward goals to promote the infants' progress, (c) working with the infants and families to ensure effective follow through, and (d) participating in ISFP meetings to update progress and present future goals.

There has been an increase in the incidence of preschool children who have behavioral challenges (Squires & Bricker, 2007). Instead of focusing on the front end, supporting children with programs that have the potential to improve their lives, California has inexplicable amounts of money tied up at the back end. For example, the state spent approximately \$10,000,000.00 a year to support the 33 adult prisons, seven juvenile institutions, parole services, and related programs (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation [CDCR], 2011). This continues despite the CDCR's (2011) self-reported recidivism rate of 67.5% in 2008 for the 105,974 parolees who were

released in 2005. Meanwhile, there is not sufficient funding for children who are at risk and in need of quality preschool in hopes of avoiding this failed system as a future outcome (Children Now, 2011). The lack of funding for preschool persists in spite of the awareness that preschool improves emotional well-being, increases high school graduation rates, enhances future opportunities, and leads to long-term monetary savings for the state (Children Now, 2011).

There are research-based strategies that are effective for preschool children with EBD. Function-based supports is a tried and true system that involves the use of data for defining the functions, or causes, of a behavior and determining what was reinforcing the behavior (Nahgahgwon, Umbreit, Liaupsin, & Turton, 2010). The information was used to drive behavior intervention plans that were effective with addressing behavioral challenges in early childhood (Wood, Ferro, Umbreit, & Liaupsin, 2011). Likewise, the Positive Education Program (PEP) has resulted in improved behavior (Steed, 2011). PEP is a three tier model: Universal support is Tier One, the level of support provided to all students; targeted support is Tier two, for students who need additional interventions; and individualized support is Tier three. Steed (2011) focused on the tier two level of intervention for preschool children. A team created and launched the program and trained their colleagues on implementation. In short, Steed considered Tier 2 strategies and, specifically, data collection sheets. It was recommended that a star system be used wherein students who meet their behavioral goals color in a star. This was considered preferable to having happy/sad faces or thumbs up/thumbs down because it foregoes the negative icons.

PEP is similar to the PBIS model which also involves three tiers, or levels of support, for students. Gilliam and Shabar (2006) described the initial level of PBS as including well organized classrooms, three to five rules provided with pictures, and ongoing feedback so students knew how they were doing. The second level of support involved small group intervention and reinforcement of expectations for students who needed this additional guidance (Gilliam & Shabar, 2006). The tertiary level of support, for the few students who needed the most support, required FBAs to guide the development and implementation of individualized BIPs (Gilliam & Shabar, 2006).

Strategies that are effective with preschool children include (a) interventions involving peer interactions, such as pre-correction and providing brief amounts of incidental feedback to promote positive language and social interactions; (b) tiered approaches to positive behavioral supports, such as structuring the environment and activities to prevent misbehavior, increasing the intensity of instruction for students who need additional support, and conducting FBAs and BIPs to support students who need individualized interventions; and (c) intervention through literacy, including interactive shared reading, a component for parent participation beyond school, and inclusion of academic instruction (Marshall, Brown, Conroy, & Knopf, 2011). Intervening on antecedents was also an effective means of improving the behavior of preschool students. Strategies such as manipulating environmental conditions, individual prompting, and group prompting resulted in generalization of students' success over time and across settings (Park & Scott, 2009). In a study on Head Start programs, it was determined that effective communication between staff members impact the use of quality and efficient

success of behavioral interventions (Quesenberry, Hemmeter, & Ostrosky, 2011). The importance of teachers having support that continues beyond their training on behavioral interventions was also emphasized (Quesenberry et al., 2011).

The above mentioned PBIS strategies for preschool are also effective for older children, all the way through high school (Benedict, Horner, & Squires, 2007). Other effective strategies to address EBD include (a) focusing on improving academic successes (Vannest, 2011); (b) the provision of mental health services (Children Now, 2011); (c) vocational programs in secondary education (Boreson, 2006); and (d) inclusive settings where teachers insist upon set standards of achievement (Boreson, 2006). In addition, Harris (2009) promotes the importance of realigning the state's resources toward the prevention of crime by addressing the needs of children. Since there is a significant correlation between graduation rates and crime rates, Harris has attacked the first stage in the chain of educational failure: attendance. Harris (2009) considers truancy as the most important matter to address in order to prevent crime throughout the country.

Chong and Ng (2011) conducted a study in China where teachers were interviewed to determine which types of behavioral interventions they used most and which they used least. The Chinese teachers reported that they were more inclined to use behavioral strategies (reinforcement and consequences), systemic strategies (ecological, environmental), cultural strategies (consideration of heritage), and social strategies (relationships and sense of belonging) than they were to use cognitive strategies (goal setting, self-monitoring/rewarding systems). Like teachers in the United States, it can be expected that there is a need for efficient strategies in a classroom setting. As such, it is

possible that students need counseling or teachers who are trained, efficient, and willing to implement cognitive strategies. Even if teachers are adept with cognitive strategies, some students need support beyond what their teachers can provide. Children Now (2011) found that mental health services were inaccessible for 47% of California's children, 2-17 years-old, that needed such services. In 2014, the California Department of Education (CDE) reported that the 29% of its schools have no counseling whatsoever. California has 945 students to every 1 counselor, compared to the average nationally of 477 students to every 1 counselor. The CDE reported that California ranked last in the nation for supporting students by providing counseling. Based on personal observation, students who have ASD are almost always precluded from receiving counseling services at school. Students with chaotic family lives and histories of emotional trauma may also be refused services unless they have been formally diagnosed with ED, which may only occur after a psychiatric or medical professional provides a specific diagnosis. When school-based counseling is provided, there is a confidential parent component and support for the classroom teacher as needed. The lack of counseling services for students with disabilities and EBD in California is unfortunate, since parental relationships have the strongest influence on children's behavior (Montague, Cavendish, Enders & Dietz, 2010).

In terms of effective programs, Swank and Huber (2013) described success with community-based vocational programs for students with EBD. Likewise, there have been innovative programs, such as the Simon Youth Foundation, where educational classes for at risk students have been conducted in community locations such as shopping

malls (Chalker & Stelsel, 2009). This approach was believed to be successful because class ratios were 15 students to 1 teacher, students were each allowed to work at their own pace, and there were less social distractions (Chalker & Stelsel, 2009). The students attended school for a half day, which allowed time to work and care for their young children (Chalker & Stelsel, 2009). This program had a 90% graduation rate. Since students were educated in the community, there were increased employment opportunities after graduation. For example, one student whose classes met in a mall was able to secure employment at a pharmacy in that setting. This led to her interest in pharmacology, which prompted college plans and increased her likelihood of a promising future.

To address the concern related to teachers not having high expectations and not providing accommodations for students with EBD, there should be strategic pairing of teachers with EBD training and students who have EBD (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). This strategic pairing should be combined with pre-service training and in-service training (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). Unfortunately, disproportionate numbers of teachers who have students with EBD are new hires, placed in settings of economic disadvantage, with students who have higher than average numbers of behavior issues and low academic performance (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). Such schools, with low income and high rates of students with EBD, have difficulty attracting and retaining special education teachers (Fall & Billingsley, 2008) who could be a support to the general educators. Teachers need pre-service and ongoing in-service training; and, understandably, novice teachers need the most support (Bickel, 2010; Epstein et al., 2008; Jolivet et al., 2010; Strauss,

2010). Teacher preparation and ongoing PD should include a systematic approach to teaching classroom management, including guided practice and feedback (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). Classroom management should focus on proactive, preventative strategies, with corrective measures employed as necessary (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). The goal is to promote developmentally appropriate learning that will preclude reactive strategies such as suspension (Buron & Wolfberg, 2008; Oliver & Reschley, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Academic instruction should be provided in tandem with a school-wide behavior support system for optimal effectiveness (Mattison & Schneider, 2009).

Berliner (2009), from Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Research Unit in Tempe, Arizona, wrote a brief on out-of-school factors that impede students' success, with a focus on the impact of poverty. Berliner reported that poverty results in out-of-school-factors which ultimately impact learning. These OSFs include: low birth weight and other neonatal factors; lack of medical, dental, and vision care; environmental pollutants; lack of food; impoverished and unsafe neighborhoods; and family stressors. Berliner highlighted correlations between out-of-school-factors and academics. More specifically, out-of-school-factors correlated to conditions such as ADHD, neurological disorders, learning disabilities, and oppositional behaviors that impact learning.

Parenting education is an effective means of addressing students' behavioral challenges (Vannest, 2011). *The Incredible Years*® is an internationally renowned parenting program by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton. The program was designed and based on Patterson, Reid, and Dishion's (1992) research with antisocial boys and their

families. The program entails an interlocking series of evidence-based strategies for parents, teachers, and children. *The Incredible Years*® was originally established for youngsters with ODD and CD; however, adaptations have been made to address children with ADHD (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2013). The curriculum, which is geared to children from newborn to 12-years-old, is supported by various studies and has been translated for use in various countries (Azvedo, Seabra-Sarros, Gaspar, & Homem, 2013; Hutchings, Martin-Forbes, Daley, & Williams, 2013; Mentinga, Orobio de Castro, & Matthy, 2013).

California's students who have IEPs may have mental health services. In a local school district, for example, a student's IEP team refers him or her to be considered for mental health services. The process begins with six pre-referral sessions, followed by an IEP meeting that allows the psychologist to recommend whether school-based mental health services are needed to help the student reach his IEP goals. If so, the child is referred for a formal assessment. If the student qualifies for mental health services, he or she is seen individually by a psychologist during school hours. In addition to services for the student, there is contact between the parents and the school-based mental health care provider. Unfortunately, these services were only been provided for students who have disabilities and deficits being addressed through an IEP until the 2015-2016 school year. Since then, there are a limited number of psychologists who have been hired to address the needs of general education students throughout the school district.

In terms of the school environment, it is important that schools are positive and proactive (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2010; Reynolds et al., 2001). The CDC

(2010) report noted that children who bully are at greater risk for truancy, property crimes, physical altercations, and dropping out of school. The report further suggested prevention strategies, which included *Individual Level Strategies*, *Relationship Level Strategies*, *Community Level Strategies*, and *Societal Level Strategies*. Based on the CDC (2010) recommendations, *Individual Level Strategies* include explicit instruction, modeling, and role playing. *Relationship Level Strategies* involve interventions for families, especially for families with young children. The CDC also recommends mentoring programs for older children. For the greatest effect, mentors should be well trained, nonjudgmental role models of prosocial behavior. *Community Level Strategies* include improvements in classroom management, active monitoring of students, and involving parents in addressing bullying. Beyond the school, the CDC recommended supervising children when they are not in school, including services such as childcare, sports, and recreation programs. Proactive strategies should be in place to prevent children from accessing drugs and alcohol. Moreover, the housing and employment needs of families should be a priority. *Societal Level Strategies* involve strategies that will result in long-term improvements, such as public campaigns to improve social norms, addressing violence in the media, and reforming education by addressing issues at the institutional level.

In terms of classroom strategies that teachers can employ, Vannest (2011) provided a comprehensive list of EBS that teachers can use for students with EBD. She included educational strategies, such as (a) anger management skills training, (b) modeling, (c) video modeling, and (d) exposure based techniques. Vannest included peer

interventions: (a) class wide peer tutoring, (b) interdependent group-oriented contingency management, (c) peer mediated interventions, (d) peer tutoring, and (e) peer-mediated conflict resolution and negotiation. There are strategies that involve students managing their own behavior: (a) choice, (b) self-instruction, (c) self-mediated strategies, (d) self-monitoring, and (e) self-management. The family is included among the research-based strategies, highlighting (a) family therapy and (b) parent training. Vannest also listed numerous means for recording and reinforcing students' positive behavior.

For classroom routines that facilitate positive behavior, Cheney (2011) determined that schools should have rules that are visible; and students should be well monitored throughout the school day. Classroom routines should be well established, with teachers using proximity, eye contact, hand signals, and clear statements to direct behavior. Other EBPs mentioned by Cheney (2011) included using varied academic approaches, having contracts for students who need it, and having a rich repertoire of positive consequences, including praise, group contingencies, and token economies.

Teachers Who are Successful with Students Who Have EBD

Beyond knowledge of the strategies for working successfully with students who have EBD, it is important to know the characteristics of teachers whom have worked successfully with these challenging students. Solar (2011) found that teachers who provide a secure, consistent, safe environment will have a better connection with students that have EBD. The teachers must have flexibility, with the willingness to sometimes provide care as a mentor, a counselor, and a nurse, as well as an educator (Boe, 2013). It was determined that effective environments for students with EBD have adequate

classroom and program provisions combined with a collective sense of professional effectiveness that is shared by colleagues. Mackenzie (2012) named characteristics for the resiliency of teachers who have students with EBD: a sense of moral purpose, a strong support network beyond work, pride in their accomplishments, and a sense of confidence.

Likewise, Boe (2013) underscored that teachers with longevity in the field of EBD share the characteristics of understanding, patience, flexibility, resilience, and the belief that they are able to have success with the students. In another study, Prather-Jones (2011) determined the characteristics of teachers who are successful with students that have EBD to include a flexible nature, appreciation for variety, interest in students who have EBD, and internal motivation to work with this population. Humor has also been found to be an important quality to have when working with students who have EBD (Austin, Brodsky, Malow, Gomez, 2011; Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008). Participants in Boe's study (2013) brought up the importance of teachers being mindful that students' misbehavior is an attempt to have his or her needs met. Behavioral excesses may indicate a need for attention, control, avoidance, or sensory regulation (Boe, 2013).

Summary of the Rationale for the Study

When school staff does not tend to children who have with EBD, results include a greater likelihood of absenteeism, academic failure, retention, more restrictive educational settings, involvement with juvenile justice, and dropping out of high school (Harris, 2009). Specific factors that impede the success of students with EBD include: (a) low academic skills, (b) a lack of vocational programs in secondary education, (c) a

lack of counseling services, and (d) non-inclusive settings, and (e) testing situations where teachers insist upon set standards of achievement while providing little accommodation/modification or emotional consideration (Boreson, 2006; Jolivette et al., 2000; Lindstrom, 2011). In addition to the difficulties students with EBD face, there are also financial consequences and societal repercussions (Alliance, 2009; Harris, 2009)

The results of this study will highlight the PD experiences and needs of general education teachers who have students with externalizing behaviors from preschool through high school. Teachers are in a unique position, because they have a substantial amount of time and opportunity to impact the lives of children with EBD. Unfortunately, disproportionate numbers of educators who have students with EBD are new hires, placed to work within the constraints of economic disadvantage, a higher than average number of behavior issues, and low academic performance (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). Teachers need pre-service and ongoing in-service training for working effectively with their students who have EBD, with novice teachers needing the most support (Bickel, 2010; Epstein et al., 2008; Jolivette et al., 2010; Strauss, 2010). Teacher preparation and ongoing PD should include a systematic approach to teaching classroom management, including guided practice and feedback (Oliver & Reschley, 2007). Classroom management should focus on proactive, preventative measures, with corrective measures employed as necessary (Cheney, 2011). One idea, proposed by Zirkel and Thomas (2010), would be to require preventative measures, rather than allowing students' behaviors to worsen during the evaluation process. This would require PD to inform teachers on the implementation of behavior interventions. Ultimately, the goal is to

promote learning, which precludes reactive strategies such as suspension and requires engaging, developmentally appropriate instruction (Buron & Wolfberg, 2008). Academic instruction should be provided in tandem with a school-wide behavior support system for optimal effectiveness (Oliver & Reschley, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2010) presented findings from the *National Youth Risk Behavior Survey* involving high school students in 2007. The findings indicated that 5.9% of the students had a weapon at school within the previous month, with threats or injuries involving weapons experienced by 7.8% of the students while at school. The findings also indicated that, over the course of 2006-2007, more than 12% of school children were involved in aggressive altercations; and 22.3% of the students were offered or provided with drugs on campus. In 2006, there was a reported 29 violent crimes per 1,000 students. Bullying was reported by 32% of high school students in 2007, including cyber bullying at a rate of 4%. The CDC (2010) report noted that children who bully are at greater risk for truancy, property crimes, physical altercations, and dropping out of school. The report further suggested prevention strategies, which included *Individual Level Strategies*, *Relationship Level Strategies*, *Community Level Strategies*, and *Societal Level Strategies*.

Based on the CDC (2010) recommendations, *Individual Level Strategies* include explicit instruction, modeling, and role playing. *Relationship Level Strategies* involved interventions for families, especially for families with young children. The CDC also recommended mentoring programs for older children. For the greatest effect, mentors should be well trained, nonjudgmental role models of prosocial behavior. *Community*

Level Strategies include improvements in classroom management, active monitoring of students, and involving parents to address bullying. The CDC recommended monitoring children when school is out, through childcare, sports, and recreation programs.

Proactive strategies should be in place to prevent children from accessing drugs and alcohol. Moreover, the housing and employment needs of families should be a priority.

Societal Level Strategies involve strategies that will result in long-term improvements, such as public campaigns to improve social norms, addressing violence in the media, and reforming education by addressing issues at the institutional level.

Cosmos (2010) used online discussions and survey responses to compile information presented by the Council for Exceptional Children. Cosmos cited Eleanor Guetzloe, with the University of South Florida, who described students with EBD as the least likely to maintain friendships and graduate high school. Cosmos also conveyed the concerns of Robert Horner, professor at University of Oregon, who stated that we have the knowledge to support children with EBD but not the political commitment to provide the necessary resources. According to Cosmos, the Department of Education provides funds for the training of general education teachers who have students with emotional challenges.

Bickel (2010) stated that all school staff should have mandatory, ongoing training with practice of techniques for conflict de-escalation to prevent and defuse crisis situations. McMahon et al. (2013) conducted a study with 2,410 teacher participants, 50.9% of whom reported being victimized [through verbal abuse, property damage, or physical attacks] at least once in the past two school years. Teachers need training on

proactive school-wide methods of preventing emotional escalations. Ross and Horner (2009) found that School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) facilitated improvement with school climate, student learning, and teachers feeling more content and competent.

Research Basis for the Proposed Research Methodology

Potential themes and perceptions to be explored include, first and foremost, the teachers' perceptions of their experiences with students who have externalizing types of EBD. It was predicted that the general education teachers would probably describe frustrations they have experienced with their students who have EBD (Landers et al., 2008). It was expected that the teachers would express how they have tried everything they know to work with their most challenging students. Teachers were expected to mention how their students with externalizing behaviors have disrupted the learning of other children. It was also predicted that teachers would convey a desire to learn the process for getting difficult or dangerous students out of their classrooms. From the teachers' experiences, themes that were expected to emerge include the need to know: (a) how IDEA mandates related to students with EBD (Howey, 2011); (b) how certain behaviors may coincide with certain disabilities (Pierangeo & Giuliani, 2008); (c) how to implement positive behavioral strategies (Horner et al., 2008); (d) how to prevent or de-escalate agitated students (Behavior Analysis for Successfully Initiating Change [B.A.S.I.C.], 2011; Crisis Prevention Institute [CPI], 2010; Dufresne, 2010; Professional Assault Crisis Training & Certification [Pro-ACT], 2010); and (e) how to react in the event of a crisis (B.A.S.I.C., 2011; CPI, 2010; Pro-ACT, 2010).

It was projected that teachers would not focus extensively on the possible long-term outcomes of students with EBD in general. Concerns were expected to be limited to the futures of students whom participants have known personally. It was also projected that teachers would spend more time discussing the externalizing behaviors of students than the internalizing behaviors, even though the effects of overt behavior *and* internal emotional states can both become hardwired once students are eight years old. Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) emphasized that if behavior is not remediated by this time, it becomes chronic. From that point, strategies to address behavior switches from prevention and remediation to ongoing management.

While preparing for the study, I considered how it would be a welcome surprise if EBS were specified by the teachers during interviews, especially the notion of using evidence-based academic strategies in tandem with evidence-based behavioral strategies (Epstein et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2008). Broad future implications, such as the array of potentially negative societal effects, were not expected to be on the forefront of participants' minds. For example, I considered how it would be surprising if teachers specified possible fiscal or emotional factors to the various stakeholders. For example, some teachers were expected to express concern over the impact that a student with EBD had on his or her own family; however, it was not expected that the teachers would mention the future families of their students with EBD and others who may suffer the consequences of problem behaviors that persist into the future.

Resources for the Literature Review

The resources for this literature review included peer-reviewed journals articles, organizations, reputable online sources, news articles, books related to EBD, professional development trainings, dissertations, and speakers at professional conferences. In addition to reading numerous sources, attending conferences, and participating in trainings, time was spent referring to the references cited by each author. This helped in determining which sources were reputable by noting whose work was repeatedly referenced. The conferences were also very helpful in this regard. Before attending conferences, an effort was made to learn of each presenter's previous work, his or her expertise, and whom they cited in their own work. This section on resources has been organized as listed above, with information about each resource presented in alphabetical order by authors' last names.

Organizations and Researchers Who Have Written for Organizations

Organizations have been included as resources about (a) legal information related to IDEA, IEPs, and students with behavior problems; (b) PD for teachers; (c) the impact of poor outcomes; and (d) directions for influencing future policies. Howey (2011) is a special education advocate with Wrightslaw, a well-respected organization that provides up-to-date legal information regarding special education. For this study, Howey's article entitled, "What You Need to Know About IDEA 2004: IEPs for Children with Behavior Problems," will be used to define IDEA mandates related to students with EBD.

Wrightslaw provides information on Topics A-Z, Section 504, Behavior & Discipline, IEPs, Legal Requirements of IEPs, No Child Left Behind, and What You Need to Know

About IDEA. Wrightslaw also has: Book Store; Multimedia Training; an Advocacy Library; a Law Library; Resources and Directories; and Yellow Pages for Kids to assist with locating attorneys, advocates, and therapists, and information of educational grants.

Resources that are helpful for PD to assist teachers with classroom management include the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (found at www.gtlcenter.org), What Works Clearinghouse (WWC; found at www.ies.ed.gov/ncer/wwc/), and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; found at www.cec.sped.org). Oliver and Reschly (2007) presented study results on “Effective Classroom Management: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development,” by authors associated with Vanderbilt University, produced by the *National Comprehensive Center for Research Quality*, and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee is known to have professors who are passionate about seeing improvements for students with EBD. One of their professors, Dr. Kathleen Lane, made a lasting impression during presentations and a mentoring session at the 34th Annual TECBD Conference, “Future Research Directions for the Field of EBD: Academic and Social Ideas Across Ages and Settings.” Dr. Lane recommended that each person in the field should find an area of expertise and develop it to the fullest on behalf of students with EBD. She had some of her university students accompany her to the conference and shared that they were publishing work together. It was impressive to see Dr. Lane’s dedication to university students who will follow in her footsteps for this important work.

Epstein et al. (2008) conducted a comprehensive study entitled, “Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom: A Practice Guide.” These

researchers ranked the best strategies for reducing misbehavior in the classroom and provided a checklist so teachers can easily determine which strategies they need to focus on. The researchers' report is presented on the website for What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). WWC is a comprehensive resource for teachers, with a focus on providing evidence-based instructional practices.

The CEC leads all organizations that advocate on behalf of children with exceptionalities, including children with disabilities, children who are gifted, and children who are twice exceptional (i.e., children with both disabilities and giftedness). This organization is based in Virginia and facilitates the largest PD conventions of any entity working on behalf of students with exceptionalities. In addition, the CEC has a web site that is rich with resources, including webinars and blogs for teachers, administrators, parents, and others who are interested.

Cosmos (2010) compiled current research for a CEC article entitled, "Children Behaving Badly—Helping Students with Emotional Disorders." Topics addressed included the challenges faced by students with EBD, the fact that we have knowledge on how to help but not the follow-through to make the information accessible. Cosmos' article was a call for the political commitment to improve matters for students with EBD.

Two organizations that provide statistics on the poor outcomes of juveniles with EBD are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The CDC is a major entity within the Department of Health and Human Services. The agency collaborates with other agencies to collect and disseminate scientific data for protecting the health and

well-being of communities and individuals. For example, the CDC provides statistics on Child Maltreatment; Understanding Bullying; Electronic Aggression; Suicide; Youth Violence National Statistics; and Violence Prevention. Information on Youth Violence included statistics from a national survey that were cited in this literature review.

Sometimes the behaviors of children persist into the teen years or early adulthood. When this occurs, California students with EBD may come under the jurisdiction of the CDCR. The CDCR (2011) provides statistics on the number of prisons and juvenile facilities there are in California. There has been a recent decrease in juvenile incarceration. As of December 2008, only 1% of the 225,000 youths arrested in California have been incarcerated and placed in the DJJ. Most youthful offenders have been directed to local programs that serve youth in their home counties, near their families and communities, with the aim of increasing rehabilitative success. In addition to information about juveniles, the CDCR has been used in this study as a resource for the cost of failure to work effectively with children who have EBD. California spends 10 billion dollars per year, yet their own reports indicate a recidivism rate of approximately 67.5% within the three years after parole (CDCR, 2009).

Two organizations that provide statistics to promote policy change are the Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) and Children Now (2011). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) is an organization of proactive educators who conduct and compile research to inform congress on ways to improve. This organization emphasizes the needs of six million high school students who are at the lowest quartile. This includes a disproportionate number of students with EBD, for whom high school graduation is

tenuous. Children Now (2011) is a national organization that provides statistics on the well-being of children, with recommendations for how to improve. Children Now (2011) has a strong component that is focused on California's children. They have evaluated the current state of health and education in their *California Report Card* (2011). The goal of Children Now is to find practical solutions to societal problems that are related to children. Individuals in this organization work with influential opinion leaders, interest groups, and policy makers to promote political change.

Online Sources

There are three online sources that have relevant information on (a) the history of precluding children deemed as SM from receiving special education, (b) the impact of not graduating from high school, and (c) effective programs for students with EBD. In a conceptual position paper, Merrell and Walker (2004) provided an historical context on the exclusion of students with SM from special education services. This exclusion is presented as indefensible, since it is impossible to determine if behavior problems are solely SM or if there may be underlying elements of ED. The work done by Merrell and Walker (2004) resonates with the underlying intent of this disability study, which is to improve long-term outcomes for students with EBD. Tending to behavior problems of students who cannot be clearly defined as ED would undoubtedly entail financial investment; however, ignoring their needs is neither productive for society nor ethical for professionals who serve children.

Belfield and Levin (2007) researched 20 year-old cohorts to determine the effects of not graduating from high school. Their study, which focused on the fiscal impacts of

students' failure to graduate, was presented in *The California Dropout Research Project* (found at http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs_reports.htm). This web site is updated on a regular basis and has many relevant resources.

Boreson (2006), a consultant with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, reported on "Effective Programs for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities." The contribution, which was developed with support from the Wisconsin Statewide Behavior Grant, was valuable for its *Global Screening Checklist* that teachers can use to evaluate their instruction on several domains. The domains included Academics, Affective Education, Behavior Management, Collaboration and Communication, Evaluation and Assessment, Life Skills/Transitions, Staff-Student Interaction, Student Engagement, and Miscellaneous additional components. Boreson (2006) also provided a *Program Improvement Plan*, which teachers can fill in as a tool to address any deficiencies and evaluate their progress. The plan topics for teachers to make notes about include Goals, Activities, Person(s) responsible, Timelines, Evaluations, and Results.

News Articles

In October of 2010, an article entitled "Report: Schools, Teacher Education Programs Ignore How Kids Really Learn" was presented in Strauss' column of *The Washington Post*. The report was authored by Dr. James Comer, the Maurice Falk Professor at the Associate Yale Child Study Center School Developmental Program, and Dr. Robert Pinta, of the Dean at the Curry School of Education with the University of Virginia. The authors emphasized academic gains students can make when social and

emotional needs are met while academics are simultaneously presented at an appropriate developmental level. Comer and Pinta also explained that teacher training does not currently include how to provide an academic education while also meeting the students' social, emotional, and developmental needs.

On October 1, 2015, Cory Turner wrote an online news article for NPR Ed, "How Learning Happens," to present the findings on a lawsuit that students initiated against Compton Unified School District. Turner described the court's findings related to trauma as a disability. In addition to claiming that trauma was a disability the students (plaintiffs) claimed that the PD their school district provided to the teachers was insufficient. The district, however, was not ordered to make changes in terms of PD.

Books

The books for this literature review pertain to (a) diagnostic information for mental health conditions; (b) the IDEA criteria for ED; (c) the difference between students with ED and SM; (d) characteristics of EBD; (e) the under service that occurs for the population of students with EBD; (f) research based strategies for working with students who have EBD; (g) PD; and (h) concerns about poor outcomes, which may originate with poor school attendance. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV) outlines diagnostic criteria for EBD conditions (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Although a psychologist may diagnose a child to have a mental illness, an IEP team may or may not find a student eligible for special education. To qualify for an IEP, a student must have a disability *and* a need for specialized services. Wright and Wright (2009) wrote *Wrightslaw*, a popular

resource often used by parents and advocates, which provides an educational definition of ED. The authors of *Wrightslaw* clarify that school districts do not require a psychologist's diagnosis in order to serve a student. If a student is unable to learn, with emotion or behavior as the factor that prevents learning, he or she may qualify for specialized academic and behavioral support.

Kauffman and Landrum (2009) clarify the uniqueness of EBD in *Characteristics of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and Youth, Ninth Edition*. Kauffman and Landrum's book and *A Step-by-Step Guide for Educators: Classroom Management for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* by Pierangelo and Giuliani (2008) both include information on the prevalence of need for special education services to address EBD. Pierangelo and Giuliani's manual is concise, thorough, relevant, and user friendly. The authors explain the common manifestations of various disabilities, providing classroom management strategies that are specific for a number of psychological disorders including anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, PTSD, reactive attachment disorder, and schizophrenia.

As the prevalence of children with EBD quickly rises, the issue of students with EBD being under identified for special education becomes increasingly problematic. Davis, Culotta, Levine, and Rice (2011) authored *School Success for Kids with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* which provides information on the history of EBD, the increasing prevalence of children with EBD, issue of these increased numbers of children being underserved, and additional topics. This book also covers classroom strategies,

homework strategies, suggestions for increasing students' independence and ability to self-advocate, ideas for planning services, and ideas for accommodations. Resources by Hammeken (2007) and Marzano (2003) also focus on academic strategies, with an emphasis on addressing academic needs as a means of also lessening behavior challenges. Hammeken (2007) authored *The Teacher's Guide to Inclusive Education: 750 Strategies for Success!* which has reproducible items for teachers to use with students that have disabilities. Hammeken (2007) focuses primarily on academic accommodations; however, she explicitly addresses behavior in Chapter 12. Subsections on behavior include, "General Tips for Discipline," "Avoiding a Crisis," "Structuring the Environment," "Behavior and Attention Difficulties," "Impulsivity and Distractibility," "Aggressive or Noncompliant Behavior," "Poor Social Skills," and "Reinforcement and Discipline." Likewise, Marzano's 2003 book, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Practice*, is packed with research based academic strategies that continue to be relevant. Marzano also emphasized the need to provide a safe and orderly school environment, strong classroom management, and consistent student motivation.

There are two books specifically related to ASD, rather than the more general EBD, but with very good information related to behaviors that are commonly a manifestation of ASD. *Learners on the Autism Spectrum: Preparing Highly Qualified Educators*, edited by Buron and Wolfberg (2008) is a text with entries from various experts on important components of autistic students' needs. For example, Chapter 2, on the "Brain-Behavior Connection," is written by Dr. Nancy J. Minshew and Dr. Diane L. Williams, CCC-SLP. Likewise, Chapter 7, on "Teaching a Different Way of Behaving:

Positive Behavior Supports,” is written by Cathy Pratt, Ph.D. This text, which has been used for an Autism Add-on Certification in the western United States, is rich with information on addressing behavioral challenges that could pertain to any child. Special consideration is given to students with Aspergers because of the increase in students who have this diagnosis and because of the anxiety these children often experience. There is also an emphasis on the impact that sensory processing and communication difficulties have on behavior.

Another book that is directed specifically toward addressing behavior is *Responding to Problem Behaviors in Schools: Behavior Education Program*, coauthored by Crone, Hawken, and Horner (2010). This book targets students who need support beyond the general strategies provided for all students in school. Children with moderate behavioral challenges may also need small group interventions. An important contribution of this resource is the provision of academic strategies and monitoring to be provided simultaneously with behavioral interventions.

Kamala Harris, California’s current Attorney General, stands alone in this literature review due to her unique approach to preventing poor outcomes in a large, complex community. In 2009, Harris authored *Smart on Crime*, which presents her responses to the data on recidivism in San Francisco, California, where she served as District Attorney. Harris responded to recidivism by implementing a proactive, multi-faceted, effective program. Included in the program was an emphasis on school attendance, since attendance was identified as a predictor of increased crime and

increased victimization. The author also emphasized the importance that reading and writing have on positive outcomes for at-risk children.

Conferences

At the 34th Annual TEBD Conference in Tempe, Arizona, Ruchi Bhargava and Shelfi Gandhi (2010) presented their research on “Hyperactivity or Elevated Mood: How to Treat them Differently.” A primary focus of their presentation was on differentiating ADHD from BD based on the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics. Bhargava and Gandhi included techniques to use for these two groups of students. Also at the 34th Annual TECBD Conference, a panel of speakers presented “Future Research Directions for the Field of EBD: Academic and Social Ideas Across Ages and Settings.” The panel included Kristine Jolivette of Georgia State University, Maureen Conroy of Virginia Commonwealth University, Kathleen Lane, Ph.D. of Vanderbilt University, C. Michael Nelson, Ed.D. with University Louisville, and Gregory Benner, Ph.D. with University of Washington. Presenters listed the 10 most critical concerns related to EBD, with teacher training as the number one need.

At the CEC Convention & Expo in National Harbor, Maryland on April 26-28, 2011, Kimberly Vannest, Ph.D., of Texas A & M University presented on “Effective Practices and Interventions for Students with EBD at Tier 1, 2, and 3.” Vannest covered many topics and generously gave permission for participants to use her Power Point, which she sent by email, in PD trainings. Vannest’s presentation included 48 EBS for working with students who have EBD. She explained how to determine which students would be in each of the three tiers (approximately 80% in Tier 1, 20% in Tier 2, and 5-

10% in Tier 3). Dr. Vannest also provided information on assessment tools for behavior, with discussion on the need for cost effective interventions for most students. Vannest provided specific strategies for children with hyperactivity, aggression, depression, learning problems, conduct problems, attention problems, somatization problems, adaptability problems, and limited functional communication. The need for interventions that have steps/procedures was emphasized. Procedures were provided for teaching students to self-monitor and problem solve. Vannest presented research that substantiated the use of token economies with students who have conduct issues. Vannest also presented an outline of how to set up token economies, and recommendations on how to evaluate the system if it lacks effectiveness.

Douglas Cheney, Ph.D., was another presenter at the CEC Convention and Expo in National Harbor, MD on April 26-28, 2011. Cheney's topic was "Essential Classroom Management Elements: Daily Consideration to Establish Effective routines and Procedures." The importance of posting rules where everyone can see them was discussed, along with the importance of positive consequences such as specific praise, group contingencies, and token economies. Cheney recommended strategies such as clear, consistent expectations; monitoring and supervising students at all times; proximity and eye contact; clear statements to stop misbehavior; hand signals; differential reinforcement; and response cost.

Professional Development

Behavior Analysis for Successfully Initiating Change ([B.A.S.I.C.], 2011) provided in-services for teachers and paraprofessionals who were part of the local school

district. This was a two-day training that emphasized de-escalation techniques, with some practice for how to respond during a crisis. It was noted that only one general education teacher was present out of approximately 25 individuals who attended the session. There was an emphasis on the concerns about restraint and seclusion of students with EBD, with mention of students who have died as a result of being physically restrained. This training also included how to properly complete reports following a behavioral emergency.

Another crisis intervention training was completed through the Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc. in 2010. This *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention* was provided only for special educators. This two-day training emphasizes the emotional escalation that occurs during a crisis and how to de-escalate a student to prevent a crisis. There was practice for how to intervene if necessary to maintain the safety of a volatile student or others.

Professional Assault Crisis Training & Certification ([Pro-ACT], 2010) is a crisis intervention training. This training takes more time than CPI or B.A.S.I.C. and, as such, is often not used in the schools. Pro-ACT, previously referred to as PART, is generally provided for staff in residential treatment settings and correctional facilities.

Nevertheless, this training has a thorough component for using one's own feelings to gauge the function of a troubled individual's behavior. This insight is used to determine the best means for assisting a volatile person to de-escalate. Physical interventions to keep individuals safe are practiced more so than with CPI or B.A.S.I.C., since Pro-ACT requires a greater investment of time. There is a strong emphasis on teams practicing together and working in sync during a crisis.

Dissertations

Boe (2013) wrote a unique dissertation entitled *Hearts of Hope: Experiences of Teachers and Factors Contributing to Career Longevity*. Whereas many peer-reviewed studies have focused on teachers leaving the field due to the challenges of working with students who have EBD, this study was used to determine what keeps the teachers who have stayed. The teachers who participated worked in self-contained classrooms specifically for children with EBD and had remained for at least 5 years. It was determined that the teachers were motivated by their beliefs and values, their commitment to students with EBD, and their relationships with the colleagues who shared their daily experiences. Although the environment of a self-contained classroom is different than the general education setting, the findings are considered useful for any setting. For example, the teachers cited important environmental factors to be (a) classroom support, (b) program support, (c) a sense of shared efficacy, and (d) critical experiences that were shared. There was a strong emphasis on relationships between staff members, as well as a strong emphasis on relationships between staff and students. Through interviews with the participants in this study, Boe (2013) also gleaned the personal characteristics these teachers had: empathy, understanding, long-term patience, flexibility, resilience, and confidence regarding their effectiveness.

There are also three dissertations from Walden University, by Bell (2012), Pressley (2013), and Watson (2013). These were qualitative studies that were related to general education teachers. The dissertations were used to help gauge how many participants should be in my own research.

Journal Articles

Peer-reviewed research for this literature review includes findings on (a) insufficient pre-service training, (b) job satisfaction, (c) OSFs that influence behavior, (d) SWPBS, (e) behavioral strategies for students from kindergarten through 12th grades, (f) alternative classes for students at-risk in high school, and (g) factors impacting juvenile recidivism. Researchers who investigated pre-service training of teachers included Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, and Merbler (2010), of Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. The authors suggested that pre-service training was not sufficiently preparing teachers to work with the most challenging students. It stands to reason that this would impact how pleased teachers were with their professions. Landers et al. (2008) researched “Students’ Challenging Behavior and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction,” which was presented in *Beyond Behavior*. It was determined that teacher’s leave the profession more at the upper grades than they do at the lower grades, primarily due to students’ lack of respect.

In a unique study, Berliner (2009) of Arizona State University researched the effects of OSFs that impede the success of students from low socioeconomic status. During the recent times of NCLB, it was mandated that schools make AYP; however, students’ needs that extended the school day were not adequately addressed. For example, the low birth weight of babies due to lack of maternal nutrition may have far-reaching effects. Families who have no health insurance or are underinsured may have children who have not had adequate medical, dental, or vision care. Where families are of low socioeconomic status, there is often greater exposure to environmental toxins.

Children whose families struggle financially also have a greater likelihood of food insecurity, poor neighborhoods, and family stress. These factors impact students academically and behaviorally. Berliner (2009) called for these issues to be addressed for the sake of better student outcomes. Other researchers have supported Berliner's findings. Wiley et al. (2010) found students from low income areas to be two standard score points lower on academic testing than students from high income areas.

Montague et al. (2010) conducted a longitudinal study on interpersonal relationships and reported that the greatest forecaster of a child's behavioral challenges, both internalizing and externalizing, is his or her relationship with parents. This research can be located in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

Gilliam and Shabar (2006) found that the rates of suspension and expulsion in preschool superseded the rates of suspension and expulsion with school age students. Using a random sample of 119 children in Massachusetts, it was determined that 15% of preschool teachers had suspended at least one student and 39% had expelled at least one student. The suspension rate was lower than that of K-12 programs; however, the expulsion rate was 13 times the national average. Although this does not give specific information for California, it does highlight the need for positive behavioral supports at the preschool level, where there is the greatest potential for change. This study was found in *Infants and Children* and has been cited in numerous research studies.

Benedict, Horner, and Squires (2007) also conducted research at the preschool level. The researcher investigated the use of PBS with preschool students, wherein it was determined that supports commonly used with older students could also be implemented

with preschool children. These strategies included explicitly taught classroom routines by using visual agendas, formats to aid with transitions, verbal praise, and positive statements. Benedict, Horner, and Squires' study was published in *Topics in Early Childhood Education*. In a literature review a related topic by Ryan et al. (2008) focused on school age students and indicated that a number of PBS strategies that were effective across all grade levels. Peer mediated strategies included cross-age tutoring, remedial tutoring by a highly skilled peer, and peer modeling following behavior instruction. Self-mediated strategies included self-monitoring. Teacher mediated instruction included strategy instruction; model, rehearsal, and feedback; and life space interviewing, which involves discussing behavior when it occurs. This work was entitled, "Evidence-based Practices for Students with EBD," and presented in *Beyond Behavior*.

Also for school age students, Sugai and Horner (2006) authored, "A Promising Approach to Expanding and Sustaining School-Wide Positive Behavior Support." Sugai and Horner found that although a repertoire of practices were available, including SWPSS, effective strategies were not effectively or consistently implemented. This discussion was presented in *School Psychology Review*.

For at-risk high school students, Chalker and Stelsel (2009) researched the success of educating high school students in classrooms that were located in malls. These alternative classroom settings had the advantage of being near potential vocational opportunities. Other advantages included small class sizes, lack of social distractions, and the ability for students to work at their own pace. This successful program had a 90% graduation rate.

“How Long is a Minute? The Importance of a Measured Plan to a Crisis Situation,” in *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, is an article to advocate for having a clear plan in place prior to avert potential behavioral crises. This is where the above mentioned trainings (CPI, B.A.S.I.C., and Pro-ACT) become useful. It takes practice to de-escalate and divert a crisis, and expertise when intervention efforts go poorly. The research of Zhang et al. (2011) involved a quantitative investigation of the factors that influence recidivism among juveniles with disabilities in the South Carolina Juvenile Justice System. They found that African American males from families with criminal histories had higher recidivism than Caucasian adolescents of low socioeconomic status that did not have families with a history of criminal involvement. It was also determined that wraparound services and family empowerment were positive interventions to modify the effects of family criminality.

Review of Literature Related to the Methods

According to Creswell (2013), the first step in deciding upon a methodological research approach is to consider one’s philosophical assumptions. For the purpose of this study, an ontological assumption will be that reality is subjective and based on the participants’ perspectives. As such, the research will be presented by using participants’ direct quotes. Themes will become evident as the individual perspectives are shared. An epistemological assumption will be that I should spend time with participants, with an understanding that I have been a general education teacher and have likely had similar experiences to what the teachers will share. Perhaps the most important philosophical assumption related to this study is the axiological assumption, wherein it is openly

recognized that this topic was selected due to strong personal values about improving the outcomes for children with EBD. When values underlie research, the potential for researcher bias should be acknowledged (Creswell, 2013). Every effort will be made to bracket previous experiences that might influence data collection, analyzing the data, and the presentation of results. Efforts to decrease researcher biases will include (a) selecting participants from online sources, or from the recommendations of others, rather than participants who have professional ties to the researcher; (b) providing interview questions prior to meeting with participants so participants have time to consider their responses; (c) recording the interviews so the teachers' exact words are available; and (d) providing participants with opportunities to read and offer feedback on transcriptions of the interviews. This study will be conducted with conscious efforts to circumvent researcher biases, combined with a concerted effort to interpret what participants' actually mean as they answer interview questions. It is, however, acknowledged that inferences drawn in the findings cannot be absolute. In addition, the final summary will allow for some amount of advocacy/participatory expression. In terms of a rhetorical assumption, the results of this study will be presented as an engaging narrative with the intention of expressing the participants' reflections and feelings in a manner that can be experienced by the reader (van Mahen, 1997).

This research will be qualitative and guided by social constructivism, with elements of an advocacy/participatory perspective (Creswell, 2013). The study will use a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to allow for description of the participants' lived experience in tandem with the researcher's opportunity to be present, learn, and

grow through the process (Moustakas, 1994). As expected with research that is guided by social constructivism, the information for this study will be collected by interviews with the participants. Open-ended interviews will be used for this qualitative research, through which teachers will be asked to share their perceptions of teaching students that have EBD. The main hope will be to glean understanding on what the teachers need to learn in future PD sessions. As long as this primary objective is addressed, interviews will be allowed to detour and include the teachers' perceptions of other experiences related to their students with EBD.

Review of Literature Related to the Use of Different Methodologies

This research will be exploratory and, as such, qualitative inquiry will be preferable to quantitative research (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2009). Quantitative studies are better suited for larger scale testing of theories, with variables that can be compared (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2009). This study involves a topic for which little related research could be located. The perspectives of general education teachers of students with EBD have not been adequately considered, especially in terms of the teachers' PD needs. Therefore, this research calls for qualitative tradition in order to generate a depth of information (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Literature Related to the Methodologies

Considering Different Strategies for Inquiry

Since this research is exploratory, qualitative inquiry is preferable to quantitative research. Quantitative studies are better suited for the larger scale testing of theories, with variables that can be compared (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2009). This implies the

need for a substantial amount of previous literature on the topic. Since the perspective of general education teachers of students with EBD seems to have been overlooked, it is not yet clear what the teachers are interested in learning. As such, this study is an initial investigation and is best suited for qualitative methodology (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2009).

Considering Different Research Approaches

In qualitative research, there are numerous research approaches. Creswell (2013) presents five: narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, and phenomenology. Since the research tradition for this study will be phenomenological, the reasons for ruling out each of the other traditions will be explained. With a narrative, one or more participants tell about their lives (Creswell, 2009). Since this is an exploration of particular lived experiences in the participants' lives, narrative research would be too broad and is, therefore, not applicable. Grounded Theory involves developing a general theory based on data collection that is done in multiple stages (Creswell, 2009). In contrast, this study will lead to increased understanding based on descriptions of how teachers perceive their experiences with their students who have had EBD. Ethnography is used to study a cultural group over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2009); therefore, it is not prudent for a study that entails limited time and does not involve field observation. The case study tradition is used for in-depth exploration of a program, person, occasion, or process using a variety of procedures for collecting data (Creswell, 2009). This research will not require the level of depth that is inherent in the case study approach and, therefore, is not preferable to phenomenological tradition.

Section 3: Research Methods

How This Research Design Derives Logically From the Problem

According to Jolivette et al. (2010), teacher education is the greatest need in the field of EBD. There is strong agreement regarding the need for general education teachers to have PD on how to effectively educate students with EBD (Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Nelson & Schultz, 2009; Strauss, 2010). Despite the need for teachers to have PD, there is no indication that general education teachers have been asked about their perceptions of their experiences or their own PD needs. Zepeda (2012) reported that adult learners should have a say in their own learning needs. With this in mind, exploring the teachers' perceptions of their experiences seemed like a logical place to begin when considering how to design effective refine PD regarding students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD.

Addressing the needs of teachers is important because, although statistics vary, 10-20% of the United States' students are considered to have EBD. Of these students, 5% have emotional needs that exceed the qualifications of teachers (Freeman, Griggs, Anderson, & Kimbough, 2009). In California, the target state for this research, 53% of children ages 2-17 need mental health support but are not being served (Children Now, 2011). In addition to the crisis for our children, the general education teachers consider their greatest source of professional discontent to be working with students who have consistently challenging behavior (Landers et al., 2008). Many students with EBD are general education students who have not been identified as having ED or any other

disability. When students do have a disability and externalizing behavior, there is much controversy about where the students should be educated. For example, Mock and Kauffman (2002) argue that if we look at education the way we do medicine, it does not make sense to prepare general education teachers with the depth needed by specialists. General educators may not require the same depth of training on the intricacies of disabilities; however, all teachers need to know how to prevent and respond to behavioral problems. Espelage et al. (2013) reported that 47.9% of teachers were victimized by students within the past two school years. Half of the teachers reported harassment, one-third suffered property damage, and one-fourth of the teachers were physically attacked by students. As such, general education teachers need additional training on how to stay safe (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). Training for teachers should include how to respond in volatile, or potentially volatile, situations (Espelage et al., 2013) with evidence-based techniques for incorporating behavioral and academic strategies to improve educational outcomes (Crone et al., 2010; Epstein et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Vannest, 2011).

Qualitative Tradition

Qualitative procedures were used to explore the perspective of twenty general education teachers regarding their own PD needs related to their students who have externalizing behaviors related to EBD. Qualitative research is often designed around a theoretical lens which, for this study, involves a social problem (Babbie, 2013). Qualitative research is generally conducted in a natural setting, such as a school site (Hatch, 2002). The qualitative researcher typically conducts interviews using an

instrument to guide data collection (Janesick, 2011). When conducting qualitative research, multiple sources of collecting data are used and may include interviews, observations, public documents, journals maintained by the researcher, journals maintained by the research subjects, news articles, and the like (Hatch, 2002). Having a solid base of data sources increases a study's validity (Creswell, 2009), which has special importance when research involves participants' perceptions. It is expected that the participants would have varying degrees of knowledge, experience levels, and biases that may impact their perceptions and, thereby, their responses. With qualitative research, inductive analysis is used to examine the data. This is accomplished by coding the data based on patterns that emerge during interviews then categorizing the data according to themes that recur (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers must be careful to accurately represent the participants' intended meaning without allowing their own knowledge, experiences, and biases to impede the process (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the researcher's experiences will inevitably have some impact on the interpretation and presentation of a study (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). It is also foreseeable that the participants and readers will have interpretations based on their own experiences (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The reality is that participants do not express raw opinions; their responses are shaped by their perceptions, attitudes, and critical, informed judgment. This is directly tied to issues of validity and the controls established as data are collected and analyzed.

Qualitative research is holistic and includes parts of a study that are eventually drawn together into a larger picture of the topic that is being explored (Creswell, 2009).

This qualitative study was centered on phenomenological tradition, wherein a sample of twenty general education teachers described the essence of their perceived experiences with students who had externalizing behaviors (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The study may be used to open new lines of communication for teacher participants about their perceived experiences, since qualitative methodology is ideal for generating deep, thought provoking conversations (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). As teachers articulated the essence of their experiences, themes were identified that illuminated what PD topics need to be made available or improved upon.

Phenomenological Inquiry with Social Constructivism and Advocacy/Participatory Paradigms

Phenomenological Inquiry (PI) is rooted in philosophy and psychology, with allowances for the subjective interpretations of participants' experiences (Merriam, 2009). The goal of PI is to seek answers regarding important contemporary social or psychological issues (Babbie, 2013; Merriam, 2009) and describe the perceptions individuals have of their lived experiences involving a particular phenomenon (Smith et al., 2013; van Mahen, 1997). The main paradigm, or worldview, that guided this study was social constructivism. A researcher whose beliefs align with social constructivism is looking for patterns of meaning based on each participant's perceptions of his or her own experiences (Creswell, 2013).

It is understood that historical and cultural influences underlie each person's interpretations of his or her life experiences (Creswell, 2013; Smith et al., 2013). With PI, data are collected through interviews; and with social constructivism, meaning is

constructed through conversations between researcher and participant (Moustakas, 1994). It is therefore acknowledged that a researcher cannot completely eliminate his or her own experience, which can interfere with fully understanding another person's perspective. Nevertheless, a conscious effort is made by the constructivist researcher to honestly examine his or her perceptions of the topic and bracket anything that might lessen the focus on understanding the participants' perceptions (Merriam, 2009; Smith et al., 2013).

The specific approach for this study was *hermeneutical phenomenology*, wherein a researcher interprets the lived experience of participants (Creswell, 2013; Smith et al., 2013). With hermeneutical phenomenology, a researcher's study is based on an enduring concern. In this case, the concern is for general education teachers, whose greatest professional discontent is having students with severe behavior (Landers et al., 2008). There is also a concern for the students with EBD, especially those with hyper aggression due to a 50% likelihood of requiring legal or psychiatric involvement as adults (Hallahan et al., 2012). As a researcher thinks deeply about his or her concern, themes emerge about the nature of a lived experience. A description of the phenomenon is developed, with the researcher maintaining strong ties to the topic of concern. When a study is conducted, data are collected and interpreted to learn about the meaning of participants' reflections (Smith et al., 2013; van Mahen, 1997).

Comparison of Effective Paradigms to Less Effective Paradigms

Each worldview, or paradigm, involves a set of beliefs that inform how a study is conducted and written (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002). For this inquiry, which included students who were marginalized and their teachers, social constructivism and the

advocacy/participatory worldviews were used. Social constructivism allowed for interviews wherein new ideas were expected to emerge. As new ideas emerge, it is acceptable to veer from the original study questions and develop new concepts, because social constructivism and advocacy/participatory paradigms allow participants to develop their own sense of awareness about a phenomenon as their conversations unfold (Hatch, 2002; van Manen, 1997). This is ideal for a study involving the teachers of students with EBD, because working with challenging students is certain to evoke contrasting ideas and feelings for participants. It is possible that participants may come to new perspectives simply by thinking aloud about their experiences. If so, participation in this research may have had professional value even before the study was concluded and findings were presented.

Two paradigms that were not philosophically feasible for this study were postpositivism and pragmatism. Postpositivism involves a scientific approach, with a series of predictable steps that would be somewhat stringent for an exploratory study (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2011), whereas constructivism involves unplanned questions and ideas that may arise during interview conversations (Creswell, 20013; Hatch, 2002; Smith et al., 2013). When research discussions are written for postpositivist studies, data are presented in a fashion similar to that of quantitative research. When research discussions are written for constructivist studies, excerpts of the participants' actual responses are conveyed (Creswell, 2013; Smith et al., 2013). Similar to social constructivism, the advocacy/participatory worldview allows participants to express themselves aloud (Creswell, 2013). When research involves sensitive social issues, this

may lead to participants' consideration of their beliefs. The researcher's interpretation of participants' ideas can then be given a voice in the written discussion of a study (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Smith et al., 2013).

Pragmatism was another worldview that was not used for this study. Creswell (2013) describes pragmatism as a practical research method that aims to solve problems. The topic of teachers' experiences with PD on EBD and with students who have externalizing behaviors did not yet have clearly defined problems to solve. In addition, pragmatism calls for multiple methods of collecting data whereas constructivism allows for interviews as the primary means of data collection (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Janesick, 2011; Smith et al., 2013). Pragmatism may be used with mixed methods, while social constructivism is used for qualitative and not quantitative studies (Creswell, 2013). Participants' conversations for this constructivist study were used to glean initial topics that teachers need to learn through PD. Pragmatic solutions might be more useful once this initial, exploratory research has provided rich, descriptive detail about the teachers' experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors.

Research Question and Subquestion

PI involves learning about the essence of what people have experienced. During the interview with each of the twenty participants, open-ended questions were posed. The central question was: What are your perceptions and experiences with pre-service and in-service training you have had regarding students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD? A subquestion followed: What are your perceptions and experiences with students in your class who have externalizing behaviors? It is important that

research questions are understandable and directly related to the problem (Creswell, 2009). This is true for any type of research. With qualitative studies, however, it is also important to have open-ended questions. Participants may express ideas that the researcher had not previously considered. These ideas should be allowed to emerge. Having open-ended questions, with the freedom to veer from original questions, elicits more detailed descriptions of participants' perspectives on their experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). For this study, the questions were presented in the *Consent Form* by email before the interviews. A hard copy was also provided and summarized verbally prior to the interviews.

Context for the Study

This qualitative study was inspired by local general education teachers who shared their frustration about students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD. There is a national upsurge in the prevalence of students with EBD, combined with a higher prevalence of pupils with EBD who are served in the general education classroom (Nelson et al., 2008; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008). To complicate matters for California teachers, the participants in this study, their classrooms rank 48th in the nation for teacher to student ratio (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.).

Students with EBD engender a need for PD amongst classroom teachers (Bickel, 2010; Children Now, 2011; Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Nelson & Schultz, 2009; Strauss, 2010). As adult learners, the teachers should have opportunities to drive the topics of their own learning (Briggs & Coleman, 2007; Zepeda, 2012); and general education teachers have

expressed a need for PD on how to address behavioral challenges (Allison, 2012). EBS on the most effective PD indicates a need for training that is ongoing, classroom based, and provided with collaborative feedback (Blanks, 2013; Fixsen et al., 2005).

At the time of this study, there has been qualitative research on the perceptions and experiences of general education teachers who have students with EBD. Heflin and Bullock (2010) found that general education teachers were concerned about having too many students with complex needs, a lack of time to modify the curriculum for their student(s) with EBD, and a lack of time to plan with others on the team. Teachers also expressed concerns about classroom management, neglecting the needs of general education students, and not meeting the unique needs of the student with EBD. As such, these general education teachers reported that their training has been insufficient for addressing the needs of their students with EBD (Allison, 2012; Heflin & Bullock, 2010). This study substantiated previous research; however, it was specific to California, where the current situation is problematic for students with EBD (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2008; Children Now, 2011; Belfield & Levin, 2007; Harris, 2009; National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d).

Measures for Ethical Protection

Prior to this research, my proposal for this study was submitted to the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. The IRB is responsible for overseeing the protection of research participants. My IRB approval number is 08-20-14-0152574. Once IRB approval was received, I recruited prospective participants. The recruitment process of this study is designed to protect privacy. Prospective participants were

recruited through online educational forums/chat boards, and through snowball recruiting. With snowball recruiting there was a stipulation that teachers could not refer other teachers who work in the same school district. Likewise, prospective participants were not selected from the school district where I am employed. In addition to protecting the privacy of participants, not working in my school district avoided any sense of obligation to participate in the study. I was not be in a position of authority over any of the participants, so there should be no risk that participants felt coerced to participate or provide answers that they believed would please me.

Prospective participants received a *Consent Form* which outlined information and ethical protections for participants. Ethic protections in the *Consent Form* included (a) participants' option to discontinue participation at their discretion, no matter when or why; (b) the need to maintain confidentiality for their students, their students' families, and school district personnel by not using names or other identifying information; (c) mention that the interviews would be recorded on audiotape for the purposes of transcription only; (d) awareness that electronic correspondences (e.g., emails) would be saved by using password protection during the study and for five years after the study has concluded as required by Walden University; (e) awareness that hard copies of information (e.g., notes about phone conversations, interview notes, audio tapes) would be maintained in a locked safe during the study and for five years after the study has concluded as required by Walden University. If a prospective participant agreed to be a part of the study, he or she replied to the email with the attached *Consent Form* by writing, "I consent."

To maintain the participants' privacy, electronic data related to the study (e.g., identifying information such as participants' real names, participants' real names matched with their pseudonyms to be used for the study, school districts where they work, email correspondences, interview transcriptions, and anything else that can be saved by computer) are being maintained in password protected files. I will be the only person who knows the password. Due to the nature of my employment, I am accustomed to protecting my personal computer. I routinely keep it with me or under lock and key. I am also accustomed to maintaining privacy rights according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Therefore, protection from revealing identifying information is being extended to maintain the privacy of participants and stakeholders for the purpose of this research.

If anyone was within earshot during interviews, participants would have been made aware of my desire to protect them from having our conversation heard. Participants were provided with a hard copy of the *Consent Form*, the *Characteristics of Externalizing Behaviors* (Appendix A), and a *Confidentiality Agreement* each of which was summarized prior to the interview. The *Confidentiality Agreement* was adapted from a Walden University template and had my signature as indication of my commitment to maintain confidentiality. Participants were asked to maintain the confidentiality of stakeholders, taking care not to share identifying information about personnel at their school or school district, their students, or the students' families.

If anyone were to have come close enough to hear our conversations during the interviews, we would have moved to another location. If anyone were to have recognized a participant during an interview, it would not have been likely that they would have also recognized me or connected us to the research. My interviews were conducted in various California communities where people did not know me. Only one participant needed to have children with us, so we met in a location where the children were busy but close to their parent. I was cognizant to look out for potential physical or emotional health issues. It was presumed that participants were healthy enough to discuss their experiences, since they work with children. None of the participants showed signs of stress, so there was no need to provide breaks or change the subject. None of the participants seemed especially anxious or physically ill (e.g., no shaky hands/voice and no other overt signs of discomfort), so there was not a need to discontinue any of the interviews or disregard any data that had been collected.

Following the first few interviews, participants were provided with a small notebook in case they thought of anything else to share. Participants were reminded to avoid noting anyone's name or identifying information. I soon realized that it would be safer to ask for any additional information to be shared by email when I sent the transcripts for approval. Transcripts were sent as an email attachment. Each participant was asked to respond within one week from the date the email was sent. I explained that if I did not hear from him or her in one week the transcripts would be considered acceptable; it would be understood that the participant had no additional information to share. The same procedure occurred with the final written discussion.

To prevent participants' potential social or economic loss, such as difficulty with social reputation or employability, they were cautioned not to divulge information that was discussed during the interviews. Identifying information about the participants and stakeholders was not included in the written discussion of interviews. Also, teachers were described as working in Northern California (with the southernmost counties being Monterey, Kings, Tulare, and Inyo) or Southern California rather than naming their school districts. This helped to maintain the privacy of participants, all of whom joined the study through snowballing recruitment.

Unforeseen ethical issues did not come up during the study. For example, there was no mention of physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse that had gone unreported. Teachers did not mention using behavioral strategies that were considered undesirable or aversive. Teachers did mention a variety of ways that principals have handled behavior, some of which were more punitive than today's standards would consider ideal but nothing illegal. Several times, teachers mentioned students who perhaps should have had IEPs. This constituted a breach in the schools' Child Find responsibilities. Nevertheless, many of the situations described were in the distant past, at schools that I did not know, and with students whom I did not know. Teachers did not mention instances of disregarding IDEA guidelines for responding to behavior that might have been an expression of a student's disability. To avoid, prevent, and address these types of dilemmas, the following were employed: (a) the Consent Form for participants included precautions about disclosing identifying or private information; (b) information gathered through interviews was not disclosed if there was any potential of a physical,

psychological, social, financial, or legal risk to a participant; (c) participants had opportunities to review the transcripts of their interviews; and (d) participants were allowed to review my inferences as written in the research discussions. Every possible protection was afforded to participants; however, if there had been mention of a child being physically abused, emotionally abused, sexually abused, or neglected, that would have been reported as specified in the Consent Form.

Research always includes ethical concerns. Nevertheless, this study had minimal risks to participants and stakeholders. The potential benefits were believed to outweigh any risks. For example, this study afforded participants an opportunity to express concerns about their greatest professional frustration: students who have persistent externalizing behaviors (Landers, Alter, & Servillo, 2008). This opportunity to speak out may have provided a sense of relief to these teachers who have not had their PD needs met (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010; Strauss, 2010). Speaking about their concerns may have inspired the teachers to advocate for training that will lead to better professional experiences. This research also has the potential benefit of adding to the knowledge on how teachers' PD experiences impact their classroom experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors. Ideas for further research have emerged from this preliminary study. Moreover, links between the teachers' training and their classroom experiences will be available to inform specific improvements in PD regarding students with EBD. In turn, having effective PD will potentially contribute to improved outcomes for students with EBD, their schools, their homes, and their communities.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Two means of accessing participants were used, online education forums/chat boards and snowballing recruitment. I considered that online sources would afford participants an extra measure of anonymity, so approval was sought from administrators for the following forums/chat boards: (a) The Teachers' Corner at www.theteacherscorner.net/forum.php; (b) A to Z Teacher Stuff at www.forums.atozteacherstuff.com; (c) The Apple Monster at www.theapplemonster.com/discussions; and (d) Teachers.net at www.california.teachers.net/chatboard. Only one administrator responded and provided permission: The Teachers' Corner. I posted a request for research participants entitled: "Got Behavior?" but received zero responses. The snowballing recruiting technique, which involves networking as a means of locating potential participants, was more effective (Dilley, 2000). Several of the teacher participants were asked to suggest colleagues who did not work in their same school or school district. Some of the participants located by snowballing recruitment contacted me by phone or email. For other prospective participants, I contacted them by phone or email, depending on what was suggested by the person who provided the referral. If they were interested in participating, the *Consent Form* was provided by email. Prospective participants then sent a reply with the words, "I consent." This electronic consent was sufficient and provided the same authorization as a handwritten signature. Each participant's consent remained valid throughout the study unless revoked in writing or verbally.

Role of the Researcher

Past and Current Professional Roles

An important component for verifying the internal validity of a phenomenological study includes acknowledgment of a researcher's experience (Creswell, 2009; Smith et al., 2013). Therefore, a conscious effort was made to bracket, or set aside, past experiences, views, and biases about the research topic. My own experiences, which were bracketed for this study, included 20 years of teaching (10 years as a general education teacher in an inclusive second grade classroom and 10 years as a special educator in elementary school resource programs, with 18 summers of teaching self-contained classes). Since 1974, I have volunteered or had formal employment involving children who have EBD, with and without disabilities. I have worked with children from 2-months-old to adult, with problem behaviors beginning at approximately 18 months for some youngsters. My work with children who have EBD has been in a variety of locations: educational settings (infant programs, preschool, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools), in-home settings (with families and foster families), and institutional settings (a state hospital, a private residential institution for exceptional children, a residential treatment center for teenage girls with their children, and CYA).

Methods for Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

With qualitative investigations, it is important to readily establish a positive rapport with participants so they will make themselves available and feel comfortable enough to speak honestly. When teachers responded to my first attempt at reaching them, or when they first contacted me, their preferred means of communication was established.

I explained that involvement in the study was at the participants' discretion and that discontinuing was an option at any time. I also explained that participants would have the opportunity to review and approve or edit the interview transcripts. As interview dates were scheduled, the prospective participants agreed to read the details of the study and provide an email response to indicate interest in participating. My phone number and email address were provided in case a participant needed to reschedule, ask questions, or provide additional information at any point in the study. Being accessible and providing opportunities for sustained communication is an important aspect of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Researcher's Experiences or Biases

Great care was taken to avoid impeding the data collection or reporting of participants' views based on my own experience. For example, participants knew that I was a teacher; however, they were not aware of my experiences with adolescents in residential treatment and the CYA. Working with teenage children who have committed violent crimes, and seeing the complex impacts of their crimes, has led to my passion for seeing EBD addressed in an effective manner. Every effort was made, therefore, to set aside my own biases in order to accurately collect, record, code, and report the participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Included in this study was a sample of 20 general education teachers who were employed within the state of California and have had students, preschool through high school, with externalizing behaviors. Participants did not have special education training

or experience, because special educators usually have training on students with EBD. Each participant was employed by a different school district at the time of the study; and none of the participants were employed by my school district. This provided an extra measure of privacy. In addition, having participants who were not at my school district precluded any sense of obligation to participate or to provide responses based on a professional relationship. This study has been designed to avoid conflicts of interest.

This study incorporated a two-stage process for selecting participants. First, snowball recruiting was used to locate participants; then stratified purposeful sampling was used to allow for in depth exploration of specific characteristics for the subgroups that made up a sample. The 20 teacher participants naturally constituted subgroups based on the grade levels of students with whom they have worked. The teachers' lived experiences and PD needs varied based on the grade levels of their students, so consideration of this characteristic provided important information. The subgroups were teachers who have had experience with (a) Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten, (b) Kindergarten through Second Grade, (c) Third Grade through Fifth Grade, (d) Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade, and/or (e) Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade. An effort was made to have at least four participants who had experience with each subgroup; however, there were only three participants for the Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten group. Stratified purposeful sampling allowed for flexibility as the study emerged. According to Creswell (2013), the purpose of stratified purposeful sampling is not to achieve statistical saturation for the subgroups, but rather to provide for an in-depth exploration of a certain characteristic in order to make comparisons. It became apparent

that three preschool teachers were sufficient, because the teachers had very similar perceptions of their experiences.

Consideration was made on whether or not to include potentially vulnerable participants, such as individuals with mental illness, emotional disabilities, pregnancy, socioeconomic challenges, and individuals who were in the midst of crisis. Simply put, it is unethical to discriminate when hiring individuals for employment based on these criteria, including employment for teaching. It did not, therefore, make sense to exclude such individuals from educational research. Additionally, it was reasoned that if a teacher was found fit to manage a classroom of students, he or she would likely be able to participate in a conversational interview. If a participant had, however, shown indications of anxiety or stress during the interview, the interview would have been discontinued temporarily or permanently. Any data from that interview would not have been used. Fortunately, this did not occur.

To reiterate the criteria for qualification to join in this study, participants were general education teachers who did not have training or experience in special education. The participants have each had students with externalizing, acting out types of behaviors. Moreover, the teachers were aware that internalizing behaviors (i.e., phobias, anxiety, or depression) were not the focus of this study. Participants each worked for a different school district from any of the other participants, and from me. Figure 1 outlines a flow chart of the procedure for recruitment and the criteria for qualifying to participate in the study.

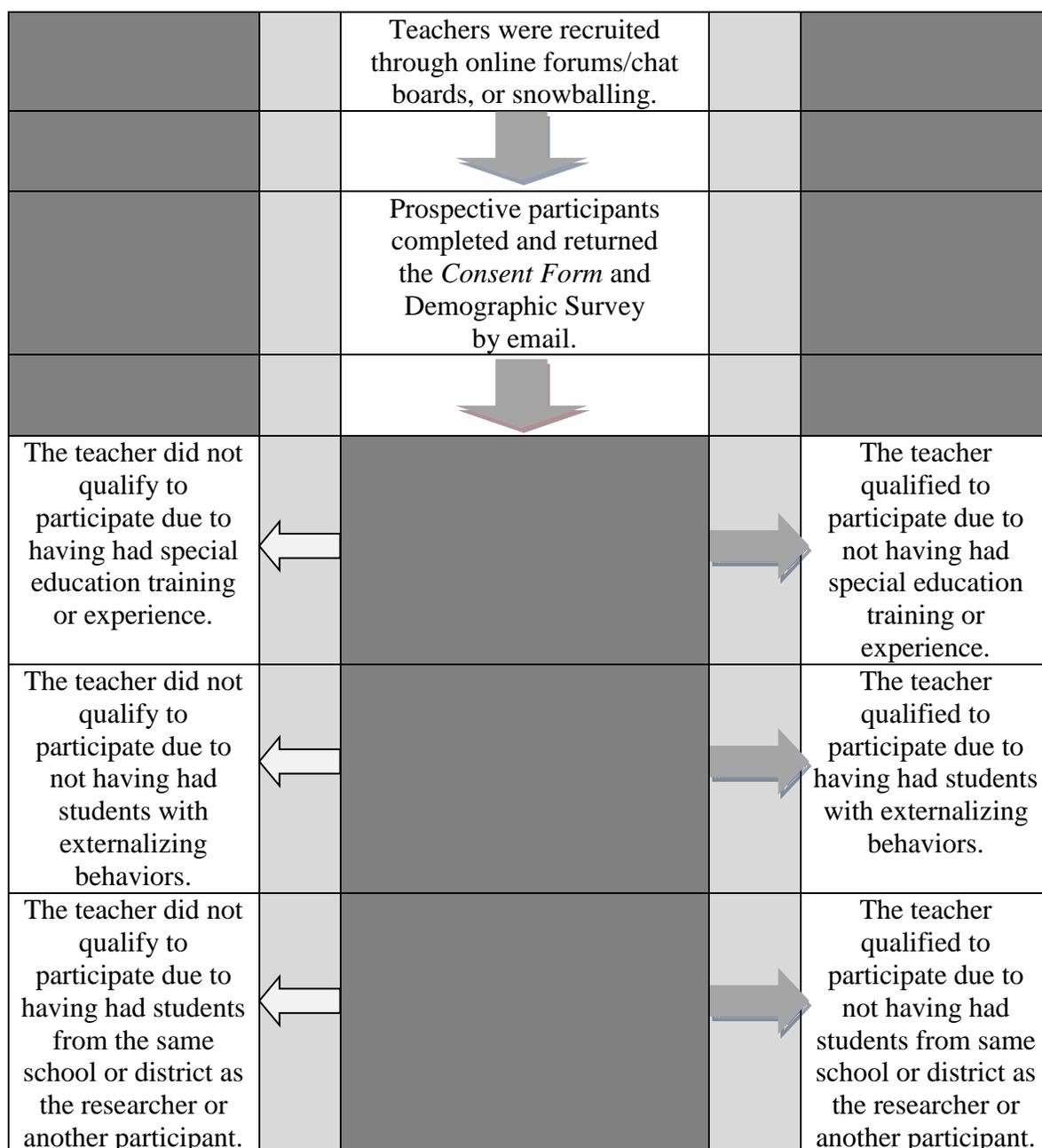


Figure 1. Procedure for Recruitment and Participation.

Data Collection Procedures

Data Collection Tools

In qualitative research, the primary tool for data collection is the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002). Researchers typically develop their own guide for interview conversations (Janesick, 2011). It is also important that researchers ask probing questions when additional topics emerge, to elicit more information (Janesick, 2011). In order to show interest and ensure understanding, researchers should paraphrase participants' comments (Janesick, 2011). In addition to the researcher, tools for data collection in qualitative research may include an interview guide, field notes, journals, documents, artifacts, videos, audio recordings, and the like (Creswell, 2009).

Participants were provided with a demographic survey to ensure qualification for the study. The survey was designed through Survey Monkey and could be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2LWBW5B> or viewed in Appendix C. Information from the survey was recorded on the Demographic Coding Form (Appendix D). Once the demographic information was collected, the actual PI was initiated.

Since I was considered the primary tool for gathering information (Creswell, 2013; Janesick, 2011), the quality of data is impacted by how well rapport is established, how well conversations are facilitated, and how adept a researcher is with active listening (Janesick, 2011). Another important tool for gathering data in this PI study was the *Interview Guide* (Appendix B). The *Interview Guide* was designed specifically for this study. It listed the central question and one subquestion. The *Interview Guide* also served as a place for taking field notes during the interviews. An audio recorder was

used to collect interview data. In addition, as participants thought of anything more they wanted to say, data were collected from journals that were provided to them, notes of telephone conversations, text messages, and email communications.

Choices About Which Data Are Justified

Data that answer the central question and subquestion are most important (Janesick, 2011). There were themes which came up frequently during interviews and were considered to have high importance to participants. These were afforded high value when reporting the findings. In addition to focusing on data which answer the research questions, attention was given to comparing data on the similarities and differences of experiences reported by teachers of different grade levels. This PI allowed teachers to express their thoughts in their own words and, therefore, lead to topics that were not originally considered when the research questions were designed. When new ideas emerge in qualitative research, provisions are made to follow the participants' lead and branch into additional inquiry as needed (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Topics that emerge in qualitative research often result in an increased depth of understanding about the participants' experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Data Collection to Answer Research Question Using Phenomenological Tradition

Phenomenological tradition was used to collect data for this study, with the goal of answering the research questions. In PI fashion, interviews were conducted to ask about the teachers' perceptions of pre-service and in-service PD they have had related to EBD. They were also asked about their firsthand experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors. One goal of the data collection is to gather information that will

establish links which exist between the participants' training on EBD and their experiences with the challenging behaviors of their students, thereby gaining deeper understanding of the research topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). A constructivist framework was used for this study, in the sense that the participants and I worked cooperatively to construct meaning concerning their perceptions of experiences they have had with PD and students who have EBD. In other words, data were collected through conversations from which I interpreted the participants' meaning. This was followed by allowing opportunities for member checking to determine the accuracy of my inferences (Creswell, 2013).

How and When Data Were Collected and Recorded

Once participants were recruited, demographic information was collected and recorded. Interviews were set up and conducted as participants joined the study, with consideration for logistics when possible. Participants were provided with a journal on which to take notes, and the opportunity to communicate by phone, text, or email in case there was anything they thought of after the interviews.

A demographic survey was accessible through a link that was provided to participants by email. The email included a brief explanation and a request for participants to follow the link and complete the survey. The link led to Survey Monkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2LWBW5B>) and took approximately 5 minutes to complete. The questions were: (a) How many years have you taught in a general education setting?; (b) What is the highest degree you have earned?; (c) What type of teaching credential do you have?; (d) What is your gender?; (e) Have you ever taught

Special Education?; (f) What grade levels have you taught?; (g) In what grade(s) are/were your student(s) who had externalizing behaviors?; (h) Has your teaching experience been in rural, suburban, urban schools, two or more of the above (please explain)?; (i) With which California school district are you employed? Most questions were multiple choice with a box for optional written responses as needed. The last question, regarding with which school district the teachers were employed, required a written response. The purpose of the demographic questions was to provide characteristics of the sample and to provide comparisons of the similarities and differences teachers experienced based on their students' grade levels. In addition, the demographic questions provided verification that the teachers were qualified to participate in the study. By the time teachers completed the *Demographic Survey*, they had already received the *Consent Form* which included information on the criteria for participation. Nevertheless, the *Demographic Survey* provided additional verification that participants did not have special education backgrounds and that they did not work in the same school districts.

Information from the *Demographic Survey* was recorded on the *Demographic Coding Form*, located in Appendix C. The *Demographic Coding Form* has seven columns with the following headings: (a) Participant's Pseudonym for the Study; (b) Years of Teaching General Education; (c) Highest Degree Earned and Type of Credential(s); (d) Participant's Experiences: Rural, Suburban, and/or Urban of Northern CA and/or Southern CA; (e) Grade Levels Taught in General Education; (f) Grade Level(s) of Student(s) With Externalizing Behaviors; and (g) Gender.

An important means of collecting data for this PI research was face-to-face interviews. Janesick (2011) recommends meeting in a comfortable, relaxed location in order to establish a positive rapport. A single interview with each of the twenty participants was conducted in mutually agreed upon locations, most often a coffee shop. As the interviews began, participants were provided with a hard copy of the *Consent Form*. They were also given the characteristics of externalizing behaviors (Appendix A, which is a list of overt misbehaviors). This ensured that everyone in the study shared a common definition for externalizing behaviors. I had an interview guide (Appendix B), which was the primary tool that was used. The interview guide, which I designed for this study, has a central question followed by a subquestion. The interviews were audio recorded and notes were taken simultaneously. Questions were open-ended, with the intention of facilitating conversations that illuminated links between the teachers' PD experiences and their experiences involving students with EBD. I remained neutral during the interviews, listening carefully to responses in order to understand the participants' perceptions rather than guiding the ensuing conversations based on my own perceptions (Schon, 1983). I achieved this by letting participants speak their thoughts and responding only in a neutral, nonjudgmental manner. Interviews did not exceed 30 minutes.

As each interview came to an end, participants were provided with a journal for writing notes of anything that comes to mind later and a verbal invitation to contact me if they thought of anything else. I also explained that written transcripts of our interview would arrive as an email attachment so participants would have the opportunity to verify

the accuracy and edit. I explained that this would also be a good time to convey any additional information they have thought of since our interview and that if I did not hear from them for a week after the transcripts arrive, I would assume that the transcripts were accurate and nothing needed to be added.

Once I left each interview, my field notes were filled in and audio tapes were transcribed as quickly as possible. This allowed for retaining as much information as possible from each interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The procedure for transcribing recorded interviews was followed using the example established by Janesick (2011), with record sheets for recording each transcript to include the participant's pseudonym, the date, the time, and the location (Northern California or Southern California). Notes on general impressions of the data were made in the margins, next to interview transcriptions and field notes.

Data Analysis

How and When the Data Were Analyzed

I analyzed the data for this study at various times as participants joined the research. Tasks for the research alternated between collecting data, transcribing interviews, organizing and analyzing data, and writing about the findings (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, data analysis was a process which began after the first interview and ended after the last interview. With phenomenological research, data analysis involves organizing the information then looking for significant statements that indicate units of meaning (Creswell, 2009). As data were collected, NVivo 10 was used to manage the information. NVivo 10 is a specific brand of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data

Analysis (CAQDA) used for qualitative research. This software also allowed for the data to be sorted into categories and themes that could be analyzed to answer the research questions.

Procedures for Dealing With Discrepant Cases

Creswell (2009) suggested categorizing clustered information as major topics, unique topics, and leftovers. The leftover category was used to group discrepant ideas that were not useful as main themes in the final description of what was clearly important to the teachers. For this study, themes that were mentioned by one teacher constituted discrepant data, since these issues were not among the participants' most common concerns. Separating the recurrent data from the discrepant, or leftover, ideas helped to determine what should be included in the study's discussion and what could be disregarded.

Description of Software to be Used in the Analysis

As mentioned above, NVivo 10 is CAQDA software that was used in the data analysis of this research. With NVivo, a project file was created specifically for this study. Each data source was stored in its own source file. As such, there was a source file for each of the following: demographic information, interview transcripts, field notes, telephone records, email records, and participants' journal notes. NVivo was then used to identify main themes which were coded, or chunked, into units of meaning for various types of analysis.

Coding Procedure for Reducing Information Into Categories and Themes

NVivo was used to conduct coding queries for providing preliminary insight into the data. For example, queries were run to determine (a) the 200 words that most frequently surfaced in interviews, (b) the number of times specific comments were made, and (c) the number of participants who expressed a certain attitude. The concepts, themes, and ideas that occur most often were organized and stored in nodes for further analysis. Some nodes were predetermined and set up before the study began. For example, this study will have a purposeful stratified sample with subgroups based on grade levels the teachers have taught. These subgroups were set up in advance. For the most part, however, nodes were established as the study emerged. Themes that participants mention most often and themes that made up unique, relevant topics were analyzed to look for categories and interrelatedness.

Data Analysis Procedures After Coding

Once coding queries provided insight on the preliminary information, matrix queries were used to compare and contrast the concepts, themes, and ideas. Interrelated themes were merged within the nodes to provide another vantage point for interpretation. For example, grade level subgroups were merged when participants had similar experiences in elementary school, but left separate when there were different experiences once students reach the secondary grades. The main purpose of data analysis for this study was to determine what PD would best support teachers of students with externalizing behaviors. This was accomplished by making inferences about (a) the teachers' experiences with PD, (b) the teachers' experiences with students who have

externalizing behaviors, and (c) links between the teachers' PD and classroom experiences. Inferences derived from the data analysis led to written descriptions of the findings.

Methods for Addressing Validity

Triangulation of the Data

Triangulation is the process of validating a study by supporting its accuracy through multiple means (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation for this study was accomplished through (a) substantiating the study's data with various sources, including related studies; (b) member checking; (c) rich description of the findings; and (d) consideration of the researcher's experiences and biases (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000). For this study, means for validation included: (a) demographic data; (b) interview transcriptions; (c) field notes; (d) participants' journal entries; (e) written records of telephone calls, text messages, and email correspondences with participants; and (f) research that related to the topic (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). A forthright description of my history and my penchant for the improved outcomes of students with EBD has been provided, and consciously bracketed, (Creswell, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Finally, the essence of each teacher's lived experience was presented in the thick, rich description that exemplifies qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Smith et al., 2013).

Relation to the Body of Research on EBD

Mock and Kauffman (2002) examined the feasibility of full inclusion, which repeatedly came up as topic of discussion during interviews. Bickel (2010) explained

that if teachers believe they are not able to avoid students with EBD, they may emphasize the need for training on how to prevent, avert, and handle crisis situations as discussed by Bickel (2010). Moreover, any teacher who has experienced behavioral crises may wonder how the administration can improve the school climate, especially when it is clear that school-wide techniques exist for preventing misbehavior from occurring (McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, & Sugai, 2010; Sugai, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Teachers may also want to know how to help their students academically, emotionally, and socially (Burns & Ysseldyke, 2009; Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Nelson et al., 2009; Pierangelo & Giuliano, 2008; Scarlett, Ponte, & Singh, 2009; Squires & Bricker, 2007; Sugai, 2011). Findings on the teachers' experiences with PD on EBD, their firsthand experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors, and any links found between the teachers' PD and classroom experiences were discussed in light of the above-mentioned research that is related to this study.

Summary

Section 3 addressed how qualitative, phenomenological design relates to the PD needs of general education teachers who have students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD. Justification was provided for the selected worldviews including the social constructivist paradigm, which allows participants to adapt their changing awareness throughout the interviews, and the advocacy/participatory paradigm, which allow participants' awareness to extend beyond this study as they advocate for their own PD needs. Hermeneutical phenomenology was identified as ideal for this research, since

the goal was to interpret the teachers' lived experiences. The research question and subquestion were specified, with a discussion on the open-ended nature of the questions that will be used to elicit various themes for which teachers have experienced success and frustration to determine areas of PD need. These questions were designed based on the context for this study, whereby local general education teachers frequently expressed concerns about their students with externalizing behavior.

Measures for ethical protection were outlined, including the need for approval by Walden University's IRB, specific plans to ensure the integrity of the research, and ethical boundaries which were adhered to. Participants were to be accessed through various websites and through snowball sampling. When prospective participants expressed interest in the study, demographic information was collected to determine if they were qualified to participate. For the sake of maintaining validity, my past experiences and biases were acknowledged with a commitment made to suspend my biases and to focus on the perspectives of the participants. Plans for efforts to establish a positive rapport with participants were discussed. Most importantly, I noted that the interviews were conducted in person to demonstrate my level of investment in this research and my genuine interest in learning about the teachers' lived experiences with their most challenging students.

How the data were collected and analyzed was covered in detail. A conversational guide which had the interview questions was used for reference as interviews were conducted. The constructivist nature of the study allowed participants to

veer from the main questions to establish what they considered important. As such, I took a semi-structured approach to gathering data.

As interviews were completed, NVivo was used to help with organizing the data by themes that recurred during the interviews. Ways to ensure validity through triangulation were delineated. My study's data were supported by related studies, member checking of the findings, rich description of themes and inferences, and consideration of the researcher's experiences and biases.

Transition Statement

Section 4 will be a presentation of the results. This will include how the data were generated, collected, and documented. Systems that were used for keeping track of the data will be presented, as will the understanding which emerged through the interviews. The participants' reflective journals and my cataloging systems will also be described. The findings, which will develop plausibly from the problem and research design, will address the research questions. Discrepant cases and nonconforming data will be expounded upon. Patterns, relationships, themes, and inferential judgments that are supported by the data will be presented through rich description and tables. Evidence of Quality will be demonstrated through explanations of how the research procedures were adhered to for assuring validity of the data. Consideration will be given to how this study relates to the larger research on this topic.

This study included using snowball recruiting to track down potential participants followed by a method to purposefully stratify the teachers based on their students' various grade levels. The reason for this was to shed light on how the teachers'

perceptions differed based on the ages of their students. The subgroups for this purpose were (a) Pre-Kindergarten through Transitional Kindergarten; (b) Kindergarten through Second Grade, (c) Third Grade through Fifth Grade; (d) Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade, and (e) Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade.

Section 4: Results

Introduction

Process by Which the Data Were Generated, Gathered, and Recorded

Twenty general education teachers of California, each from a different school district, participated in face-to-face interviews. Each of the participants was assigned a pseudonym to maintain privacy throughout the study. Four of the teachers were from Northern California as bordered by the southernmost counties of Monterey, Kings, Tulare, Inyo, and all counties north thereof. The other sixteen teachers were from Southern California.

This research was developed to learn about the perceptions general educators have of their professional development and about the personal experiences teachers have had with students who present externalizing behaviors. Therefore, none of the teachers in this study had training in special education. The teachers each completed a demographic survey through Survey Monkey, which they accessed via a link that was provided by email, to confirm their lack of special education training and provide additional information on their characteristics.

Participants were asked whether they have worked in areas that they considered Suburban, Urban, Rural, or Two or More (i.e., at least two of the different areas). Of the Northern California teachers, the areas where they taught were identified as “Two or More” [different areas] by 2 of the teachers, “Suburban” by 1 of the teachers, and “Urban” by 1 of the teachers. In Southern California, the areas where teachers taught were identified as “Suburban” by 13 of the teachers, “Urban” by 1 of the teachers,

“Rural” by 1 of the teachers, and “Two or More” [different areas] by 1 of the teachers. The participants consisted of 18 women and 2 men. In terms of education, 12 of the teachers had Master’s degrees, 7 had Bachelor’s degrees, and 1 had an Associate’s degree. For credentials, 13 of the teachers had Multiple Subject Credentials, 6 of the teachers had Single Subject credentials, and 3 had Early Childhood Education credentials. (Two of the teachers were dual credentialed, one with Early Childhood Education and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, and the other with a Childhood Development Permit and a Single Subject Teaching Credential.) The teachers were asked whether they had been teaching from 0-5 years, from 6-10 years, from 11-15 years, or more than 15 years. There were 2 teachers with 0-5 years of classroom experience, 2 teachers with 6-10 years of experience, 4 teachers with 11-15 years of experience, and 12 teachers with more than 15 years of experience.

This study included a stratified purposeful sample of teachers from various grade levels to shed light on teachers’ perceptions that might be different based on the grade levels of their students. The subgroups for the purpose of this study were (a) Pre-Kindergarten through Transitional Kindergarten, (b) Kindergarten through Second Grade, (c) Third Grade through Fifth Grade, (d) Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade, and (e) Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade. Table 1 outlines results from the demographic survey, including the grades participants have taught and the grades in which they had students with externalizing behaviors. Since the teachers did not mention students of every grade level during the interviews, the grade levels with bold font indicate the grade levels of specific experiences they described.

Table 1

Demographic Coding Form

Pseudo-nyms	Years of Teaching General Education	Highest Degree; Type of Credential(s)	Rural, Suburban, Urban, Two or More; Northern CA, Southern CA	Grade Level(s) Taught in General Education	Grade Level(s) of Student(s) With Externalizing Behaviors	Gender
Betty	11-15	BA; Single Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	9, 10, 11, 12	9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Cassy	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4	Female
Debbie	11-15	BA; Multiple Subject	Two or More; Northern CA	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Female
Ed	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Urban; Northern CA	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Male
Frank	0-5	MA; Single Subject	Two or More; Northern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	9, 10, 11, 12	Male
Gina	6-10	MA; Single Subject	Suburban; Northern CA	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Haylee	0-5	MA; Single Subject	Urban; Southern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Julie	>15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	K, 1, 2, 5	Female
Kira	>15	AA; Early Childhood Development	Suburban; Southern CA	Pre-K, K	Pre-K, K	Female
Layne	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	K, 3, 4, 5, 6	3, 4, 5, 6	Female
Marsha	>15	BA; Early Childhood Development Multiple Subject	Two or More; Southern CA	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8	Female
Nancy	6-10	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	Female
Paulette	11-15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	K, 1	Female
Qadira	>15	BA; Early Childhood Development Single Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Rianna	>15	MA; Single Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Sonia	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Rural; Southern CA	K, 4	K, 4	Female
Tanya	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 3, 4	Female
Valerie	11-15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	K, 2, 6	K, 2, 6	Female
Wendy	>15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	K, 1, 3, 4, 5	K, 4	Female
Zofia	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban; Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4	Female

Note. In the columns for Grade Level(s) of Students With Externalizing Behaviors, bold numbers represent grade level(s) the teachers mentioned during interviews.

The interviews were conducted over approximately six months. Snowballing recruitment was effective but slow, since each teacher was from a different district. The teachers tended to have many referrals of other teachers from their own districts; however, they were asked to think outside the box. For example, if the teacher had a family member or friend who could refer someone from another school district, that was an ideal referral source. In the end, only two sets of teachers knew each other. The teachers who knew each other had strong relationships, so they were able to share openly during their interviews. It was challenging to seek participants who did not know each other, but having a limited number of teachers who were familiar with one another made for a more reliable study.

System Used for Keeping Track of Data and Emerging Understandings

The systems of data collection included email, written records of telephone correspondences and text messages, the Survey Monkey instrument for collecting demographic information (see <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2LWB5B>), audio recordings, and written notes that were taken during the interviews. Initial contact was made based on the recommendations of the person who referred each participant. Some participants were contacted by phone and the Consent Form was then sent by email; some participants were contacted first by email, with the Consent Form attached; and a few participants were contacted first by the person who was referring them and then by me. Each participant was provided with the Consent Form by email, to which they replied, "I consent." The data also included a demographic survey that was provided by email. Participants each had a link through which they accessed the survey.

The main source of data collection involved audio recordings and notes taken during the interviews. The first two of twenty interviews were recorded on a hand held recording device which was stored in a locked safe. The eighteen subsequent interviews were recorded on an iPhone that is protected by fingerprint access, on an app entitled QuickVoice. The audio recordings were transcribed by me then stored on my personal computer, which is password protected. The transcriptions were stored as Word documents, also within QSR International's NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software (QSR International, 2012). Notes that were taken during the interview were written onto the Interview Guide and maintained in a binder with hard copies of the transcriptions and demographic surveys for each participant. The binder was stored at my home in a locked safe with the hand held recorder. Following the first six interviews, a small notebook was provided so participants could record information related to the study. For subsequent interviews, participants were told that there would be opportunities to share additional thoughts by email when transcripts were provided for their approval, or any other time they would like to contact me. This seemed safer than having participants write notes, even though the initial participants were cautioned not to write anyone's name or information in a way that could be understood by someone other than themselves.

In terms of cataloging systems, the binder and NVivo (QSR International, 2012) were primary sources for organizing the data so they could be analyzed. As mentioned above, the binder included notes taken during the interview, demographic information, and transcripts. These hard copies were in a binder, sectioned by each participant's

pseudonym. The pseudonyms were assigned alphabetically, usually beginning with a consonant (“Ed” being the one exception), according to the order in which participants were interviewed. As such, the binder is arranged alphabetically and sequentially, with the first participant’s materials (i.e., Betty’s materials) in the back and the final participant’s materials (i.e., Zofia’s materials) in the front.

With NVivo (QSR International, 2012), data sources were uploaded and stored under “Sources.” These sources included demographic information, interview transcripts, notes taken during the interview, and relevant comments contributed by participants after the interviews. The research questions and the ideas that emerged during interviews led to themes that were named as “Nodes.” Once the nodes were created, relevant data from the various sources were highlighted and saved under each theme so the information could be analyzed. In addition to the hardcopy information and information stored in NVivo (QSR International, 2012), a table was created to support understanding related to the findings. Specifically, the data were used to determine if any links could be established between the teachers’ perceptions of their PD experiences and the teachers’ perceptions of their firsthand experiences with students who have had externalizing behaviors.

The findings of this study are presented as textual descriptions of the teachers’ perceptions, or intentional reflections, of their experiences (Smith et al., 2013), as presented in their responses to the key research question and the subquestion. The key research question asks about the teachers’ perceptions of their pre-service and in-service training on students with EBD. The teacher’s descriptions of their experiences are

categorized in light of teachers who had: (a) Relatively Strong Pre-service Training (RSPT), defined by thorough education combined with firsthand experience that included modeling from another teacher on how to use best practices and collaboration with a veteran teacher; (b) Moderate Pre-service Training (MPT), defined by thorough education on classroom management but little, if any, information on specific externalizing behaviors and no modeling or collaboration with a veteran teacher; (c) Relatively Weak Pre-service Training (RWPT) defined by possible training on classroom management but little, if any, on how to manage externalizing behaviors; (d) Relatively Strong In-service Training (RSIT), defined by thorough education combined with modeling from another teacher on how to use best practices and collaboration with a veteran teacher; (e) Moderate In-service Training (MIT), defined by thorough education but no follow-up collaboration with a veteran teacher, and (f) Relatively Weak In-service Training (RWIT), defined by possible training on classroom management but little, if any, on how to manage specific externalizing behaviors.

Next is a presentation of the teachers' answers about the research subquestion, involving the teachers' perceptions of their firsthand experiences with students who have had externalizing behaviors. Before considering the teachers' perceptions of how easy or difficult they considered their experiences to be with students, I have also considered the ease versus the difficulty of each teacher's student population based on the children's socioeconomic status. Consideration of socioeconomic status of the students is important, since there is a link between chronic stress and behavior (McEwen, 2013; Walker et al., 2004). Chronic stress impacts the risk trajectories of individuals who are

vulnerable to chronic stress, such as children (McEwen; Walker et al.). If children are exposed to stress, including difficult socioeconomic situations, this can affect the brain's neuroplasticity—or ability of the brain to continue developing and healing (McEwen).

The categories for this information are groups of teachers who perceived themselves to have had: (a) Relatively Easy Populations (REP), defined by students from moderate to high socioeconomic status who the teachers perceived as having less than average (less intense and less frequent) externalizing behaviors; (b) Moderate Populations (MP), as defined by students who were typical based on the descriptions of teachers in this study; (c) Relatively Difficult Populations (RDP), as defined by research that includes descriptions of extreme behavior that occurs on a regular basis (Landers et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2004). In addition to textual descriptions of each category, Table 2 is used to present these data.

The teachers' experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors are then rated as: (a) Relatively Easy Classroom Experience (RECE), defined by descriptions of teachers having an easy time with classroom behaviors; (b) Moderate Classroom Experiences (MCE), defined by typical descriptions of teachers' experiences as described in this study and other research on externalizing behavior; and (c) Relatively Difficult Classroom Experiences (RDCE), defined by teachers who have a difficult time with externalizing behaviors. In addition to textual descriptions for each category, Table 2 is used to present these data.

Once I present the answers to the research questions, I give consideration to discrepant cases and nonconforming data. Next, I present a discussion of the patterns,

relationships, and themes. In this discussion, I bring attention to themes that were expressed based on which grade levels the teachers mentioned during their interviews. The data are combined by grade level subgroups that teachers described: (a) Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten, (b) Kindergarten through Second Grade, (c) Third Grade through Fifth Grade, (d) Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade, and (e) Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade. Section 4 concludes with a discussion on evidence of quality, where I describe adherence to research procedures that promote accuracy for this study.

Findings

Teachers' Perceptions and Researcher's Inferences

Before addressing the teachers' responses to the research questions, a working definition of "perceptions" is called for. The teachers' perceptions were derived from their senses and feelings about their experiences then shared as opinions and informed judgments. The same could be said for me. Nevertheless, my own perceptions of the data are a concerted effort at making informed judgments rather than offering mere opinions in order to enhance the validity of this study (Thomasson, 2012). My own experiences, ideas, and biases have been consciously bracketed in the interest of describing the teachers' perceptions with integrity. For example, I set aside my own experiences during interviews with participants who have had more or less teaching experience than I have. I set aside my own ideas on how and why students with behavioral needs should feel welcome and supported, so I could understand the frustrations and thoughts of general education teachers who shared their experiences with me during interviews. Most importantly, I disregarded my own biases about the need for

teachers to make intentional, concerted efforts to redirect students who are at risk. This intentional bracketing allowed me to fully consider what each participant needed in terms of PD and support.

Teachers' Perceptions of Pre-service Training

Teachers with relatively strong pre-service training (RSPT). Nineteen out of the twenty teachers had pre-service, university training in California; however, none of the teachers described having RSPT which included thorough education on externalizing behaviors combined with firsthand experience which included modeling and collaboration.

Teachers with moderate pre-service training (MPT). Two of the teachers had MPT, as defined by thorough education but no modeling from a veteran teacher on how to use best practices and/or collaboration. Betty mentioned classes in psychology, mainstreaming, and observation. Her pre-service education included classroom/course-related discussions about students with emotional disorders and firsthand experience with a student who had disabilities; however, there were no firsthand practicum experiences which involved students with externalizing types of EBD. Layne was also rated as having moderate pre-service training. She had a psychology class and a Special Education class that covered an array of disabilities, including specific issues that teachers might come across. However, neither of Layne's classes allowed for working directly with students.

Teachers with relatively weak pre-service training (RWPT). Pre-service training was relatively weak for 17 of the 19 teachers who attended California

universities. This group of teachers may have had education on general classroom management with little or no training on how to manage specific externalizing behaviors. Also, these teachers did not describe modeling or collaboration as part of their pre-service training.

General classroom management was mentioned by Cassy, Zofia, Debbie, and Wendy. Qadira described discipline as a small component of her training. Rianna had a psychology class with information that applied to students in general, but no helpful hints on classroom management. Gina, Kira, Julie, Sonia, and Nancy said they had nothing at all on behavior. Frank discussed in-service training, but did not offer information on pre-service training. Instead of training on externalizing behaviors, Nadine was pointed toward some books by renowned authors on early childhood which she did take the initiative to read.

Ed explained that he had information on how to conduct a class, but “nothing on how to deal with the types of behaviors you may come across.” Tanya had a class where one or two behaviors were glossed over during each class, but she added, “Since I have been teaching, things have come up that were never mentioned in class.” Valerie expressed that pre-service training was a long time ago; however, if she had learned enough, she would have remembered. Paulette shared that behavior was discussed but said, “I felt extremely unprepared for some of the situations I’ve come to face; and I continue to feel unprepared.

Teachers' Perceptions of In-Service Training

Teachers with relatively strong in-service training (RSIT). Of the 20 teachers, Debbie and Sonia were the only ones who had RSIT, defined by thorough instruction on externalizing behaviors combined with modeling and collaboration. Debbie was teaching 4th, 5th and 6th grade students who have extreme behavior and have been sent to a segregated school for that purpose. Debbie has had in-service trainings that include Pro-Act and CPI, which provided information combined with practice on how to de-escalate and manage potentially volatile situations. These types of trainings call for periodic re-certification which has not been maintained by the school district in order to keep her current. Debbie's new principal is implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS, 2015) with training. The program includes visual feedback posted on each student's progress to help the children stay on track.

Sonia receives annual in-service training on behavior because she is a mentor for novice teachers through the Beginning Teacher Support Assessment (BTSA, 2012) Induction program. Follow-up collaboration is provided by Sonia for the BTSA teachers that she supports. Sonia's district is described as having a lot of in-services on a variety of topics, including regular trainings on classroom management for all teachers with different presenters and, therefore, different perspectives each year.

Teachers with moderate in-service training (MIT). Six of the teachers had MIT, as defined by thorough education on externalizing behaviors but no mention of follow-up modeling or collaboration. Julie, for example, told of an in-service on escalating behaviors, the triggers of behaviors, and what to do if a student elopes. Julie

said that she and her colleagues considered the training to be vague on what they should do if a child runs off. There was no follow-up in terms of modeling or collaboration. Kira mentioned a conference that her school financed. The topic of biting was being addressed. Unfortunately, participants at the training were allowed to spend so much time sharing that information on how to prevent the behavior of biting was never provided. Although Kira did not specifically mention training on behavior, she described how the staff collects ABC behavioral data to determine patterns that precede and reinforce the students' misbehaviors. This functional assessment observation method was likely learned through some type of training during the 20 plus years that Kira has been teaching.

Sonia described annual training on behavior and mentioned that each session had different topics and presenters. Tanya has had PD on ADD and ADHD, but “not on anything that we’re looking at now,” referring to extreme behaviors (i.e., behaviors that are aggressive and violent, with the potential to cause harm). Gina experienced challenges with secondary students at a time when there was zero training or support, followed by a change in administration and the implementation of PBIS that resulted in notable positive changes. The training involved staff meetings, becoming invested in PBIS procedures, and having the staff decide together on consequences for various behaviors.

Ed teaches at a community school which serves high school students who have been expelled from the regular school setting and/or have been in juvenile hall. In-service training has been provided on topics such as PTSD and gang awareness. There

have also been trainings, provided by probation officers, with information on individual students. Ed has a background in criminal justice and worked for the California Youth Authority (CYA), now known as the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), before teaching at his current school. Still, since working for the school district, Ed has not been provided with training on how to handle volatile situations. Ed's school has a Safe School Officer who is shared between his community school and another campus where students with ED are served. As of this year, Ed's school also has probation officers on campus.

Qadira started out at a privately funded pre-school where there was tremendous support for PD, followed by a publicly funded pre-school where there was a lot of information available through conferences and books. When she started teaching middle school, workshops were provided on behavior. Qadira did not mention modeling or collaborative follow-up as a part of the training for either of the age groups she has worked with.

Teachers with relatively weak in-service training (RWIT). The remaining 12 teachers had RWIT, based on possible classroom management training but no modeling or collaboration to address specific externalizing behaviors. Rianna, Layne, and Nancy have not had in-service PD on behavior. Nancy considered PD on EBD to be an area that is lacking; she stated that training on behavior is just as important as training on curriculum. Betty, Haylee, and Zofia have only had PD on curriculum. Betty's school introduced PBIS during the 2014-2015 school year. Haylee was a new teacher at a brand new charter school, where training on behavior is projected to be provided soon. When

Zofia needed advice on behavior, the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher and the school psychologist helped; however, she generally creates her own effective accommodations and strategies. Also, Zofia mentioned that her colleagues have voiced a need for training on how to work with students who have challenging behavior. Cassy has had training on autism, followed by the support of the district autism specialist who retired about five years ago and has not been replaced. There has not been in-service training on students whose behaviors are unrelated to autism. Paulette and Marsha have sought out their own PD on behavior, since nothing was provided. At Wendy's school district, there was a pupil free day last year where teachers could select PD topics of their choice. Unfortunately, the district underestimated how many teachers would opt for the class on behavior management. Wendy and a colleague were running to get into the class but did not make it. When they arrived, the class was full. Wendy described teachers "spilling out into the hall, hoping that someone would get up and leave." There was a second session; however, the competition to get in was even worse. Wendy missed both sessions. Frank mentioned training that he had while working for CYA, but did not describe PD on externalizing behaviors since working for the public schools.

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions of PD

Name	RSPT	MPT	RWP	RSIT	MIT	RWIT
Betty	X					X
Cassy		X				X
Debbie		X		X		
Ed		X			X	
Frank		X				X
Gina		X			X	
Haylee		X				X
Julie		X			X	
Kira		X			X	
Layne	X					X
Marsha		X				X
Nancy		X				X
Paulette		X				X
Qadira		X			X	
Rianna		X				X
Sonia		X		X	X	
Tanya		X			X	
Valerie		X				X
Wendy		X				X
Zofia		X				X

Note. RSPT = Relatively strong pre-service training; MPT = Moderate pre-service training; RWPT = Relatively weak pre-service training; RSIST = Relatively strong in-service training = MIT: Moderate in-service training; RWIT = Relatively weak in-service training.

Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Experiences

Teachers with relatively easy populations (REPs). REPs were defined by the teachers who had students who were primarily of moderate to high socioeconomic status. Also, the teacher considered his or her population relatively easy in terms of externalizing behaviors. The one teacher rated to have a REP was Betty.

Betty was in her 11th year of teaching. She has worked with students from ninth through twelfth grades. She is employed in a suburban area. Although Betty has had serious concerns regarding her students and safety, she described pupils who were

generally well behaved and high achieving. She teaches classes for college preparation for high school students. She also teaches Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) which is a comprehensive program that targets students who have the recognized potential to be first generation college students in their families.

Teachers with moderate populations (MPs). The teachers of MPs expressed perceptions that sounded typical based on the interviews for this study and other research. Most teachers, 14 of the 20, were rated to be in this category. The teachers include Cassy, Gina, Julie, Kira, Nancy, Paulette, Qadira, Rianna, Sonia, Tanya, Valerie, Wendy, and Zofia.

Cassy has been teaching for 18 years. She has taught second, third, and fourth grade students and works for a large school district in a suburban area. Cassy described students engaging in behaviors such as noncompliance, choking other children, and inappropriate sexual behavior. Although these behaviors are serious, it is common to have some challenging students over the course of one's career. Therefore, she was rated as having a MP.

Gina was in her ninth year of teaching. She has taught grades seven through twelve in a suburban setting and is a Science teacher. As such, her classes transition from one location to another as they participate in lab assignments. Facilitating transitions requires extra finesse in terms of classroom management, especially for students with autism. Gina also has the concern of how to safely manage chemicals and sharp objects in her classroom.

Julie has been teaching for 20 years. She has taught kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade classes. She has also taught Art classes for students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Julie works in a suburban setting, in a district that has been relatively affluent during the recent recession due to the district's phenomenal fiscal planning before the recession started. Most of Julie's experience with challenging behavior has been in kindergarten, where students are first experiencing school. Even though Julie has dealt with an abundance of severe behavior (e.g., hitting, biting, and eloping) she was rated as having a MP since her experience is typical of kindergarten teachers. Her students are in their initial year of formal schooling; therefore, it is understandable that these children are often being recognized as having significant differences with learning, behavior, communication, and/or socialization.

Kira is a preschool teacher who has been in the field for more than 15 years. She teaches in a suburban area. Kira's school is very inclusive and inviting for all types of children, including those who have disabilities and/or EBD. The director of Kira's program is excellent about securing funding to support the students' various needs; and the ratio of adults to students is generally one to four, with additional assistants who provide one-on-one assistance for students who need additional support.

On the Demographic Survey, Nancy indicated that she had been teaching for 6-10 years. She has taught first through fourth grades and works in a suburban area. Nancy was rated as having a MP primarily because she works for a small, affluent school district that is known to be proactive and supportive. That aside, Nancy had one incident that seemed to affect her peace of mind. She once had a student who unexpectedly punched

her in the stomach on the first day of school. At the time of our interview, Nancy was not far into a pregnancy but was already on maternity leave. She mentioned wanting PD that includes how to deflect attacks from students.

Paulette has taught for approximately 14 years. She taught kindergarten through fourth grades in an urban area. Paulette described externalizing behaviors that occurred with her kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students, but did not mention difficulty with the older students. She told of instances when her class had to be repeatedly evacuated due to the unsafe behavior of one student. During another school year, a colleague repeatedly had to evacuate her class and go into Paulette's class due to another student whose behavior was out of control.

Qadira previously had taught preschool and has more recently taught middle school and high school, grades sixth through twelfth. She has worked in suburban areas. Qadira started working with children in 1977, first with preschool students. She eventually moved on to teach secondary students in 1998, where she worked with sixth through twelfth graders. Qadira spoke mostly of the behaviors seen with her preschool students, many of whom had communication challenges, sensory issues, and related disorders. She mentioned behaviors such as screaming, kicking, and hitting. In middle school, the troubling behaviors included stealing, dishonesty, and disrespect.

Rianna has taught for more than 15 years, grades sixth through twelfth. She currently works with high school students in a suburban area. Rianna has taught English Language Learners, as well as collaborative classes that she taught with special

educators. She has been experiencing challenging behaviors with girls who subtly set off issues with other students in class.

Sonia has been teaching for more than 15 years. She has taught kindergarten and fourth grade. She is currently teaching a full-day kindergarten program with 27-32 students each year. Sonia works in an urban area where parents often spend an inordinate amount of time commuting to and from work. As such, many of her students lack sufficient homework support and time with parents.

Tanya has been teaching for more than 15 years and has worked with students from kindergarten through sixth grades. She teaches in a suburban area and emphasized that students' behaviors have increased in severity over the years. She expressed that ADHD was once a significant concern, whereas now we have students who are of greater concern because they are oppositional, belligerent, and disrespectful.

Valerie has been teaching for approximately 12 years. She has taught kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade. Valerie's students are of low socioeconomic status at a school that is in a predominantly affluent suburban school district. Valerie often has students who lack focus or have behavior issues which are related to difficulties with learning. She mentioned that her students often need more support and/or attention at home.

Wendy was in her 38th year of teaching. She has worked with students in kindergarten, first grade, third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. She works in a suburban area. Wendy graduated in 1976 and did not see any remarkable behaviors for the first 10 years. From that point, however, externalizing behaviors have increased

significantly. Wendy has been teaching kindergarten and, as such, is on the front line for incoming behaviors of every kind. She has had biting, self-injurious behaviors, eloping, sensory issues that have impacted other children, and much more.

Zofia has been teaching for 17 years. She has taught first through sixth grades and has had students with ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, and Schizophrenia. She also described students who were oppositional and difficult to reach, such as students with no interest, no discipline, no concern over consequences, and no remorse.

Teachers with relatively difficult populations (RDPs). RDPs were defined by reports of extreme behavior that occurs on a regular basis. The teachers rated to have RDPs included Debbie, Ed, Frank, Haylee, Layne, and Marsha.

Debbie has taught for 15 years, previously in a suburban setting and currently in more of an urban location. She teaches a fourth/fifth/sixth grade combination class of students whose severe behavior could not be effectively supported at their home school. The school is a small, segregated campus where Debbie has worked for 12 years. She serves up to 15 students each school year. Children enter and exit the class throughout the year, so the class is ever changing. Debbie mentioned that students in this setting have a strong impact on one another. She described her student population:

My class always changes and fluxes. Like, last year it was kids with ADHD 90% of the students and only 20% were medicated. So that impulsivity and difficulty calming was a handful—like zZzZzZzzzzz [buzzing sound]. It gets really tough. Some years I'll have wanna-be gang bangers. Sometimes I'll have fighters. Or there are the ones that stir up the pot and call each other names. So, there are

different personalities. Every year is different. The year itself changes within the 10 months we are in school. My classroom in September looks *completely* different than my classroom in December, March, and June.

Ed has taught all secondary grades. He previously taught in the CYA and currently teaches high school students at a community school which is located in an urban area. Ed's students are transitioning back to the public school system from juvenile hall. There are two groups of students, with about 17 students in each class. He teaches one of the groups while a second teacher works with the other group; then they switch students. When asked if he had additional support while in class, Ed said that he has not had a paraprofessional for about seven years. He mentioned that the lack of a second adult in class has had a significant, negative impact on his program.

Frank has taught all secondary grades. His experience includes CYA and, more recently, the regular school setting. He has taught students in grades six through twelve. Frank has a unique perspective because he has also worked as an administrator. He currently has a typical high school population; nevertheless, he has experience with the most challenging of students.

Haylee is a native Californian who has had university training in states other than California. In each location, she has worked with at-risk youth who have severe behavior, including a residential treatment center for girls and schools that were in low socioeconomic areas with a high rate of gang activity. Haylee has worked with students in grades six through twelve. She currently teaches at a small charter school that serves high school students in an urban setting.

Layne has a Master's degree and has been teaching for more than 15 years. She works for a relatively affluent school district in a suburban area, yet serves at one of the lowest income schools in her county. Layne described her school as 99% English Language Learners. The neighborhood was described as having gang activity and a high degree of poverty. Layne believed that there were a lot of students with externalizing behaviors due to poverty, undiagnosed autism spectrum disorder, and undiagnosed emotional disorders.

In the classroom, Layne has had students that growl, throw chairs, break down crying for no reason, steal, hit others, disrespect others, and the like. She has had students who had selective mutism. She has had students who exhibited inappropriate sexual behavior. There is a part-time school psychologist at the school; however, nobody comes to observe and advise teachers. Layne said, "If things get really bad, a crisis counselor can be called to come from the school district." At Layne's school, there have been kids with knives in their shoes, kids with BB guns that look like real guns, and students who have had baggies of tea that were mistaken for marijuana. Layne's most challenging time as a teacher was when she had a student who was very smart and sometimes wonderful; yet, at other times he would growl, hiss, run away, hit the teacher, hit his peers, stab children with pencils, and the like. When asked if he had an IEP, Layne said, "No, no, nope, nothing. Nothing. Nothing." She was rated to have RDPs because her students are challenging every day, every year.

Marsha has been teaching middle school, sixth through eighth grades, for the past 20 years. Before that, she taught preschool for 10 years. She has worked in urban and

rural areas and believes that there are parallels between preschool and middle school students. While most people might consider these periods in child development to be especially challenging, Marsha seems to genuinely enjoy children at these two stages. In addition to teaching the usual populations of students, Marsha has taught the Opportunity Program for at-risk middle school students, in a setting that was self-contained but still on the students' regular campus so they could earn their way back to the regular classroom(s). Marsha has had preschool students that hit, kick, bite, and the like. Her middle school students had Oppositional Defiance Disorder, which was perceived to preclude them from qualifying for Special Education. She also mentioned students with ADHD and low motivation.

Teachers with relatively easy classroom experiences (RECE). RECE was defined by descriptions of student behaviors which were easy to manage for the most part. This group included Betty, Frank, Haylee, Marsha, Qadira, Sonia, and Wendy.

Betty described herself as comfortable with managing her classrooms. Her worst experiences involved defiance and verbal conflict to the point where she called campus security, because the students could not be trusted to make it to the office on their own. This has occurred approximately three times in the 11 years she has been teaching. Her biggest frustration is with students with poor attendance and/or low motivation. When asked how the school manages attendance, she explained that students rack up absences, which result in detentions. If the detentions are not served, students are referred for Saturday school, which they don't attend. Eventually, the lack of school attendance, detention attendance, and Saturday School attendance leads to on-campus suspension,

which students may not attend. Betty feels that this pattern of attendance-related consequences just adds to the problem of missing school. If attendance continues to be a problem, an administrator may establish a contract with the student and his or her parents. From there, absences can escalate into legal action, although she does not know of this actually happening.

Betty also expressed concern about bullying and having students in class without knowing that they have a history of violence. At her school, students who have been suspended will have an asterisk by their names; however, there is no indication of how serious these incidents were. (Did the students make the poor choice to cheat on a test? Or, had he or she committed acts of violence?) Betty is from a state where one of the well-known mass murders occurred on a school site, so she is vigilant about safety. Her classroom has a device on the door which allows it to be locked immediately from the inside in case there is ever a potential threat on campus. This teacher presented herself as aware, sensitive, and proactive about safety.

Frank has a Master's degree and a Single Subject Teaching Credential. He has been teaching for less than 5 years in the public school. He also had a 25 year career in Youth Authority, where he taught for approximately 8 years. He also worked as an administrator, and as a superintendent. Frank has taught grades six through twelve. He has an impressive ability to recall his training, and to utilize what he has learned from working in volatile settings. Frank emphasized the importance of building relationships with students so respect can be established. To do this, he suggested: (a) receiving students into class with an open, welcome greeting; (b) knowing each student's name; (c)

knowing something about each child; (d) avoiding authority struggles (e.g., “I told you to sit down, because I am the teacher”); (e) not embarrassing kids; (f) leaving students with the opportunity to respond in a neutral or positive manner rather than backing them into a corner to where they are enticed to act out. He also emphasized the need, physically, to command the classroom by being mobile and close to students who need the subtle reminder that comes with adult presence. The behavior that concerns Frank most is verbal outbursts that disrupt and disrespect the teacher and other students. He pointed out that other behaviors can usually be kept under wraps if verbal outbursts do not begin, or if they can be managed effectively. Frank used to work as Student Services Director, where he handled suspensions and expulsions. He described problems that often started out with the teacher being disrespected:

A lot of times, when the teacher was disrespected, the kid got suspended or expelled. The teacher was disrespected; the kid got assertive and cussed out the teacher, got in her face—that kind of thing. Usually, the teacher backed the kid up against the wall and there was no way of escape, so the kid lashed out. So, we need to find a way to communicate with where the kid always has a neutral or positive alternative decision to make. Don’t give them one where, “You’re leaving my class. You’re out the door. Get out of here.” They have to feel like they are making part of the decision themselves. I guess it’s sort of like leading the horse to water. You can lead a horse to water, and if he goes to the water, don’t worry about him drinking; at some time he is going to get thirsty. Just lead them to the water, because you are the water. They will drink at some point.

Haylee is a young teacher with less than 5 years of formal teaching experience. She has taught secondary students in sixth through twelfth grades. Haylee attended university programs outside of California and has worked with challenging populations in at least four different states. Although Haylee is a novice teacher, she presented herself as surprisingly knowledgeable, insightful, and willing to work with students who have externalizing behaviors. She mentioned the importance of understanding the whole child (e.g., physical and emotional health); being aware of the students' neighborhood and community (e.g., gangs affiliations, drugs, programs that are available); having strong classroom management skills (e.g., placing students in u-shaped setting for easy access to each child and being watchful); meeting individual needs (e.g., connecting with each student, understanding where students are coming from, not expecting each child to act the same, and implementing calming strategies such as a stress ball for certain students); and teachers being mindful of their own needs (e.g., teachers being self-aware of where they are coming from).

Haylee is concerned about behaviors that demonstrate that the student is not being engaged in class, such as tapping on the desk and making jokes. When asked about the most difficult experience she has ever had in terms of behavior, Haylee described an incident that occurred at a residential program for girls that was located outside of California:

The most traumatizing thing in my career has been these two pregnant girls who tried to jump this other girl. It was so intense and violent. And they were pregnant. For something to bring you to that state—it made me sad. It really did.

Marsha has a Child Development Permit with which she taught preschool and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential with which she has taught grades six through eight. Marsha mentioned the shortfalls of zero tolerance and knew of restorative justice. She has taught a self-contained class with approximately 15 students, mostly boys, who had severe behavior but did not qualify for Specialized Academic Instruction. She said that the students generally had Oppositional Defiance Disorder or Conduct Disorder. The idea of her program was to gradually reintegrate the students back into the regular school setting as their behavior improved, generally over a 12-week period.

When Marsha worked with preschool students, she was proactive about using pre-emptive strategies to prevent misbehavior before situations became critical. She saw behaviors such pre-verbal biting, hitting, and kicking. Marsha described a couple of especially challenging preschool students, one with explosive tantrums and one with weak muscles that caused him to unintentionally flail himself onto the blocks/activities of his classmates. With both children, Marsha worked on increasing their awareness and perspective taking skills.

Regarding middle school students, Marsha did not mention any behaviors that were especially troublesome to her. She enjoys the students' spontaneity and has a good understanding of how to motivate children. Marsha mentioned that her colleagues who have never had preschool experience sometimes struggle with students' behavior because they see it as willful whereas she considers much of the typical teen behavior to be developmental. She commented on how similar middle school students are to preschool children in certain regards. Marsha feels that in secondary education, sometimes teachers

love their topic, but may not enjoy the developmental stage of the students so much. She felt that there is a need to teach a child and not just a topic.

Qadira has been teaching for more than 15 years. She first taught preschool and has since taught secondary students, in grades six through twelve. Qadira believes in the consideration of the whole child. When she taught preschool, Qadira set up the environment so students could learn by exploring. As such, the behaviors that concerned her most were those that lead to restrictive experiences. For example, it troubled her if she had to limit a child's movement due to him or her hurting another child. Qadira mentioned children who always blamed someone else, including imaginary friends, when they did something naughty. In addition to teaching, Qadira has supervised other preschool teachers and mentioned that she was often asked to help with behaviors such as screaming, hitting, and biting.

At the middle school level, the behavior that concerns Qadira most is lying, because "There is nowhere to go from there if they are not going to face the truth." She is concerned about students who lie, steal, and do not accept responsibility. She also expressed concern about students who are disrespectful and/or off task.

Qadira recalled one preschool student who was especially challenging, pointing out that it was the 1970s when she started teaching, a time when she did not see the extreme behaviors that we have today. The preschool student was diagnosed with ADHD and would jump off of tables, slam doors, put paint in his mouth (at 4-years-old), and cry. His language skills were limited, while his motor skills were advanced; and he was a danger to the other children.

Sonia has been teaching for more than 15 years. She has a Master's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Sonia has taught kindergarten and fourth grade. She is a BTSA provider, working with new teachers as a mentor. As such, Sonia has benefitted from frequent training on classroom management. She has recently been teaching kindergarten, with approximately 27-32 students in a full day program.

Sonia expressed concern over students with spotty attendance. She currently teaches kindergarten and, since kindergarten is not mandatory, she often has students with high rates of absences. Fortunately, there has been a bit of improvement in attendance since kindergarten transitioned from a half day program to a full day program. Sonia mentioned that parents in her rural community generally have to drive for an hour and a half or two hours each way for work. Therefore, children spend a lot of time in child care and parents have little energy left to spend on being supportive with homework. Sonia also mentioned that there are five students in her school whose families are homeless. She pointed out that it is hard for students to focus on homework when they are thinking about not having a home or bed to sleep in.

In kindergarten, students with disabilities are often noticed for the first time. Sonia described a couple of difficult students. One student had severe ADHD with impulsive behavior. She said, "This poor little boy absolutely could not control his body." He talked out a lot, could not stay focused, and could not stay in his seat. Another little boy had to sit off by himself for the safety of other children. On the playground and with other adults, he would push and shove the other children. He would also cuss at the other children and at adults. His parents were in denial that there was a

problem, so there was no support from home. A third child who Sonia mentioned was a student with autism who was in foster care. He was still in a diaper and sometimes required physical intervention from a paraprofessional to keep him safe. He scribbled on things, yelled out, and had difficulty articulating his words.

Sonia expressed concern about the impact of parenting and the need for parent training. In the past, her school district was paired up with organizations to help parents, but Sonia does not think there was sufficient parent participation. To increase parent participation for her own class, she is using ClassDojo, a phone app where you can text parents individually or as a group. It also allows parents to see how their student is doing.

Wendy is the teacher who had the most years of experience in this study. She was in her 38th year of teaching. Wendy has a Bachelor's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. She has taught kindergarten, first grade, third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. During her first year of teaching, a girl in her fourth grade class came in from recess on the second day of school, upset by something that had happened on the playground, and threw a desk—with chair attached—at Wendy from across the classroom. The desk flew over the heads of numerous students. Wendy called for help on the intercom. The student was permanently removed from class as of that day. This was in the 1970s. Wendy reported 10 relatively calm years of teaching from that point, before more serious behaviors began to surface on a regular basis.

In the late 1980s, Wendy had a kindergarten student who would scream at the top of her lungs, lie on the floor and roll around, climb on the piano and counters, and throw

objects. She had no idea how to use the tools that were provided in class. She did not know how to communicate with the other children. At recess, she stayed in and stayed close to Wendy. When Wendy asked for help, she was told, “Well, she’s in kindergarten. She is Spanish speaking. We can’t test her because they’ll say it is discrimination. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” By the end of the year, testing had been completed and the little girl was sent to an ED class. Then Wendy had mixed feelings about referring the child, because something did not seem right about that outcome. Looking back with today’s knowledge, Wendy believes that little girl must have been severely autistic.

In the past couple of years, Wendy has had two boys who were extremely disruptive. They did not respond to all of the usual tricks and reinforcement strategies, nor did they respond to visual cues. They presented behaviors such as throwing things, taking scissors to stab other children, getting under tables and refusing to come out, screaming, making noises, running away, and the like. One of the boys was identified as twice exceptional, gifted and autistic. He was brilliant and had an exceptional vocabulary. If you touched his shoulder, it felt as if he were experiencing an earthquake. He needed weighted vests and weighted blankets to help with this.

There was a third little boy who had a propensity to make loud noises, bite objects, and bite other children. To reduce the biting, professionals outside the school district provided rubber tubing for him to chew on. Unfortunately, the boy’s saliva would coat the tubing; then he would sling it around so everybody would get “a saliva shower.” He would also interrupt the class by calling out, “Where’s my chew toy?” Although

Wendy has had challenging students over the decades, she presented herself as cheerful and did not mention a desire to begin retirement!

Teachers with moderate classroom experiences (MCE). MCE was defined by typical descriptions of classroom experiences based on this study and other research. This group of teachers included Cassy, Debbie, Ed, Julie, Kira, Nancy, Rianna, Tanya, Valerie, and Zofia.

Cassy has taught for 18 years. She has worked with 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students. She described a willingness to disregard what previous teachers say and allow each student the opportunity to begin anew once they enter her class. Cassy's biggest challenge has been students who are defiant combined with a lack of parental support and back up. Her most challenging student was impulsive, honest, and smart but presented behaviors such as choking other children and rubbing himself against other children at school. The school had Student Study Team (SST) meetings and put positive behavioral supports in place, including a behavior chart and rewards for positive behavior. Ultimately, the student required intervention that was beyond the district's realm. Cassy's biggest concern about behavior is the impact it has on the student and other children.

Debbie has taught 2nd through 8th grades. She has been teaching for 15 years. She teaches at a school that serves only students with severe behavior. Debbie has not had a paraprofessional for several years, so she independently teaches three grade levels of curriculum while simultaneously managing the behaviors of her challenging population. Despite the demands of her position, Debbie has been teaching at this school

for 12 years. She has strong insight regarding the need to build relationships. Debbie said, “If you build relationships with them—I really do have minimal issues in the classroom. I mean, I am not saying none, but minimal.” She also has a communication sheet that goes home with students each day. As a result, improvement is seen in class for the students of families who follow-through with logical consequences. Debbie felt that working with this population takes characteristics that cannot necessarily be taught, such as being patient and not taking things personally.

One factor that Debbie mentioned throughout the interview was the impact that principals have had on her program. She has had 8 principals in 12 years. She has had principals who provided a lot of professional development and others who provided nothing. She has also had principals who said, “Don’t touch the kids at all,” and principals who have said, “Stay safe and use appropriate restraints.” The current administrator is initiating a tiered system with visuals so students can see where they are in terms of positive behavior. Privileges which coincide with each level will be posted. In addition, positive behavior will be supported by using a school-wide token economy.

Debbie’s most difficult experiences have involved students throwing desks and times when students were taken away in handcuffs. She has been called every name in the book. Debbie realizes that the students will have externalizing behaviors, since that is why they are in her program. As such, the behaviors that concern her most involve students shutting down. For Debbie, the attitude of, “I am just not going to even try. I refuse,” is the most challenging behavior to deal with.

Ed earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and spent a short time working in Youth Authority before teaching. He took the Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teachers (MSAT), started teaching while he cleared his credential, and is in his 19th year of teaching. Given his experience, Ed has a tremendous amount of insight about the students he serves. He mentioned that they are impulsive and have struggled with externalizing behaviors since they were young children. The students seem uncomfortable when it is quiet for a couple of minutes, so somebody is bound to make noise. We discussed the possible link between their desire to have some noise/havoc and PTSD; perhaps the calm makes them anxious about when the storm will come. Many of Ed's students will stay up until 3:00 or 4:00 am then come to school and sleep. Some students come to eat because it may be the only food they have for the day. He explained that his students' emotional needs must come first if they are to access the curriculum; and he has good understanding of the function of his students' behaviors. Most of the students have difficulty postponing gratification and/or persisting with tasks. A student may say, "Mr. ___, I worked for 10 minutes today. Did I do a good job?" to which Ed would likely respond, "Yes. You did a great job for 10 minutes, but the class is a little longer than that."

Behaviors that were the most difficult for Ed included being cussed at, profanity in general, being threatened, and fighting. The frequency of fighting has decreased over the years, yet the behaviors of students seem worse as a whole. Ed has never been attacked by a student. He is frustrated when the district takes fighting and possession of marijuana more seriously than the disrespect of authority and the learning environment.

Julie has been teaching for approximately 20 years. She has a Bachelor's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Julie has taught kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade classes, as well as Art for students in kindergarten through fifth grades. For most of the past decade, she has taught kindergarten.

Julie told of a student who wore a diaper and would take it off and wipe it on stuff. She grabbed people's hair, seemingly to feel the texture. The most disconcerting behavior was that she would elope. This student had one-on-one and, often, two-on-one paraprofessional support for safety, toileting, academic support, and assistance in learning the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Another student of Julie's had major attention issues, a history of prenatal drug exposure, and previous placement in an orphanage. The student was "bouncing off the walls. He would choke people because he liked them."

Julie also described one student who was young, immature, and the lowest in her class academically. He would provoke the larger boys, intentionally running into them and head-butting them. The little boy stuck his tongue out at Julie almost every day. He rolled his eyes in response to directives and refused to sit on the rug at circle time. He was oppositional, yet clingy with the teacher and always wanted to be preferred over the other students. Once, he banged on the chair for 20 minutes because the teacher was letting other students read. When asked what type of behaviors get to her, Julie said sneaky behaviors, and behaviors that involve hurting other children.

Kira has an Associate's degree with a Child Development Permit and has been teaching preschool for more than 15 years. She mentioned concern about behaviors such

as pulling hair, pinching, and biting. The behavior with which Kira seemed most frustrated was biting. She knows how to record ABC data, how to look for environmental patterns under which the behaviors occur, and she knows how to look for what is reinforcing the behavior. However, she shared that it is difficult to extinguish this particular behavior.

Kira's most challenging time as a teacher was when 9 out of the 16, two-year-old students in her class had disabilities. She mentioned speech issues and sensory issues, such as hearing, vision, and sensory needs related to autism. The children with speech and sensory disorders also had more externalizing behaviors. In addition, many of Kira's students that semester were new to her class. She pointed out that it is more difficult when the students do not know their teacher because they are learning if they can trust.

Nancy has a Master's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. On the Demographic Survey, she reported herself as having 6-10 years' teaching experience in the first through fourth grades. Nancy was on maternity leave at the time of this interview. In general, Nancy mentioned concerns about behaviors such as attendance problems, apathetic attitudes, work refusal, and lying. The behavior she considers most troubling is oppositional defiance, especially from a student who is capable, but refuses to do his or her work. She also described other behaviors of the student who hit her. He would growl and grimace at classmates, hit the other students, ram desks into the children when he did not get his way, and pretend to shoot others with his hand as an imaginary gun. Another student who stood out in her mind was difficult because of attendance

problems that were being supported by his mother who made excuses for him. That student was extremely unmotivated and unwilling to participate in class.

Rianna has taught for more than 15 years. She has her Master's degree and a Single Subject credential. She has taught sixth through twelfth grades and prefers to work with high school students. Rianna has taught English Language Learners and co-taught collaborative classes with special education professionals. She expressed that some high school students with IEPs do not seem to consider their disability a disability. She gave the example of students using their IEPs as a tool to turn in late assignments and/or get up and out of class to socialize whenever possible.

Lately, Rianna's biggest frustration in terms of behavior is that some of her girls have been snide, rude, manipulative, and cruel. They have been instigating problems in the classroom, "starting three or four minor little explosions that set off fireworks around the classroom." She says that the girls are more advanced than the boys at analyzing situations and quickly turning things to their advantage.

Rianna gave an example of effective guidance she received when she was a student teacher. The mentor teacher had Rianna take one challenging student out and tell him, "I need your help. You are the glue that holds this class together. The other kids look to you. If I can, with your help, get the rest of the kids on board...." She said the strategy was effective; the other students [who were also challenging] followed suit.

Tanya has been teaching for 22 years. She has a Master's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. She has taught students from kindergarten through sixth grades. Tanya mentioned the changing student population in terms of behavior over

time. She recalls when ADHD was typically her greatest challenge, but says that the behaviors we see today are much more severe. She is concerned about students with oppositional defiance and flat out belligerence. Her district is beginning to implement PBIS. She says that the schools spend a lot of time teaching children how to be good human beings. The behavior that pushes Tanya's buttons most is flat out disrespect.

Tanya told of a little boy who was on the autism spectrum and had Oppositional Defiance Disorder. The child was smitten with one particular little girl, and if she did not acknowledge him at every recess, he would go into his classroom and throw desks, throw chairs, and pull over file cabinets. "He stalked her on the playground to the point where she would not go on the playground." This little girl spent four months in the classroom with her teacher and eventually transferred to another school. In this case, the parents of the boy were supportive and present. They tried hard to help turn things around.

She discussed another student who was challenging. He had ADHD and no structure at home because Mother had her hands full with four children and juggled a few different jobs to make ends meet. Dad was incarcerated. This boy had difficulty taking responsibility for his actions; and, his consequences for misbehavior were always somebody else's fault. One teacher caught him tagging. He denied it and accused her of being racist.

Valerie has been teaching for approximately 12 years. She has a Master's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Valerie has taught kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade. She had good insight on possible causes of students' misbehavior. She mentioned that the children might be frustrated and struggling

academically; they might be bored; they might have a medical condition; or, they might be lacking support from home.

Behaviors Valerie mentioned included students not being on task and problems that occur during recess. The behavior which bothers her most is that which causes students to need constant redirection because it takes away from the class. Valerie pointed out that misbehavior is often a result of students not having support or attention at home. She shared about a second grade student who was influenced by older brothers and was wise beyond his years. He struggled with reading and fooled around in class rather than putting forth a concerted effort. He just gave up.

Zofia has been teaching for 17 years. She has a Master's degree and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Zofia has taught first through sixth grade students. She described innovative accommodations and modifications that she has designed and implemented on her own initiative. Zofia deals with behaviors such as severe attention seeking, to the point that school work does not get completed, and students with conditions such as ADD, ADHD, Autism, Bipolar, Schizophrenia, and so on. She described one student whose behaviors included sucking his thumb, licking his clothes and objects, and crawling on the floor. Zofia attached the student's pencil to his desk, provided him with a water bottle, and made changes with her strategies throughout the year as his needs changed.

The most difficult students for Zofia are the ones who do not respond to discipline and have no remorse. They do not care if they have to sit out, or miss a field trip, or don't pass a test. She feels that if parents are not into school, the students will not value

school. When asked if her school district has anything in place for parent education, she said they used to have a program called “Bridges.” Unfortunately, it was discontinued due to lack of funding. The school district is reportedly trying to reinstate the program.

Teachers with relatively difficult classroom experiences (RDCE). RDCE was defined as descriptions of students with frequent and severe externalizing behaviors.

This group consisted of Gina, Layne, and Paulette.

Gina has a Bachelor’s degree in Science, a Single Subject Teaching Credential and a Master’s degree. She has taught seventh through twelfth grades. Gina considers disrespect to be the most troublesome behavior for her. She gave the example of students turning around and talking while the teacher is addressing the class. The most difficult experience she has ever had was with a student who had autism and reacted violently, apparently because he was frustrated about his partner working too slowly on the computer. The boy wielded a sharp object that is commonly used in Science Lab, so Gina had to clear the other students from the class while adults intervened with the student who was acting out. Gina pointed out that Science classes call for special training on how to manage the out-of-control student, since there are chemicals, sharp objects, and frequent transitions within the classroom.

In addition to the needs of students in her class, Gina emphasized the impact that different principals have on behavior throughout the school. In the past, there was little, if any, guidance or support from administration. Teachers could try Time Out, calling parents, giving alternatives, or lunch detention. For more serious incidents (e.g., if a student left the room, hit somebody, tried to hit a teacher, or threw things), teachers could

call Security. More recently, Gina had a principal who introduced PBIS and was proactive in preventing and addressing misbehavior. For example, when parents came to pick up their students' schedules, the principal spoke about behavior expectations. Students attended an assembly on the second day of school, with information provided on behavioral expectations and consequences. Gina described that principal as having the best run school at which she has ever worked. He has since retired and student behavior has declined with the new administration due to inconsistency.

Layne has a Master's degree and has been teaching for more than 15 years. The students at her school are primarily of low socioeconomic status. Moreover, 99% of the students are English Language Learners. The neighborhood has an inordinate amount of gang activity, considering that the county as a whole is one of the higher income regions in California. Layne believed that a lot of the students with externalizing behaviors are struggling due to poverty, undiagnosed autism spectrum disorder, and undiagnosed emotional disorders.

In the classroom, Layne has had students who growl, throw chairs, break down crying for no reason, steal, hit others, disrespect others, and the like. She has had students who had selective mutism. She has had students who act out sexually. There is a part time school psychologist at the school, but nobody comes to observe and advise teachers. If things get really bad, a crisis counselor can be called to come from the school district. At Layne's school, there have been kids with knives in their shoes, kids with BB guns that look like real guns, and students with baggies of tea that have been mistaken for marijuana.

Layne's most challenging time as a teacher was when she had a student who was very smart and sometimes wonderful; however, at other times he would growl, hiss, run away, hit the teacher, hit his peers, stab children with pencils, and the like. When asked if he had an IEP, Layne said, "No, no, nope, nothing. Nothing. Nothing." She said that it was difficult to get students qualified for Special Education, because many of the children did not have a discrepancy between their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and academic levels.

Paulette has been teaching for nearly 15 years and has worked with students from kindergarten through fourth grade. She has a Bachelor's degree and a Multiple Subjects Teaching credential. Paulette always planned to work with typical students and honestly explained that she never wanted to teach Special Education, including students who have unique needs related to externalizing behaviors. Paulette currently teaches first grade, so many of the children who have special needs have not yet been identified. She expressed frustration over the time it takes to go through the SST process and the psychoeducational assessment process. In terms of behaviors that Paulette commonly has in class, she mentioned "your typical ADD kids and little naughty talkers," but these behaviors were not expounded upon. Her real concerns were the "explosive, physical, scary kids." She generally has 30 impressionable first graders whose parents are in an uproar if a student is severely out of control. She described a couple of students who have impacted her classrooms in an extreme manner because each time it took an entire year to get help. With one student, she described: explosive meltdowns; knocking things off of desks; chasing, hitting, and biting other children; pulling his own pants down; and eloping.

Another year, there was a student who screamed, climbed on other students, spit on other students, banged his head on the wall, kicked windows, threw hard objects at windows, and the like. While more intensive support was pending, the behavior of these two youngsters resulted in evacuating the other children multiple times, disrupting neighboring classrooms, and possibly causing emotional trauma to all of the children.

Table 3

Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Experiences

Name	REP	MP	RDP	RECE	MCE	RDCE
Betty	X			X		
Cassy		X			X	
Debbie		X			X	
Ed			X		X	
Frank			X	X		
Gina		X				X
Haylee			X	X		
Julie		X			X	
Kira		X			X	
Layne			X			X
Marsha			X	X		
Nancy		X			X	
Paulette		X				X
Qadira		X		X		
Rianna		X			X	
Sonia		X			X	
Tanya			X		X	
Valerie			X		X	
Wendy			X	X		
Zofia			X		X	

Note. REP = Relatively easy population; MP = Moderate population; RDP = Relatively difficult population; RECE = Relatively easy classroom experience; MP = Moderate classroom experience; RECE = Relatively easy classroom experience. Ease or difficulty of the populations do not relate to the research question but provides insight into the teachers' perceived experiences.

Discrepant Cases and Nonconfirming Data

All PD experiences mentioned by the teachers will be described, in order to compare how frequently the topics came up when the teachers discussed their firsthand experiences. Therefore, the discrepant cases and nonconforming data will reflect themes on the teachers' classroom experiences only, whereby a topic was brought up by only one teacher and/or was not directly related to the research questions.

Antecedent-behavior-consequence (ABC) data. Kira mentioned that she collects ABC data to help determine what triggers negative behaviors with her preschool students. She was the only teacher who mentioned collecting behavioral data on her own. It may have been more feasible for her to collect data, since she has assistants in her classroom.

Difficulty getting special education services for students with EBD. Wendy also mentioned concerns about the time it takes to get through the assessment process when students have externalizing behaviors. In her school of approximately 600 students, there is about one SST meeting per week. Since Wendy is a kindergarten teacher, she is often the first person to provide parents with information about a child who is not learning or not behaving in a typical manner. When the child is the firstborn in a family or the only child, it often takes time for parents to come to terms with their child's unique needs. Wendy told of one student who was Spanish speaking but clearly had unusual, immature, and unsafe behaviors. When she reported to the school that something was not right, they delayed assessment by stating that she was Spanish speaking and parents would say the school was being discriminatory. In her 38 years of

teaching, Wendy has experienced frustration regarding the delays in assessing students to determine how they can best be supported.

Layne works in an elementary school where approximately 99% of the students are English Language Learners (ELLs). Her students experience tremendous stress at home and in their communities. Their experiences often present as both internalizing behaviors (e.g., selective mutism, crying for no apparent reason) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., growling, throwing chairs, exhibiting overtly sexual behaviors, stealing, hitting, disrespecting everyone, showing defiance, possessing knives and BB guns, eloping, stabbing other students with pencils, and the like). When asked if she felt that some of these students needed Special Education, Layne shared her frustration in getting the children qualified. She was reportedly (and incorrectly) told that children who do not have a discrepancy between their IQ and academic levels will not qualify for Special Education.

Marsha expressed frustration with the assessment process for students in middle school. She gave an example of a typical experience. First, she is supposed to implement various strategies, keep data, and meet with the parent(s) multiple times. She said that it is sometimes difficult to get one meeting with parents, let alone multiple meetings. Once the Assessment Plan is signed, everyone attempts to be discrete; however, her students are in middle school, so they are aware and this can make them very uncomfortable. For example, Marsha recently had a sixth grade student with ADHD whom she believed should have been assessed long ago given that his reading level approximates at the late second/early third grade level. Marsha said that his behaviors

have escalated since the assessment process started. Whenever possible, Marsha would rather get a student over academic and behavioral hurdles without referring him or her for assessment, “without putting everyone through that,” especially if the specialists may say that the student may not have a gap between his or her IQ and academic levels.

Monitoring students during unstructured times. Debbie mentioned that most externalizing behaviors outside of the classroom occurred during unstructured times.

Not taking things personally. Debbie felt that there are some things which cannot be taught in PD sessions, such as not taking students’ externalizing behaviors personally.

Reporting child abuse. Julie expressed concern over teachers not being clear on when to report child abuse and child neglect. She says that teachers sometimes err on the side of reasonable doubt rather than letting the investigators sort out what is and is not abuse or neglect. Since student behavior is often a reflection of how children are being treated, Julie feels that PD should include information on reporting child abuse/neglect.

Self-injurious behaviors. Paulette told of a student who was in the class next to hers. He would bang his head on doors and glass windows.

Suicide. Betty brought up the very serious concern of students and suicide. Internalizing behaviors were not a part of this study; however, children who suffer to this extent are of great concern. Betty told of a high school student who seemed very depressed. This student’s only conversations involved violent video games; and he showed her pictures of gruesome shootings and the like. Therefore, Betty referred the student to the school psychologist. His parents were able to intervene by taking him to a

special program outside the district. Betty mentioned a nonfatal suicide attempt that occurred on campus. This child's parents also intervened by taking him to a private program. By contrast, a third at-risk student died by suicide. This child's parents did not have the means to intervene. Betty also discussed the responses of administration regarding these incidents. The first principal's response was to keep the issue quiet, whereas a subsequent principal put together a suicide prevention program which was presented to the school by assembly.

Overview of Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

Themes, relationships, and patterns will be discussed for each of two research questions, with discussion of links that appear between the teachers' accounts of their PD experience and their firsthand classroom experiences with students who have externalizing behaviors. Some teachers had students in more than one grade level subgroup; however, themes are described based on the specific grade level subgroups of the students they were discussing during the interview. The PD themes will be presented first then the classroom experience themes, with each set of themes in alphabetical order. Subgroups of teachers who discuss the youngest students will be reported first for each theme; and subgroups that include the oldest students will be reported last for each theme. If no teachers reported on a particular theme, their grade level subgroup is followed by the words, "In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme."

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes on Pre-service and In-service PD

Most teachers expressed that they did not feel sufficiently trained, especially during pre-service experiences through their respective universities. In-service training has been sparse, with varied topics from one district to the next.

Autism. Two of the 20 teachers reported PD on autism.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy had training on *Autism* after five years in the classroom. The training included follow-up support with a district autism specialist whom Cassy described as “amazing.” The specialist was available from approximately 2002 through 2010. Layne also had a two hour in-service on *Autism*.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Behavior management. Three teachers told of general *Behavior Management* as a topic covered in PD.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Marsha has pre-service training on *Behavior Management* which was embedded in the curriculum.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette had in-service training on behavior issues. The use of stickers was discussed, but nothing to prepare her for aggressive, out-of-control behavior. Sonia is a BTSA provider and attends classes on behavior with the teachers whom she mentors. The district offers classes on behavior with various topics

and different presenters each year. She says that it is wonderful and helpful to have these classes with her novice teachers each year.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Frank had in-service training on *Behavior Management* while working for the California Youth Authority (CYA).

Classroom management. Six teachers mentioned *Classroom Management*.

Three of the teachers have experience in different grade levels, so their names appear for more than one subgroup.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette had in-service training on *Classroom Management*. Sonia attended an in-service on *Classroom Management*. Valerie also mentioned training on *Classroom Management*; however, she emphasized that specific behaviors were not addressed. Zofia mentioned learning about *Classroom Management* during pre-service training, but there was nothing on specific behaviors.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie had university training on general *Classroom Management*, including how to get students' attention and maintain order during transitions. Valerie reported her experiences with kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade students. Zofia's comments are relevant for this subgroup as well as the previous subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie's focus during this interview was her fourth through sixth grade students, so this subgroup was included in the above mentioned pre-service training. As mentioned, Valerie reported on kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade students.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Frank had in-service training on *Classroom Management* while working for the CYA.

Collaboration. Two teachers have had PD on *Collaboration*, with one of these teachers representing two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Zofia has had collaborative support from the resource specialist and the school psychologist.

Third grade through fifth grade. Nancy has benefited from collaboration with the resource specialist and the school psychologist at her school. The collaborative support Zofia receive from her resource specialist and school psychologist are also applicable for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Crisis management. Two teachers had training on *Crisis Management*. One of the teachers has taught two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie's school district has provided Pro-Act and CPI trainings; however, neither have been updated to keep her certification current.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie's Pro-Act and CPI training have also been useful with students in this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Frank had Professional Assault Response Training (PART) while working for the CYA. This training would, today, be referred to as Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-Act).

Eloping. One kindergarten teacher was provided with PD on *Eloping* (i.e., running away) to address the needs of a specific student.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had a student with a tendency to elope, so in-service training was provided at her school site.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Emotional disturbance (ED). Two teachers mentioned training on *ED*, although Nancy's training was a course in a Master's program (i.e., not pre-service or in-service through the school district). Since Ed taught students in two subgroups, three subgroups of children benefitted from *ED* training.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. Nancy had a class in her Master's program on ED. The class included safety precautions and there was information on the ripple effect that could be seen in high school and beyond for the students with ED.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Ed has had in-service training from individual speakers, counselors, and probation speakers to address topics such as PTSD.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Ed had students in eight through twelfth grades, so his information is also relevant for this subgroup.

Escalating behaviors. One teacher mentioned PD on recognizing when behaviors are escalating.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. When Julie had in-service training to address the needs of her student who eloped, the school psychologists also covered *Escalating Behaviors*.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Gang awareness. One teacher mentioned training on *Gang Awareness*. This teacher has worked with students in two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Ed mentioned his training on Gang Awareness.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Since Ed had students in eighth grade through twelfth grade, his training on *Gang Awareness* is also relevant for this subgroup.

Own initiative. Three teachers mentioned that they sought their own PD on students with externalizing behaviors.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Marsha took the initiative to read books that were recommended during pre-service training.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette took two classes on her own initiative, one on *Classroom Management* and the other on *Mainstreaming*. The classes were independent study and not as helpful as she had hoped.

Third grade through fifth grade. Beyond her credential requirements, Nancy opted for a Master's program which included an *ED* class.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS). Four teachers received training on *PBIS*. Three of these teachers have had students in more than one subgroup.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Tanya said that her school piloted a program on *PBIS*.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie has had training on *PBIS* and has a good understanding of how it will look. Her new principal plans to begin implementation of *PBIS*. Tanya, mentioned in the *Kindergarten through Second Grade* subgroup, also reported experiences with students in this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. The benefit of Debbie's training in *PBIS* and the school's upcoming implementation is expected to extend to her sixth grade students. Gina reported in-service training in *PBIS* during the previous two school years.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Gina's in-service training in *PBIS* is also relevant for this subgroup. Betty's school introduced *PBIS* during the 2014-2015 school year. She is excited about the new implementation.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One teacher discussed training on *PTSD*.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Due to Ed's population being a community school, Ed was provided with training on *PTSD*.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. As mentioned, Ed was provided with in-service training on *PTSD*.

Psychology. Two teachers have had training in psychology, although one of the teachers received the training through a Master's program (i.e., not pre-service or district in-service).

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Third grade through fifth grade. Layne mentioned having a pre-service *Psychology* class that included information on behavior.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty mentioned that she had a *Psychology* class in her Master's program.

Special education. Seven teachers had PD pertaining to *Special Education*. Two of these teachers worked with more than one subgroup of students.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette and Julie mentioned *Mainstreaming* as a pre-service class that was required in order to clear their credentials. Paulette said her course covered theory and case studies, but nothing that was relevant to the classroom. Julie said that her course focused on special education law, but presented nothing on how to work with the children. Layne mentioned a pre-service class in

Special Education, but did not discuss anything specific. Tanya had been teaching for more than 22 years and mentioned that her pre-service training included an *Exceptional Child* class. When Wendy had pre-service training in the 1970s, she had an overview on mainstreaming students with mention of behaviors the prospective teachers might see; however, information on what to do with the behaviors was not presented.

Third grade through fifth grade. Since Tanya reported experiences with students in first, third and fourth grades, her account of pre-service training that included a class on *Exceptional Child* is also relevant for this subgroup. Wendy reported mostly on kindergarten experiences, as mentioned above; however, she also discussed her first year of teaching which involved fourth grade students.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Marsha had a couple of classes on students with special needs as part of her Multiple Subject teaching credential.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty mentioned that she had a *Mainstreaming* class during her pre-service training.

Triggers of behavior. One teacher had training on how to recognize the triggers of students' behavior.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. There were no data for this subgroup.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had in-service training that included information on the triggers of misbehavior.

Third grade through fifth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. There were no data for this subgroup.

Table 4

Frequency of Themes on PD by Subgroup

Subgroup	PK-TK	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	# of Teachers
ABC Data	2	0	0	0	0	2
Autism	0	0	2	0	0	2
Behavior Management	1	2	0	0	1	3*
Classroom Management	0	3	3	3	0	6*
Collaboration	0	1	2	0	0	2*
Crisis Management	0	0	1	1	1	2*
Eloping	0	1	0	0	0	1
Emotional Disturbance	0	0	1	1	1	2* **
Escalating Behaviors	0	1	0	0	0	1
Gang Awareness	0	0	0	1	1	1*
PBIS	0	1	2	2	2	4*
Own Initiative	1	1	1	0	0	3
PTSD	0	0	0	1	1	2
Psychology	0	0	1	0	1	2 **
Special Education	0	5	2	1	1	7*
Triggers of Behavior	0	1	0	0	0	1

Note. Subgroups are based on the grade level(s) that teachers focused on most during the interviews = P-TK = Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten; K-2 = Kindergarten through Second Grade; 3-5 = Third Grade through Fifth Grade; 6-8 = Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade; 9-12 = Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade.

*The number of teachers reporting on a topic is fewer than the subgroups of students the teachers have taught, because some teachers taught for more than one subgroup.

**One of the teachers had PD that likely benefited students, but the training was through a Master's program rather than pre-service or district in-service. All salient data are accounted for in the findings.

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes on Experiences with Externalizing Behaviors

Aggressive and/or unsafe behaviors. This was the most prevalent theme, with 16 teachers who told stories of students with aggressive and/or unsafe behaviors. Five of the teachers told of their experiences with students in different subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira has students that bite, pull hair, and pinch.

Marsha had a 3-year-old who was large and had big, explosive behaviors. He would bite, strike out with his fists, and kick. Marsha was bitten a number of times by this student and she had to redirect other children out of the room for their protection.

Qadira told of a preschool student who climbed, jumped off of tables, slammed doors, and was a danger to other children. Her biggest concern was for students who are dangerous to other children, because she did not like restricting any student's ability to explore the learning environment.

Kindergarten through second grade. Cassy had a third grade student who choked other children.

Julie had a kindergarten student who choked others when he was excited. She had a little boy who was young and small, but would head-butt the other, larger boys. She also had a student who pounded chairs on the floor. What Julie finds most troublesome is students hurting other students because she wants her class to be a safe place.

Layne mentioned students hitting one another, throwing chairs, and stabbing other children with pencils. In addition to students hitting one another, Layne has been hit by children. At her school, students have had knives in their shoes and BB guns in their backpacks.

Paulette has first grade students who often have not yet received services that they need. She had one child who had explosive meltdowns that involved turning over desks

and knocking things off of Paulette's desk. This little boy would crawl under desks, chase, hit, bite, and pull on other children. He also pulled his pants down in front of the class.

Sonia said that the toughest students for her are the little ones with ADHD who are not able to control their bodies. She described a student who had ADHD and impulsivity. He did a lot of pushing and shoving, especially outside the classroom during unstructured times. Even in the classroom, Sonia did not feel that the other children were safe; therefore, she eventually created a space for his desk to be away from the other students.

Tanya told about a little boy from another class who had a crush on one of her first grade girls. He followed her at recess, and if she did not acknowledge him each day he would pull down file cabinets, throw desks, and toss chairs. The little girl was so disturbed by this student that she stayed inside for about four months. An aide was provided for the little boy, but ultimately the little girl was traumatized and left the school.

Valerie had a second grade student who had problems with other children on the playground.

In 1977, Wendy had a little girl who would climb, scream at the top of her lungs (which startled other children), and throw things (i.e., blocks, scissors, and whatever was on the table). In the past couple of years, she has had two little boys in kindergarten who suddenly, unexpectedly presented externalizing behaviors such as throwing things, taking scissors from classmates and stabbing them, and eloping.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie has an extreme student population in terms of externalizing behavior. She told of her experiences with fourth through sixth grade students, but did not specify every aggressive behavior. She did, however, mention being kicked, desks flying, and students being taken out in handcuffs.

Nancy had a third grade student who hit her in the stomach on the first day of third grade. As the year progressed, he shoved desks into other students when he did not get his way. He also held his hand in the shape of a gun while pointing it at his teacher as if to shoot her.

Wendy had a fourth grade student who threw a desk across the room. The desk flew over the heads of numerous classmates, but did not hit anyone.

Tanya mentioned having a fourth grade boy who was not physical in the classroom, but was aggressive during recess. Another first grade boy would knock books off of the desks of classmates then yell that they were knocking the books down and trying to hurt him. The other students would tell what had occurred, but the boy consistently denied doing anything wrong.

Valerie had a sixth grade student who would fight.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie discussed her fourth, fifth, and sixth grade combination class in the previous section. (To reiterate, she has been kicked, has had desks flying, and has had students who have been taken out of the class in handcuffs.)

Ed has had secondary students that fight in class, although this occurs less than it has in the past.

Frank has also taught secondary students. Although he did not directly mention students who have been aggressive, he referred to “separating the combatants” while explaining the procedure for responding to fights.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Ed and Frank have both taught secondary students in correctional settings. Both teachers are working with high school students. Since they mentioned experiences that applied to secondary students, please refer to the previous subgroup for their information on aggressive and unsafe behaviors.

Gina’s most difficult incident was a student who had a tantrum that involved wielding an X-Acto knife. She has also had to deal with one student twisting the arm of another student, tantrums that involved flailing on the floor, throwing things, hitting, attempting to hit the teacher, and fighting with other students.

Haylee has worked in California schools, but has also worked in schools and a residential setting outside of California. Her most troubling behavioral incident occurred outside California, with two pregnant girls who jumped a third girl. Haylee described the incident as “intensely violent.”

Attendance issues. Concerns about attendance were mentioned by four teachers.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Sonia teaches kindergarten and emphasized the importance of attendance. She used to have students for a half day and had many absences. Now her school has full day kindergarten, and there are fewer problems with students missing school.

Third grade through fifth grade. Layne teaches third grade and mentioned that there are typically a lot of children who do not come to school. Last year, her school had a liaison for the families of ELLs, which includes 99% of this school's population. The liaison would go to students' homes to bring them to school if they were not in attendance. With this in place, attendance improved. Unfortunately, the position for liaison has since been cut and attendance problems have resumed.

Nancy mentioned a third grade student whose mother repeatedly made excuses for her son's absences. In turn, the child was unmotivated, dishonest, and unwilling to work.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty discussed frustration with the behavior of chronic truancy and the lack of effective interventions for her high school students with attendance issues. She said that truancy is the most difficult behavior for her because students who are truant cannot experience success. If a student is truant, the usual routine is: (a) the student racks up detentions; (b) the student does not attend the detentions; (c) the student is referred to the principal; (d) the principal establishes a contract between himself or herself, the student, and the student's parent(s). Attendance issues can escalate to legal issues, although Betty says that she has only seen this happen a few times in her 11 years of teaching.

Crisis intervention. Four teachers mentioned crisis intervention. One of the teachers currently has students in two different subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Nancy wants to have training on how to de-escalate potentially volatile behavior and how to deflect physical attacks.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie works with her school district's most challenging 4th, 5th, and 6th graders but does not have current certification in crisis intervention. She has been trained in the past through her district, but has not had the opportunity for the review and practice required to maintain one's certification.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie, mentioned in the previous subgroup, also teaches sixth grade students.

Gina believes that novice teachers would benefit from learning how to de-escalate verbal confrontations. She also said that she would like PD which addresses the need to de-escalate situations involving the out-of-control, angry student and students with neurological differences.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Ed has had excellent training, including training through the probation department and a counseling agency. His training has included information on *PTSD*, *Gang Awareness*, and specific training on individual students. Despite his experience and the variety of training he has had, Ed is working with a volatile population without school district training on how to intervene during a crisis.

Deception/lying/sneaking. Five teachers mentioned deception/lying/sneaking as a concern. Two of these teachers discussed students from more than one subgroup.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Qadira mentioned students who do not take responsibility for their actions. She told of preschool students who have blamed their invisible friends for mishaps.

Kindergarten through second grade. Tanya had a first grade student who would knock books off of the desks of his classmates then blame his classmates for knocking the books down and trying to hurt him.

Layne mentioned students that steal.

Third grade through fifth grade. Nancy had a third grade student who routinely lied.

Tanya had a fourth grade boy who did not accept responsibility for his actions and resisted consequences for his misbehavior. When he lost at tether ball, it was because the other person cheated. When he lost the privilege of playing tether ball, he wanted the whole class to lose time at tether ball because it was the classes' fault that he was losing.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In addition to Qadira's preschool students mentioned above, she spoke of her middle school students who were "sneakers," routinely stealing from others. Qadira cited lying as the behavior that concerned her most with middle school students because you cannot reach children who are not honest.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Rianna's greatest frustration concerned students who are sneaky, deceitful, and dishonest. Rianna described girls in her class who sneak food to the boys then look innocent while the boys get reprimanded. She also described students who conspire to cheat then blame it on the next group of students. Rianna mentioned feeling frustrated with students who steal things then lie to her face.

Disrespect. Nine teachers brought up the topic of disrespect.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had a kindergarten student who rolled his eyes and stuck his tongue out at her almost every day of the school year.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy described disrespect that stemmed from a lack of parent support for the teacher. The student would crumple papers that the teacher gave him and refuse to participate in class. She also mentioned that she has been called every name in the book.

Debbie mentioned disrespect and name calling.

Layne has been hit and growled at.

Nancy's experienced disrespect when she was hit and when she had a student pretend to shoot her with his hand shaped as an imaginary gun.

Tanya had a fourth grade student who, if you told him, "Put away your pencil. I need your attention up here," would look at her, snap his pencil in half, and take out a crayon to continue drawing. She has found that if she called him out on his behavior, he did better in the classroom; however, he continued to act up on the playground.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty said that the worst behaviors she has had to deal with were students who were verbally defiant and using profanity. During her

11 years of teaching, Betty has called Campus Security three times because students were being defiant to the point that they could not be trusted to walk themselves to the office.

Ed discussed the disrespect of his students. They sometimes say, “Hey Bro” to him or refer to him by his first name. If he tries to tell them this behavior is disrespectful, the students typically have trouble understanding and sometimes become offended. The behavior that bothers Ed most is being cussed at, called names, and threatened. He says that the district will suspend a student for one day for disrespecting a teacher compared to a week for fighting or possession of marijuana. The behavior that bothers Frank most is verbal outbursts that disrupt and disrespect the learning environment.

The behavior that bothers Gina most is disrespect in the classroom. She described behaviors such as students turning around and talking while she is giving instructions and students talking back to the teacher.

Disruptive behaviors. Fourteen teachers discussed disruptive behaviors that have occurred in their classrooms.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had a kindergarten student who would take her diaper off and wipe it on things in the classroom. She said, “That was really fun for the rest of the students. Their eyes were BING!”

Paulette told of a first grade student who had explosive meltdowns. She also shared about a student who was in a neighboring class, yet had a year-long impact on her class. The little boy would climb on other children, spit on other children, hit his head on

the door and windows, and throw things at the glass windows. His teacher would evacuate the class and bring her students into Paulette's class. As such, the child's behavior impacted over sixty students each time there was an incident.

Sonia described one student who was very impulsive and physically unsafe around the other children. She also mentioned a student who yelled and scribbled on the walls, and a student who often talked out during class.

Tanya told of a first grade student who routinely left a trail wherever he walked. "Between the door and his desk, he would lose a shoe and a sweater; and everything in his desk would be on the floor."

Wendy had a student who frequently climbed and required her constant supervision to prevent this behavior or to get the child down. She has had students who disrupt the class by making noises, singing, and screaming. She has had students that roll on the floor, crawl on the floor, and hide under tables. She has also had disruptions such as children throwing things, taking scissors from classmates, and stabbing other children. One child had a sensory need to bite, so a specialist provided him with a chew toy. Unfortunately, the chew toy would get drool on it; then the little boy would sling it around so the other students would get wet. If the child did not have the chew toy, the student would disrupt the class by calling out, "Where is my chew toy?" Another behavior which impacted the learning environment in Wendy's class was eloping. Wendy's school is surrounded by a busy street with large trucks that pass by on a regular basis. She fears that a student will elope, run to the fence, and climb over before she can catch him or her.

Third grade through fifth grade. For Cassy, the biggest concern about students' externalizing behavior is the impact that it has on the learning of other students.

Layne has had disruptive behaviors that include hitting, chair throwing, stabbing with pencils, hissing, growling, crying, eloping, and acting out sexually.

Nancy had a student who grimaced and growled. She also mentioned a child who yelled obscenities and pounded his fist on surfaces when frustrated about his academic assignments.

Valerie mentioned that off-task behavior is a distraction to the learning environment because it takes time to constantly redirect students who are not on task.

Wendy had a student who threw a desk through the room, over the heads of classmates.

Zofia had a student who was constantly seeking attention. She has also had a student with distracting behaviors such as repeatedly dropping his pencils. This student also presents frequent sensory-related behaviors such as thumb sucking and licking his clothes.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty has had a few instances of students who engage in verbal conflict, including use of the "F word." When this occurred, Betty called Campus Security to prevent further disruption.

Haylee mentioned a student who talked out, swore, has had a tendency to be dramatic, and has walked out of class. She also has had two girls who cry during class, as well as students who talk, tap on their desks, and make jokes during class.

Rianna described girls in her class who “appear on the surface to have done nothing wrong while they might instigate all sorts of chaos around them. They can be, in large part, responsible for starting three or four minor little explosions that set off little fireworks around the classroom.” Their behaviors which distract from learning include throwing things to one another, sneaking food to one another, and stealing things during class.

Eloping. Three teachers mentioned having students who have eloped.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie spoke of a student who had a tendency to elope. There was a special training to address this behavior. The staff was instructed not to chase the student. When asked what to do if the child could run into a dangerous situation, such as a street, the response was to let her run because they did not want anybody to get hurt. Julie said that she and her colleagues felt confused about that directive.

Layne mentioned a kindergarten student who had a tendency to elope.

Wendy has had elopers in her kindergarten classes as well. This is definitely a concern for her, since her school is surrounded by busy streets that have large trucks

going by each day. One of her biggest concerns is that a child will get to the fence and scale it before she can stop him or her.

Third grade through fifth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Family issues and/or lack of support. Sixteen teachers told stories of issues they have had with parents of their students. Two of the teachers each told stories of experiences in two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira mentioned a mother who called the preschool several times a day to check on her son because his behavior had changed for the worse since her schedule had changed. The mother used to bring her son to school, nurse him, spend time at the school, and pick him up each day. There were often different people dropping the little boy off and picking him up. The child had been biting other children and pulling hair. His mother was concerned and embarrassed, but did not seem fully to understand the function of her son's behavior.

Marsha mentioned the frustration that parents experience during the preschool and middle school years. They are "befuddled" because they simply do not know what they do not know. They do not know how to redirect their children. Marsha also mentioned a

middle school parent whose son had ADHD, as did she. The mother had difficulty keeping her own life together, so she was not able to monitor her son.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie shared about a student who was disrespectful and had a mother that was not supportive. Instead of supporting Julie to improve her child's behavior, the mother accused her of being prejudiced. She had never been accused of this before and was concerned that the parent's lack of regard lent to the child's continued disrespect throughout the entire school year.

Nancy spoke of a student who did not complete assignments and would shut down, claiming that the work was not his responsibility. Nancy worked with the Special Education team and tried various strategies that proved ineffective. This boy's mother made excuses for him not completing assignments, so the teacher felt that his lack of motivation was due in part to the mother.

Paulette had a first grade student whose parents were in denial about his externalizing behaviors. By second grade, the student had a mental health diagnosis, medication, and an aide to support him in the classroom.

Sonia told of a time when a student's relative cussed her out because she would not release the student until it could be verified that parents had authorized it.

Valerie mentioned a second grader with whom she had difficulty and there was little help from home. In addition to a lack of academic support, Valerie mentioned that the child came to school dressed in a manner which indicated he was not well cared for. This student stuck out in Valerie's mind even though her school demographics indicated

that 75% of the students received free and reduced lunches. She said that there was a lack of parent help throughout the school; you had to beg parents for support.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy mentioned behaviors that stemmed from impulsivity, such as students touching and choking other students. She had one student who was acting out sexually and “dry humped” other children at school.

Debbie talked about the lack of motivation students have when parents or guardians do not show an interest in what they are doing at school. It is difficult to keep students moving in a positive direction when behavioral communications go home but are not reinforced.

At Layne’s school, 99% of the students are ELLs. Layne teaches in an area that is of low socioeconomic status, in a difficult community. There is a high rate of unexcused absences. She also mentioned a student who lived in transitional living with his mother who suffered from alcoholism.

Tanya had a challenging fourth grade student whose mother was having difficulty managing everything in her life. The student’s father was in jail, so his mother had four children to care for. She worked three or four jobs and left the children with their grandfather who reportedly watched nothing but movies with fighting. One time the student was out late at night, so a police officer told him to go home. The boy told the officer that Grandpa said it was all right for him to be out; however, Grandpa said that was not true. In addition, Tanya mentioned another former student with externalizing behavior and a challenging family situation. He lived with his mother, rotating dads, and perhaps an aunt who was somehow involved. He also had two siblings that were in self-

contained classes for students with ED. Tanya kept in touch with this family and has been told that he had difficulty with high school. He said the wrong things, got into fights on a daily basis, and ended up staying home due to physical injuries that have resulted from the fights. Tanya shared that she does not know what to do with certain families whose lives are very different from hers. For example, one of her students lived with her dad, her mom, another lady, and many children. When it was time for parent conference, the entire family and a translator attended. Tanya was not clear on who to speak with, but did her best to work with this family which was so different from her own “Leave it to Beaver” situation, with the ideal family. Tanya explained that her own home consists of two parents, two children, nutritious meals, specific bedtimes, and household responsibilities for each person. She wants to be compassionate with students whose families are different than her own, but acknowledges that she really cannot understand the lives of many of her students.

Zofia’s greatest frustration is the students who have no discipline at home. She says they do not respond to negative consequences and show no remorse over their lack of investment in school. Zofia expressed, “You need parents that are engaged and into school.” She said that if parents are not into school, the kids are not going to be into school. I asked if her district has ever had anything in place for parent education. She said they used to have a program called “Bridges,” but it was cut from the budget.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie teaches fourth through sixth grade students, so her above mentioned comments on students who lack motivation also pertain to this subgroup.

Gina said that 70% of her parents are pretty supportive, but she has had a few parents who have been confrontational on the phone.

Marsha said that the development of middle school students parallels that of preschool students. Parents are “befuddled” by the behavior of children in both age groups.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Ed’s students have typically been raised by grandparents, older siblings, foster parents, and/or group homes. His students tend to have traumatic backgrounds. There is little parent involvement related to school. Even if the students lead their own conferences, few parents attend. Often, Ed’s students come to school primarily for food and to sleep. They may stay up until three or four o’clock in the morning then fall asleep in school. Also, they may eat as much as possible while at school because they have little else to eat.

Rianna prefers to deal with students’ behavior directly with the students whenever possible. She said:

If a kid is a problem, it’s usually pointless to deal with the parent because that is usually why the kid is a problem in the first place. You’re not going to get the parental support. It’s not that the parents are bad. They are probably just trying to advocate for their kid. And they are probably just going to go way too overboard.

Funding issues. Seven teachers mentioned funding issues. One of the teachers accounted for two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira mentioned that the administrator of her preschool is very adept at obtaining grants and maintaining a nice student to adult ratio. The school receives state funding, but also has private funding sources.

Kindergarten through second grade. Sonia said that her kindergarten class used to be part day, with 20 students. Now she teaches a full day program with up to 32 students.

Zofia expressed concern regarding the impact of parents not being interested in school, so I asked if her district has ever had anything in place for parent education. She said they used to have a program called “Bridges,” but it was cut from the budget.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie mentioned that she used to have an aide, but that support was discontinued several years ago. Since then, she has been singlehandedly juggling the curriculum of three grade levels with the district’s most challenging elementary school students.

Layne brought up the fact that the school’s liaison who worked through the 2013-2014 school year was no longer present for 2014-2015. The liaison worked with family issues in Layne’s school which is 99% ELLs and low SES.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie’s above mentioned comments also apply to this subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty did not directly refer to funding issues; however, she mentioned that students at her school have died by suicide because “the support that the school district and school psychologist could provide were not sufficient

by any means.” Betty discussed family issues pertaining to students with internalizing behaviors; nevertheless, her experiences align with the family issues of students with externalizing behaviors in terms of how to intervene and who should be responsible. Betty has had one former student who died by suicide, one student who was suicidal last year, and three students who were suicidal the year before that. She said that one of her previous students made a nonfatal attempt at suicide while he was at school. She explained that there were students who “ended up in programs that were way beyond the district’s means,” indicating that parents paid for nonpublic settings. She said that “It does come down to parents intervening as opposed to the school district advocating for them.” Betty discussed a student who died by suicide last summer. He did not have a supportive family, or a family with the monetary ability to intervene. Betty perceived this to be a complex issue and felt that it was sad that there are not better ways to intervene when families do not and/or cannot.

Ed mentioned that his program used to include a paraprofessional, which made a huge, positive difference for students. Unfortunately, paraprofessionals were eliminated with budget cuts that occurred during the recession.

Gang issues. Two teachers mentioned gang issues that impact their students, either in the community or in the classroom.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Third grade through fifth grade. Layne's students reside in an area that is of very low SES and has gang activity.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Haylee mentioned a student who is affiliated with a gang and may have brought drugs onto the campus.

Due to the nature of Ed's program, with students coming from correctional settings into a community school with only two classes, it is sometimes impossible to separate students who are from rival gangs. This can make for a tense classroom environment.

Homelessness. Two teachers mentioned students who were experiencing homelessness.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Sonia has a student who is homeless; and there are five students who are experiencing homelessness in her school. Sonia mentioned that the students are behind academically, but it is difficult for them to focus on academics when they are thinking about not having a home or a bed to sleep in.

Third through fifth grade. Layne mentioned a student who was living with his mother, who is an alcoholic, in transitional living.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Increasing EBD. Six teachers brought up the notion that student misbehavior has been increasing over time and is becoming more difficult to manage. One of the teachers reported for two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira mentioned that in her 25 years of teaching, there has been an increase in preschool children who have sensory issues. For example, there are more students with autism and autistic-like characteristics who are sensitive to touch or need deep pressure. Some students mouth objects. Others may have very sensitive hearing.

Marsha started her teaching career 30 years ago and said that this behavior was not commonplace when she first started teaching.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette has experienced more behavioral challenges with students recently than when she started teaching, approximately 15 years ago. About the past, she explained, “You had your ADHD and little naughty talkers, but not the explosive, physical, scary kids.”

Wendy started teaching in 1977, 38 years ago. During her first week, she had a fourth grade student who threw a desk over the heads of classmates. The principal came in, removed the student, and that child was never returned to Wendy’s class. For 10 years after that incident, Wendy did not have any memorable externalizing behaviors. In about 1988, she had a little girl in kindergarten who acted out in odd, immature, and unsafe ways. The child was assessed and sent to a class for students with ED. Looking

back, Wendy believes that the child had autism that went unrecognized by the school at the time. Since then, she has had numerous students on the autism spectrum. Moreover, last year she had a boy who did not respond to any of the usual strategies for addressing externalizing behaviors. This year she had another student who was very similar. She said that these boys did not respond to positive reinforcement. They did not respond to charts. They did not respond to visual cues. They were explosive and would just go off all of a sudden. Their behaviors included throwing things, stealing scissors from other children, stabbing other children, getting under tables, screaming, making noises, singing, and, in some cases, eloping. Wendy expressed that, in her 38 years of teaching, she has seen an increase in the severity of students' behaviors.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie mentioned that when she first started teaching, approximately 15 years ago, she had one student who threw a desk. This type of behavior was the exception. She said that externalizing behaviors were not as prevalent as what we now see in classrooms.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie's comments from the previous subgroups are also relevant for this age group.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Ed was in his nineteenth year of teaching and said that there is less physical fighting between students lately, but behavior overall has gotten worse. He said that the last few years have been very difficult.

Motivation. Two teachers mentioned students who have a lack of motivation.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Third grade through fifth grade. Zofia discussed the lack of interest that students have when parents are not invested in education.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. What disturbs Rianna most is children who do not care about their education.

Noncompliance. Eight teachers mentioned noncompliance as an issue, with one of the teachers reporting for two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had a kindergarten student who routinely refused to sit on the rug with his class.

Wendy has recently had two kindergarten boys who got under the furniture and refused to come out. She tried visuals, positive reinforcement, and her usual strategies without success. The specialists came in and gave these students breaks outside the classroom when nothing else would work.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy described a student who refused to work. This child's mother was not willing to work with the student's team, which Cassy felt had an impact on the child's lack of motivation.

Debbie said that students who are shut down are the most difficult for her to deal with. “The unwillingness, ‘I’m just not going to even try. I refuse’.” Debbie said that it is difficult to determine what triggers this behavior.

Nancy had a student who did not put forth an effort in class and did not complete assignments. Strategies were put in place with the help of special educators to no avail. Nancy attributed this student’s lack of success to the boy’s mother because she made excuses for him not completing assignments.

Zofia told of a little girl who was capable of doing her work, but was noncompliant about getting anything done unless there was a significant incentive, such as a field trip.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie’s report in the section above also applies to her sixth grade students.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Haylee mentioned that the unmotivated student can be just as disruptive as students with more overt behaviors, because teachers are redirecting them during class.

Ed said that students in his class sometimes get angry and walk out of class, thereby avoiding work.

Off task behavior. Four teachers mentioned students being off task.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. For Valerie, the most frustrating behavior involved students who were off task and need constant redirection.

Third grade through fifth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty said that the most common externalizing behaviors she has experienced involve students being off task.

Ed said that his students might work for 10 minutes then expect that to be enough. Ed has to tell them that the class is a little longer than 10 minutes. Ed does not like constantly telling students, “Hey, get to work.”

Haylee mentioned students who are off task. She said that some students are “just more about education than others” and some students are “straight not engaged.”

Need for support beyond the school. Five teachers reported on the need for support which extends beyond the school for students and families.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Marsha told of young parents whose son was especially challenging. Counseling was provided through the school to help the parents effectively address their child’s behaviors. This was effective. Unfortunately, this provision of counseling occurred over 20 years ago.

Kindergarten through second grade. Sonia wished that there was parent training so parents would be able to work more effectively with the school. She works in a rural area where parents often drive for 3 to 4 hours a day getting to and from work. There is little time with their children and little time to monitor homework. Students in Sonia’s class have had a high rate of absences and tardies because the parents do not realize the

importance of kindergarten. Sonia emphasized that students miss school, get behind academically, and then there is an impact on their behavior. There is also a need for after school programs that assist with homework.

Zofia had a student who was off task because she spent her energy constantly seeking the teacher's attention.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy mentioned the need for parent training.

Layne mentioned the impact that poverty and the surrounding community have on her students' emotions and behavior. She described her students as 99% ELLs, yet the school no longer has a liaison to communicate with families. Layne feels that someone should be there for these families, and this person should have a clear understanding of the community (i.e., gangs, poverty, homelessness, and resources which are available). Last year, there was a person who would go to the homes of absent students and bring the children to school. Attendance has declined, since the liaison is no longer in place.

Zofia is hoping that her district will reinstate collaboration with the "Bridges" program for parent education and resources.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

PD that is needed. Fourteen teachers reported on PD that they believe would help with externalizing behaviors.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira would appreciate PD sources where she could get instant answers on how to address students' externalizing behaviors. She would like to have PD that includes modeling and coaching.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie said that the teachers with whom she works have asked for training on the disruptive student, or the emotionally disturbed student, but it never seems to get on the agenda. Julie would like to have PD that includes videos of how to respond effectively to students with common behaviors. She would also appreciate opportunities for role playing.

Paulette said that she would like PD that entails a professionally trained person modeling how to manage a student with severe behavior while simultaneously teaching her class.

Sonia likes when YouTube videos are used to provide examples of how to implement various strategies in the classroom. She would also appreciate simple, concise online sources without the requirement of having to spend time introducing herself and telling what grade level she teaches.

Third grade through fifth grade. Cassy would like PD that includes scenarios of how to address students' externalizing behaviors. She would like PD that takes the age of students into account.

Layne would like PD that addresses the importance of understanding the students' community, including the poverty and gang issues that children experience. She would like training which is relevant to her school culture and to her classroom, as well as

follow-up training in her classroom. Layne would like for someone to visit her classroom and see what is going on.

Tanya says that after 22 years of teaching, she feels jaded about PD. She has been excited in the past, thinking “This will help!” However, when she tries the strategies, she wonders if she is doing it right because her efforts do not result in what she had hoped for. She believes that schools need someone to come in and get familiar with the culture of the campus and the situations of individual children. Tanya explained that it is difficult to understand what the children’s lives are like and how that should impact her approach with her students.

Zofia would like PD that includes information on how she can best reach students with ADD, Bipolar Disorder, psychological problems, and parents who don’t care.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Gina would like PD that addresses how to facilitate smooth transitions, since she teaches Science Lab. Gina’s class requires sharp tools, such as scalpels, so she is very interested in how to manage the out-of-control student. She also feels that PD on externalizing behaviors should include annual refresher courses.

Marsha mentioned that her colleagues tend to consider their middle school students’ behavior to be willful. She suggested training in cultural and socioeconomic awareness as well as understanding and sensitivity of students at this developmental stage. She also mentioned that middle school students, like preschool children, need a rhythm to their day. They need free time, structured time, and the like.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty is interested in PD on best practices for behavior interventions. She would appreciate PD that involves scenarios presented on video with role playing opportunities to follow. Betty was interviewed at the beginning of the 2014 school year and mentioned the need for rewards that are age appropriate, not stickers for high school students. Her school has since implemented PBIS and has age appropriate rewards to support positive behavior.

Frank felt that teachers need information on strategies to prevent externalizing behavior (e.g., relationship building strategies, command presence as a means of communication, leaving students with opportunities to make positive or neutral choices, and the like).

Haylee would like PD that is interactive, such as having scenarios and opportunities to role play what to do. As topics, she suggested information to help teachers understand the students' community and life experiences. She mentioned diet, the effects of home life, emotional health, and general consideration of the whole child. Haylee would also like to have specific strategies for helping teachers make choices that will help to de-escalate tenuous situations.

Rianna feels that there is a need for PD that addresses student motivation and how to affect cultural change amongst parents and society. The purpose of this would be to decrease students' behaviors of noncompliance that stem from a lack of motivation.

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Two teachers discussed the implementation of PBIS.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Third grade through fifth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Gina has experienced schools without PBIS and then a school with PBIS. She described frustrations before PBIS, where each teacher did their best to manage their own classrooms without any consensus on behavioral expectations. Some teachers allowed gum chewing while some did not; some teachers allowed cell phones while some did not. Also, there was little, if any, support from administration. Recently, a new principal started at her school and introduced PBIS, first to the teachers. The staff sat down together and came to a consensus on which behaviors were minor versus which behaviors were major. They came up with consequences for the various behaviors. Then the principal presented the program to parents and students. Gina says it is the best run school at which she has ever worked.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty's school has begun to implement PBIS. The principal started by having the staff hand out raffle tickets to one another for positive behaviors they noticed. She said this was an excellent team building exercise that also exemplified what the students would experience once PBIS was initiated for the school. During the 2014-2015 school year, the PBIS was initiated and is having a positive impact on behavior in the school. When students receive a ticket for positive

behavior, they have choices on which box to put it in, based on what they hope to earn (e.g., free dance tickets, an opportunity to be first in line for an event, a school spirit shirt, and the like).

Pre-emptive strategies. Seven teachers told of pre-emptive strategies they use to prevent externalizing behaviors. One of the teachers reported for two different subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Marsha reported the consistent use of preemptive strategies with her preschool students and middle school students. She watches to see who needs a change of pace, who needs support with social interactions, and who needs more space.

Kindergarten through second grade. Sonia reported that her kindergarten class is able to come in, sit quietly, and work in a tame manner because there is consistency. Her room is orderly and the children know what to expect in terms of consistency and consequences. Also, Sonia has implemented ClassDojo, where each student has a character that can be seen on a screen in class. The program can select students randomly; then the teacher is able to provide visual feedback which the class and that child's parents are able to see. ClassDojo shows "Thumbs Up" for correct answers, an indication of "Team Work," or feedback on "Needs Work."

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie mentioned that it is important to build relationships with students and that doing so leads to having an easier time with behavior.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Gina would like PD that addresses how to facilitate smooth transitions, since she teaches Science Lab. Gina's class requires sharp

tools, such as scalpels, so she is very interested in how to manage the out-of-control student. She also feels that PD on externalizing behaviors should include annual refresher courses.

Marsha uses raffle tickets to keep the students on task. She also monitors the class for any potential needs, and uses student aides whenever possible.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Betty is vigilant about watching for signs that a student could be at risk emotionally. She is proactive about intervening on behalf of students who are of concern. She told of a student who seemed depressed and was unengaged. He was drawing “pictures that were gruesome of shootings and other disturbing things.” Betty got support from parents who were able to intervene with counseling outside the school district.

Frank named numerous preemptive strategies to prevent externalizing behaviors from occurring in the classroom. For example, he emphasized the importance of having positive relationships with the students. He believes that teachers should greet students as they come in, receiving them into the class as opposed to the students offering the first greeting. He said that it helps to know each student’s name and something about each child. Having a relationship with each student fosters respect. He said that we should not leave students without a good or neutral choice that they can make. We should also take care not to embarrass students. He suggested the strategy of using proximity to communicate with students, such as moving closer to a student who is talking to convey that it is time to be quiet. He also suggested speaking with different inflections in one’s voice to maintain students’ attention. Don’t use threats. Don’t get in authority battles

such as, “Sit down because I am the teacher.” There is no need to say that, since the position holds the authority.

Haylee arranges her class in a u-shape so she is able to watch everyone. She mentioned using strategies such as handing a stress ball to a student who needs it. She also brought up the importance of making conscious choices to de-escalate situations.

Principals. Five teachers shared their experiences with the principals’ impact on behavior. One of the teachers reported for two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira’s administrator takes the teacher’s needs into consideration and works hard to maintain a high ratio of adults to support a low ratio of students. The administrator often provides one-on-one assistance for students with special needs.

Kindergarten through second grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie has had eight different principals in the past 12 years, with some periods of time when there was not a principal on campus. Some of Debbie’s principals have said to do what is needed to stay safe during behavioral emergencies; other principals have directed her not to have hands on the students for any reason. Debbie’s current principal is beginning the implementation of PBIS, with a school-wide level system and token economy. Debbie seemed excited about the impact this would likely have for her students.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Debbie’s comments for the previous subgroup of students are also relevant for this subgroup.

Gina experienced challenges with principals who were not proactive in regard to discipline. If a student misbehaved, the teachers could try talking to the student, having the student sit out, giving alternative choices, talking with parents, or lunch detention. If a student left the class, threw something, hit another student, or tried to hit the teacher, the teachers could call Security. Until recently, however, Gina did not have principals who were helpful with discipline.

Ninth through twelfth grade. Betty mentioned that there has been a disturbing lack of transparency when it comes to the administration providing clarity on students' history in terms of behavior. "You should get more than an asterisk on the roll call to show that a student has been suspended in the past." She explained that an asterisk could indicate that a student copied on a book report in junior high, or it could indicate that a student was in a fight. Betty also mentioned the impact of different principals in terms of serious situations. For example, when a pupil engaged in suicide-related behavior, her previous principal's response was to keep it quiet. Her new principal, however, took a more proactive stance to this serious behavior and "rallied the troops" to provide an assembly on suicide prevention. Although suicide-related behaviors would be manifestations of internalizing states, this example shows that different principals respond to behavior quite differently.

Haylee said that she considers principals to have a huge impact on school climate. She did not realize the impact principals have until she had one that did only the minimum. After her experience with a principal who expended minimal effort, Haylee said, "Then I really noticed that it is not just about the teachers in the classroom doing all

they can. If they don't have the support of administration, it is going to directly affect the students.”

Restraint. Three teachers mentioned physical restraint, with one of the teachers responding for two subgroups.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. Paulette told of a student who had the run of her classroom because she was told not to physically restrain or touch him. Her neighbor teacher had a similar experience, with a student who was a danger to himself and the other children. That teacher was also told not to intervene. Neither teacher was provided with training on how to de-escalate situations or intervene in an emergency.

Sonia had a student with autism who required a BIP and a one-on-one paraprofessional. This little boy ended up going to a self-contained class after a couple of weeks; however, during the time he was in general education, Sonia mentioned that he had to be held by his aide.

Third grade through fifth grade. Debbie has been trained on how to de-escalate potentially volatile situations and intervene with restraint techniques if a child is a danger to himself/herself or others. Nevertheless, different administrators have provided different directions on how to handle students in behavioral emergencies. Some have told her to intervene if she needed to in order to stay safe. Others have said not to touch the students.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Information pertaining to Debbie applies to this subgroup, as well as the previous subgroup.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Restorative justice/restorative practices. Two teachers mentioned restorative justice/practices.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Kindergarten through second grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Third grade through fifth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. Marsha used to teach an *Opportunities* class for general education middle school students whose externalizing behaviors were considered oppositional. She ran her program in a way that sounded like today's move toward restorative practices, with consideration of the whole child and an interest in what underlies a student's behaviors. Marsha's *Opportunities* class dissolved during the Zero Tolerance era, partly because the pendulum called for no tolerance but also because the district could not find teachers who were willing to provide the 12 week program at various sites throughout the school district.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. Haylee said that her principal is planning to train the staff on Restorative Justice.

Sensory issues. Five teachers mentioned students with sensory issues.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira conveyed her belief that sensory issues are becoming the most prevalent problem for preschool children. She sees each child's sensory needs as unique. Kira's preschool has a program wherein students' special needs are addressed for two hours each day, with emphasis on sensory issues as the primary focus for one of the sessions each week.

Qadira told of a 4-year-old who put paint in his mouth. To address the child's sensory needs, Qadira had success with finger paints and clay.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie described a kindergarten student whose developmental age approximated at 12-36 months. The little girl would grab people's hair in a way that showed her interest in simply feeling the texture.

Wendy mentioned a kindergarten student who would bite things. A specialist gave him a chew toy, but he got saliva on the chew toy and slung it around and the other students got wet.

Third grade through fifth grade. Zofia had a primary grade student who was sucking his thumb and licking his clothes.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Speech and language. Three teachers mentioned speech and language difficulties as related to behavior.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. Kira discussed a program that addresses the needs of preschool students who have disabilities, with services to address speech and language needs. Kira mentioned the importance of speech as a means of decreasing her students' misbehavior.

Kindergarten through second grade. Julie had a student who used the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) in kindergarten in to support communication.

Qadira mentioned a preschool student who had difficulty with language and cried until he was nearly 5-years-old.

Third grade through fifth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. In this subgroup, there were no data for this theme.

Table 5

Frequency of Themes on Classroom Experiences by Subgroup

Subgroup	PK-TK	# of Teachers
Aggression/Unsafe Behaviors	3	16*
Attendance	0	4
Crisis Intervention	0	4*
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	1	5*
Disrespect	0	9
Disruptive	0	14
Eloping	0	3
Family Issues	2	15*
Funding Issues	1	7*
Gangs	0	3
Homelessness	0	2
Increasing EBD	2	6*
Motivation	0	2
Noncompliance	0	8*
Off Task	0	4
Need for Support Beyond School	1	5*
PBIS	0	2
PD Needed	1	14
Preemptive Strategies	1	7*
Principals	1	5*
Restraint	0	3*
Restorative Justice/Practices	0	2
Sensory Issues	2	5
Speech and Language	1	3

Note. Subgroups: P-TK = Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten; K-2 = Kindergarten through Second Grade; 3-5 = Third Grade through Fifth Grade; 6-8 = Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade; 9-12 = Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade.

*The number of teachers reporting on a topic is fewer than the subgroups of students the teachers have taught, because some teachers taught for more than one subgroup. All salient data are accounted for in the findings.

Links Between PD and Classroom Experiences

To begin the process of comparing the teachers' perceptions of their PD experiences to their classroom experiences, I first considered the teachers' perceptions of their classrooms relative to the ease/difficulty of the student populations they have served

in public school settings. From there, I compared the teachers' PD (e.g., amount of PD and types of PD) and their firsthand classroom experiences to determine if links could be established between the two. There were no teachers in this study who had Relatively Strong Pre-service Training (RSPT) and only two (Betty and Layne) had Moderate Pre-service Training (MPT). The rest of the teachers had Relatively Weak Pre-service Training (RWPT). Following the written data, there are tables for comparison based on the teachers' classroom experiences.

Seven of the teachers had Relatively Easy Classroom Experiences (RECEs): Betty, Frank, Haylee, Marsha, Qadira, Sonia, and Wendy. One of these teachers (Betty) has served Relatively Easy Populations (REP) of students. Two of the teachers (Qadira and Sonia) have students that are considered to be Moderate Populations (MPs) in terms of externalizing behaviors. Four of the teachers (Frank, Haylee, Marsha, and Wendy) have worked with Relatively Difficult Populations (RDPs). In terms of PD, one teacher (Betty) had MPT. Five of the teachers (Frank, Haylee, Marsha, Qadira, and Wendy) had RWPT. The only teacher who had Relatively Strong In-service Training (RSIT) was Sonia. The other six teachers (Betty, Frank, Haylee, Marsha, Qadira, and Wendy) had RWIT.

Ten of the teachers had Moderate Classroom Experiences (MCE): Cassy, Debbie, Ed, Julie, Kira, Nancy, Rianna, Tanya, Valerie, and Zofia. None of these teachers had REPs. Five of the teachers (Cassy, Julie, Kira, Nancy, and Rianna) taught MPs. Five of the teachers (Debbie, Ed, Tanya, Valerie, and Zofia) had RDPs. In terms of PD, all ten of the teachers had RWPT. One teacher (Debbie) had RSIT. Four of the teachers (Ed, Julie,

Kira, and Valerie) had MIT. Five of the teachers (Cassy, Nancy, Rianna, Tanya, and Zofia) had RWIT.

Three of the teachers had Relatively Difficult Classroom Experiences (RDCE): Layne, Gina, and Paulette. None of the teachers in this groups taught REPs. Two of the teachers (Gina and Paulette) taught MPs. One of the teachers (Layne) taught a RDP. In terms of PD, one teacher (Layne) had MPT and two had WPT. None of the teachers in this group had RSIT. One teacher (Gina) had MIT. Two teachers (Layne and Paulette) had RWIT.

Below are Tables 6-8 with the above listed data, comparing the teachers' pre-service and in-service training to their perceptions of classroom experiences. The purpose was to see if the trainings appeared to have impacted the teachers' firsthand experiences with students who had externalizing behaviors. As an additional descriptor, information on the ease or difficulty of each teacher's described populations is presented. For example, a participant with students from a Relatively Easy Population might describe a high socioeconomic level without serious or frequent externalizing behaviors. A participant who worked with students from a Moderate Population might describe his or her perception of a typical classroom with typical students. By contrast, a participant with a Relatively Difficult Population might describe students who have extreme, ongoing externalizing behaviors. The experiences of the teachers who participated in this study will be detailed in Section 5. These experiences will include the teachers' training prior to teaching in the public schools, as well as the teachers' willingness, interest, and/or passion for working with challenging students.

Table 6

PD Compared to Relatively Easy Classroom Experience

Names	RSPT	MPT	RWPT	RSIT	MIT	RWIT	REP	MP	RDP	RECE	MCE	RDCE
Betty		X				X	X			X		
Frank			X			X			X	X		
Haylee			X			X			X	X		
Marsha			X			X			X	X		
Qadira			X			X		X		X		
Sonia			X	X				X		X		
Wendy			X			X		X		X		

Note. RSPT = Relatively Strong Pre-Service Training; MPT = Moderate Pre-Service Training; RWPT = Relatively Weak Pre-Service Training; RSIT = Relatively Strong In-Service Training; MIT = Moderate In-Service Training; RWIT = Relatively Weak In-Service Training; REP = Relatively Easy Population; MP = Moderate Population; RDP = Relatively Difficult Population; RECE = Relatively Easy Classroom Experience; MCE = Moderate Classroom Experience; RWCE = Relatively Weak Classroom Experience.

Table 7

PD Compared to Moderate Classroom Experience

Names	RSPT	MPT	RWPT	RSIT	MIT	RWIT	REP	MP	RDP	RECE	MCE	RDCE
Cassy			X			X		X			X	
Debbie			X	X					X	X	X	
Ed			X		X				X		X	
Julie			X		X			X			X	
Kira			X		X			X			X	
Nancy			X			X		X			X	
Rianna			X			X		X			X	
Tanya			X			X		X			X	
Valerie			X		X			X			X	
Zofia			X			X		X			X	

Note. RSPT = Relatively Strong Pre-Service Training;; MPT = Moderate Pre-Service Training; RWPT = Relatively Weak Pre-Service Training; RSIT = Relatively Strong In-Service Training; MIT = Moderate In-Service Training; RWIT = Relatively Weak In-Service Training; REP = Relatively Easy Population; MP = Moderate Population; RDP = Relatively Difficult Population; RECE = Relatively Easy Classroom Experience; MCE = Moderate Classroom Experience; RWCE = Relatively Weak Classroom Experience.

Table 8

PD Compared to Difficult Classroom Experience

Names	RSPT	MPT	RWPT	RSIT	MIT	RWIT	REP	MP	RDP	RECE	MCE	RDCE
Layne		X				X			X			X
Gina			X		X			X				X
Paulette			X			X		X				X

Note. RSPT = Relatively Strong Pre-Service Training; MPT = Moderate Pre-Service Training; RWPT = Relatively Weak Pre-Service Training; RSIT = Relatively Strong In-Service Training; MIT = Moderate In-Service Training; RWIT = Relatively Weak In-Service Training; REP = Relatively Easy Population; MP = Moderate Population; RDP = Relatively Difficult Population; RECE = Relatively Easy Classroom Experience; MCE = Moderate Classroom Experience; RWCE = Relatively Weak Classroom Experience.

Evidence of Quality

Twenty general education teachers participated in this study. The teachers were each from a different school district as a measure of protection. This study involved a significant amount of travel, so teachers could be interviewed face-to-face. The in-person interviews also allowed participants to convey their experiences in a personal way and allowed me to more fully understand who they were. The teachers were from Northern California and Southern California, including areas that were rural, urban, and suburban. Two of the teachers were male and 18 were female. Although ethnicity and race were not formally accounted for, the teachers were White, African American, Asian, Hispanic, and for some a hybrid mix of ethnicities typical of multicultural California.

Data sources include audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews, field notes, demographic information (see Appendix D), emails, text messages, notes about phone calls, and information stored in NVivo (QSR International, 2012). All information that can be accessed by computer is password protected. My cell phone, which has audio

recordings and text messages is also password protected. Hard copies of field notes and transcripts are kept in a locked safe.

Safeguards have been put in place to assure the accuracy and credibility of this study. For example, my own experiences related to this study have been suspended in order to focus fully on the participant's perceptions. Before I conducted interviews, Walden University's Internal Review Board approved my research proposal. After the interviews were conducted, participants had the opportunity to check and approve the transcripts, descriptions of the data, and findings. My study has been checked by individuals with expertise in the field of EBD, including but not limited to Walden University staff.

Section 5: Discussion

Overview of Why and How the Study was Done

This phenomenological inquiry (PI) was used to explore the perspectives of California teachers regarding the problem of insufficient pre-service and in-service training on students with externalizing behaviors. Teachers answered the central question: What are your perceptions and experiences of the pre-service and in-service training you have had regarding students with externalizing behavior related to EBD? This question was followed by a subquestion: What are your perceptions and experiences with students in your class who have externalizing behaviors? The subquestion was used to look for a link between the teachers' perceptions of their PD and the teacher's perceptions of their firsthand experiences with students who act out in class.

The findings for the central question appear to support previous research: There is a lack of PD to address EBD (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). The findings also specified that some of the teachers' firsthand experiences were common regardless of the students' grade levels, yet other experiences were directly related to the students' grade levels. In addition, a link was not clearly established between the teachers' perceptions of their PD and their perceptions of the firsthand experiences they have had with students who have externalizing behaviors. Nevertheless, some teachers clearly indicated which types of PD would be useful. When teachers did not directly voice their PD needs, it was still possible to make inferences based on the descriptions of their experiences then check with them to ensure my understanding of their experiences was correct. Clarifications

were usually made during the interviews; however, clarification was sought after interviews were conducted when needed.

Interpretation of the Findings

Pre-service PD

The clearest finding in this study is the lack of PD for pre-service teachers. Not even one out of the 20 teachers, 19 of whom had pre-service training in California, had Relatively Strong Pre-service Training (RSPT) on students with EBD. In this context, RSPT is defined as education combined with firsthand experience that included modeling and/or collaboration. Only two of the teachers had Moderate Pre-service Training (MPT), here defined as education on classroom management but little, if any, information on specific externalizing behaviors and no modeling or collaboration. The other 17 teachers who attended California Universities had Relatively Weak Pre-service Training (RWPT), here defined by possible training on classroom management but little, if anything, on how to manage specific externalizing behaviors.

In-service PD

Another clear finding pertained to in-service training. Of the 20 teachers, all have had in-service training in California. Two of the teachers had Relatively Strong In-service Training (RSIT), here defined by thorough instruction on externalizing behaviors combined with modeling or collaboration. Six of the teachers had Moderate In-service Training (MIT), here defined by education on externalizing behaviors, but no mention of follow-up modeling or collaboration. The other 12 teachers had Relatively Weak In-

service Training (RWIT), here defined by possible instruction on classroom management, but no modeling or collaboration to address specific behaviors.

The two teachers with MPT had classes on Psychology and Special Education. One of the teachers had opportunities to observe classroom settings. Of the 17 teachers who had RWIT, 4 mentioned training on classroom management, 1 mentioned training on discipline, 1 had a psychology class, and the rest mentioned little to no training. Three of the teachers conveyed that they had not been prepared for the types of behavior that they have been experiencing in recent years.

The PD topic for which the teachers had the most training (pre-service and in-service combined) was Special Education/Mainstreaming. This was discussed by 7 of the participants, followed by Classroom Management, which was discussed by 6 participants. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) were mentioned by 4 participants, 3 of whom had been at a school where PBIS was implemented. Behavior Management, which sounded much like Classroom Management (i.e., general information that did not include how to manage specific types of externalizing behaviors), was described by 3 teachers. Two teachers discussed training they have had on the following topics: Autism, Collaboration, Crisis Management, Emotional Disturbance (ED), PTSD, and Psychology. One teacher discussed training for each of the following topics: Eloping, Escalating Behaviors, Gang Awareness, and the Triggers of Behavior. In-service training was sometimes provided based on the needs of teachers or of a school site. Wendy mentioned in-service sessions were provided by her school district; however, teachers were not asked in advance about what they needed. As a result, there was not enough room for all

of the teachers who wanted to attend the two sessions that were provided on Behavior Management.

Pre-service training on general Classroom Management and Special Education theory did not address how teachers could prevent or respond to specific externalizing behaviors. The pre-service training these teachers had did not lead to a sense of confidence during their early years of teaching, with the exceptions of Ed and Frank who had training through the CYA prior to teaching in the public schools, and Haylee who worked in residential treatment prior to teaching. These exceptions notwithstanding, Paulette summarized the general consensus of the participants by saying that she did not feel prepared when she started teaching and still, after 14 years, does not feel prepared for the types of behaviors she is being asked to deal with. Likewise, Tanya expressed the following: “Since I have been teaching, things have come up that were never mentioned in class.”

In addition to the lack of pre-service training on externalizing behavior, in-service training on behavior has also been sparse and often nonexistent. Veteran teachers in this study were struggling with students who, over the decades, have become increasingly difficult. For example, Wendy had one student in the 2013-2014 school year, and another in the 2014-2015 school year, who were not responding to behavioral supports with which she has had success for nearly 40 years. Another teacher, Paulette, recently spent two successive years wherein her first grade class had to evacuate numerous times because of two students, one during one school year and one during the subsequent school year, who had behaviors that were dangerous and disturbing to the other children.

Four of the general education teachers who participated in this study have, at some point in their careers, worked exclusively with students who have externalizing behaviors. Marsha ran an Opportunities class for students with oppositional behavior; Debbie has taught students with extreme behavior at a segregated school for 12 years; Ed teaches at a community school and previously worked with incarcerated youth; and Frank has worn a variety of hats while working with students in correctional settings. For the most part, however, the general education teachers in this study did not volunteer to work with students who had the most severe behavior in their schools and school districts. Paulette voiced what many general teachers have expressed to me during my employment as a Special Education Teacher: “I did *not* sign up for this.” She was referring to the type of aggressive and disruptive behaviors that were studied by Bradshaw, Schaffer, Petras, and Iadlongo (2010) in their longitudinal research on the trajectories of children who have behavior problems. The researchers found that consistently aggressive behavior is predictive of negative outcomes such as early sexual activity, pregnancy, dropping out of school, drug use, and unemployment. Therefore, it makes sense to predict that if teachers are unable to help decrease a student’s consistently aggressive behaviors, the child’s long-term outcomes will likely be much worse than if effective intervention is accomplished.

Themes the Teachers Discussed

Themes the teachers discussed will be presented in descending order according to how many teachers brought up each issue. The number of teachers who discussed each theme will follow in parentheses. The teachers concerns involved: Aggressive/Unsafe

Behaviors (16), Family Issues (15), Disruptive Behavior (14), PD [on externalizing behaviors] Needed (14), Disrespect (9), Noncompliance (8), Funding Issues (7), Preemptive Strategies (7), Increasing EBD (6), Deception/Lying/Sneaking (5), Need for Support Beyond the School (5), Principals (5), Sensory Issues (5), Attendance (4), Crisis Intervention (4), Off Task (4), Eloping (3), Restraint (3), Speech and Language (3), Homelessness (2), Motivation (2), PBIS (2), Restorative Justice (2).

Table 9

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	16	11.03
Family Issues	15	10.34
Disruptive Behavior	14	9.66
PD [on externalizing behaviors] Needed	14	9.66
Disrespect	9	6.21
Noncompliance	8	5.52
Funding Issues	7	4.83
Preemptive Strategies	7	4.83
Increasing EBD	6	4.14
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	5	3.45
Need for Support Beyond the School	5	3.45
Principals	5	3.45
Sensory Issues	5	3.45
Attendance	4	2.76
Crisis Intervention	4	2.76
Off Task	4	2.76
Eloping	3	2.06
Restraints	3	2.06
Speech and Language	3	2.06
Homelessness	2	1.38
Motivation	2	1.38
PBIS	2	1.38
Restorative Justice	2	1.38

Topics which only came up once or did not conform to the research questions included: ABC Data (1), Difficulty Getting Special Education Services for Students With

EBD (3), Monitoring Students During Unstructured Times (1), Not Taking Things Personally (1), Reporting Child Abuse (1), Self-injurious Behavior (1), and Suicide (1).

Table 10

Themes Mentioned Once and/or Did Not Conform to the Research Questions

Themes	Frequency of mention
ABC Data	1
Difficulty Getting Special Education Services for Students With EBD	3
Monitoring Students During Unstructured Times	1
Not Taking Things Personally	1
Reporting Child Abuse	1
Self-injurious Behavior	1
Suicide	1

Themes which were mentioned by teachers in every grade level were Aggressive/Unsafe behaviors, Family Issues, and Disruptive Behaviors. Therefore, to be effective, pre-service and in-service programs should include how to prevent and manage difficulty in these areas. For aggressive behavior, Espelage et al. (2013) explained that teachers should be able to recognize when emotional trouble is brewing and know how to prevent problems and/or respond in a crisis. Likewise, McMahon et al. (2013) recommended that teachers, for their own safety, have training on how to prevent students' emotions from escalating. Bickel (2010) suggested ongoing training on how to prevent and defuse potentially volatile situations. For the students, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is a three tier, evidence-based system for preventing and managing students' behavior (Snell et al., 2012). In addition, Crooks et al. (2013) found that school-based programs were effective in addressing students' aggression.

McMahon et al. (2013) conducted a web-based survey of 2,410 teachers, with 50.9% reporting that they have been attacked verbally, aggressed upon physically, or experienced property offenses such as damage or theft within the past two school years. The perpetrators of such incidents were reported to consist of: students (47.9%), parents (18.9%), colleagues (10.6%), strangers (4.1%), and others (4.4%). Generally speaking, harassment was experienced more by male teachers; intimidation was experienced more by female teachers; and property damage was fairly equally for male and female teachers. Although most aggression came from students, it was reported that parents and the teachers' colleagues were more likely to use weapons. It is also noteworthy that the findings indicated a correlation between the numbers of students and parents who were aggressive. This information legitimizes the theme teachers brought up second only to aggression: Family Issues. As will be seen in the subgroup breakdown of the teachers' specific concerns, teachers had somewhat different issues with the families that related to the age of the students. Nevertheless, there was a consistent need for teachers in all subgroups to learn strategies on how to work most effectively with especially difficult families. Between the teachers' experiences with Aggression/Unsafe Behaviors and Family Issues, there was a clear consensus that de-escalation techniques should be a required curricular component of pre-service and in-service training.

Disruptive behavior was another significant area of concern for teachers. This is a broad topic, wherein the teachers described everything from the disruption that results when a student needs constant redirection to the disruption that results in having to deal with students who are a danger to themselves or others. There are many researchers who

have covered specific interventions for addressing disruptive behaviors; however, Vannest (2011) provided a comprehensive list of evidence-based strategies to address a multitude of disruptive behaviors. The teachers in this study strongly agreed with researchers in the field of EBD: Information on how to work effectively with students who have EBD has not been sufficiently conveyed to the teachers (Epstein et al., 2008; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010). In addition, it is clear that teachers need information on how to best communicate with challenging families (Graham-Clay, 2005). In sum, the interviews for this study indicated that teachers of students in all age groups experienced challenges with students' aggressive behaviors, families that were challenging, and disruptive students. As such, these should be target areas for all teacher training programs regardless of the age their students might be.

Themes Discussed by Subgroups

The themes for subgroups will be presented in the same manner as in the previous section, where themes were mentioned by teachers from all of the subgroups. The themes will be listed in descending order based on how many teachers discussed each topic, with each theme followed by the number of teachers who mentioned that theme. Given that the subgroups of teachers consisted of fewer participants, the data on themes mentioned only once were included and considered relevant.

Preschool through transitional kindergarten. For the subgroup of *Preschool through Transitional Kindergarten*, the themes and number of teachers who brought up each theme were: Aggression/Unsafe Behaviors (3), Family Issues (2), Increasing EBD

(2), Sensory Issues (2), Deception/Lying/Sneaking (1), Need for Support Beyond the School (1), PD Needed, Preemptive Strategies (1), Principals (1), and Speech and Language (1).

Table 11

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Preschool Through Transitional Kindergarten Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	3	21.40
Family Issues	2	14.30
Increasing EBD	2	14.30
Sensory Issues	2	14.30
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	1	7.14
Need for Support Beyond the School	1	7.14
PD Needed, Preemptive Strategies	1	7.14
Principals	1	7.14
Speech and Language	1	7.14

Topics which were not mentioned by teachers in this subgroup included:

Attendance, Crisis Intervention, Disrespect, Disruptive, Eloping, Gangs, Homelessness, Motivation, Noncompliance, Off Task, PBIS, Restraint, or Restorative Justice/Practices.

The preschool teachers generally accepted misbehavior as developmentally appropriate. For example, Marsha said that she does not get frustrated with preschool children because they are acting their age. Nevertheless, biting is an aggressive behavior which was mentioned universally amongst the preschool teachers. Preschool teachers in this study also felt that there has been an increase in EBD over time. They emphasized that there is a strong need for parenting support, to educate parents on child development. A third issue of importance was sensory issues, which Kira described as the problem that is increasing most rapidly at her preschool. Even when there are specialists available to

work with the students on sensory matters, Kira reasoned that having knowledgeable teachers would increase the students' opportunities for efficient progress.

Kindergarten through second grade. For the *Kindergarten through Second Grade* subgroup, the teachers' concerns, presented in descending order, were as follows: Aggression/Unsafe Behaviors (8), Disruptive (5), Family Issues (5), PD Needed (4), Eloping (3), Deception/Lying/Sneaking (2), Funding Issues (2), Increasing EBD (2), Noncompliance (2), Need for Support Beyond the School (2), Restraint (2), Sensory Issues (2), Speech and Language (2), Attendance (1), Crisis Intervention (1), Disrespect (1), Homelessness (1), Off Task (1), and Preemptive Strategies (1).

Table 12

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Kindergarten Through Second Grade Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	8	16.66
Disruptive	5	10.42
Family Issues	5	10.42
PD Needed	4	8.33
Eloping	3	6.25
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	2	4.17
Funding Issues	2	4.17
Increasing EBD	2	4.17
Noncompliance	2	4.17
Need for Support Beyond the School	2	4.17
Restraints	2	4.17
Sensory Issues	2	4.17
Speech and Language	2	4.17
Attendance	1	2.08
Crisis Intervention	1	2.08
Disrespect	1	2.08
Homelessness	1	2.08
Off Task	1	2.08
PD Needed	1	2.08
Preemptive Strategies	1	2.08

Topics which were not mentioned by teachers in this subgroup included: Gangs, Motivation, PBIS, Principals, or Restorative Justice/Practices.

The greatest concern for teachers in the *Kindergarten through Second Grade* subgroup related to aggression and unsafe behaviors, which would also reduce the difficulty with disruptive behavior. Another important concern was parent issues. Julie told of a student's lack of respect which mirrored his parent's attitude toward school. Nancy described an unmotivated student whose mother steadily made excuses for why he was not finishing assignments. Paulette shared about parents who were in denial about the severity of their son's externalizing behaviors. This student lost out on academic and social opportunities until it was formally determined that he had a mental health condition. He was eventually prescribed medication and provided with a one-on-one paraprofessional for classroom support. Sonia has been cussed out by a parent. Valerie had a second grade student who lacked academic support from home and did not appear to be well cared for. This child stood out in her mind despite the fact that she had been teaching for 11 years and worked in a school where 75% of the children receive free or reduced lunch. Since there are so many different types of issues involving parents, there needs to be guidelines for supporting parents and guidelines for supporting teachers who have to deal with difficult parents—perhaps through Student Study Team meetings or a family liaison who is equipped to provide references and support.

In terms of PD, the teachers mentioned learning by watching videos, YouTube, and role playing on how to respond effectively to students' challenging behaviors. Online sources for information which can be obtained quickly were also mentioned.

Paulette clearly expressed what would be helpful for her: a professionally trained person who could model how to teach the curriculum to 30 first graders including a student who had severe externalizing behavior.

Third grade through fifth grade. For the *Third Grade through Fifth Grade* subgroup, the teachers concerns included: Disruptive (6), Aggression/Unsafe Behavior (5), Family Issues (5), Disrespect (4), Funding Issues (3), PD Needed (4), Need for Support Beyond School (3), Attendance (2), Deception/Lying/Sneaking (2), Crisis Intervention (1), Increasing EBD (1), Noncompliance (1), Preemptive Strategies (1), Principals (1), Restraints (1), and Sensory Issues (1).

Table 13

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Third Grade Through Fifth Grade Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Disruptive	6	14.62
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	5	12.19
Family Issues	5	12.19
Disrespect	4	9.76
PD Needed	4	9.76
Need for Support Beyond the School	3	7.32
Funding Issues	3	7.32
Attendance	2	4.88
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	2	4.88
Crisis Intervention	1	2.44
Increasing EBD	1	2.44
Noncompliance	1	2.44
Preemptive Strategies	1	2.44
Principals	1	2.44
Restraints	1	2.44
Sensory Issues	1	2.44

Topics which were not mentioned by teachers in this subgroup included: Eloping, Off Task, PBIS, Restorative Justice/Practices, and Speech and Language.

Teachers in the *Third Grade through Fifth Grade Third Grade* subgroups were most concerned with the students' disruptive behavior during class. They were also concerned about aggressive/unsafe behaviors and family issues. These teachers could use PD on how to prevent and manage disruptive behavior, as well as how to promote attendance and increase students' motivation when parents are unavailable, unable to help, oppositional, or uninterested. The teachers also expressed frustration with disrespect from students who are oppositional and belligerent.

Sixth grade through eighth grade. For the *Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade* subgroup, the teachers concerns were as follows: Family Issues (3), Crisis Intervention (2), PD Needed (2), Preemptive Strategies (2), Principals (2), Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors (1), Deception/Lying/Sneaking (1), Funding Issues (1), Increasing EBD (1), Noncompliance (1), Restraint (1), and Restorative Justice/Practices (1).

Table 14

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Sixth Grade Through Eighth Grade Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Family Issues	3	16.67
Crisis Intervention	2	11.11
PD Needed	2	11.11
Preemptive Strategies	2	11.11
Principals	2	11.11
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	1	5.56
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	1	5.56
Funding Issues	1	5.56
Increasing EBD	1	5.56
Noncompliance	1	5.55
Restraints	1	5.55
Restorative Justice/Practices	1	5.55

Topics which were not mentioned by teachers in this subgroup included: Attendance, Disrespect, Disruptive, Eloping, Gangs, Homelessness, Motivation, Off Task, Need for Support Beyond the School, PBIS, Sensory Issues, and Speech and Language.

Teachers from the *Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade* subgroup were mainly concerned about Family Issues. Concerns included the lack of motivation students have when parents are not engaged, parents who do not understand typical development of students this age, and parents who are confrontational toward the teacher. Teachers in this subgroup also expressed concerns about how to use crisis intervention strategies. They would like training on how to de-escalate verbal confrontations, prevent a crisis, and manage a crisis. Gina specified that she would like PD on how to facilitate smooth transitions in a Science Lab, and how to best ensure safety in a class where sharp objects and out-of-control students are present simultaneously. Marsha suggested PD on cultural and socioeconomic awareness, as well as what to expect for students of this age. Her suggestions on how to effectively structure the learning environment in terms of time and reinforcement for positive behavior would be good topics for PD. Debbie mentioned the impact that principals have on how teachers interact with students who have severe behavior. Some principals have directed her to do what she needs to do to keep everyone safe whereas others have instructed her not to touch the students. Gina mentioned the difference it makes throughout the school when principals are actively involved in addressing students' behavior.

Ninth grade through twelfth grade. For the *Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade* subgroup, the teachers concerns were as follows: Aggression/Unsafe Behavior (4), Disrespect (4), PD Needed (4), Disruptive (3), Off Task (3), Preemptive Strategies (3), Family Issues (2), Funding Issues (2), Gangs (2), Noncompliance (2), PBIS (2), Principals (2), Attendance (1), Crisis Intervention (1), Deception/Lying/Stealing (1), Increasing EBD (1), Motivation (1), and Restorative Justice/Practices (1).

Table 15

Frequency of Themes Discussed by Ninth Grade Through Twelfth Grade Teachers

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Percentage
Aggressive/Unsafe Behaviors	4	10.26
Disrespect	4	10.26
PD Needed	4	10.26
Disruptive	3	7.70
Off Task	3	7.69
Preemptive Strategies	3	7.69
Family Issues	2	5.13
Funding Issues	2	5.13
Gangs	2	5.13
Noncompliance	2	5.13
PBIS	2	5.13
Principals	2	5.13
Attendance	1	2.56
Crisis Intervention	1	2.56
Deception/Lying/Sneaking	1	2.56
Increasing EBD	1	2.56
Motivation	1	2.56
Restorative Justice/Practices	1	2.56

Topics which were not mentioned by teachers in this subgroup included: Eloping, Homelessness, Need for Support Beyond the School, Restraints, Sensory Issues, and Speech and Language.

Teachers from the *Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade* subgroup were most concerned about aggressive/unsafe behavior and disrespect. The teachers reported verbal defiance, profanity, being called names, being called by their first names, being cussed at, and being threatened. One teacher mentioned having students turn their backs to her while instructions are being presented. Frank had students who were proud of themselves if they stayed on task for 10 minutes. Haylee mentioned students being off task due to lack of interest in education.

The teachers feel that PD should include best practices on behavior interventions presented by video and/or instructors who model various scenarios, followed by role playing opportunities. Frank suggested PD on preemptive strategies to prevent misbehavior by building relationships with the students, being mobile in the classroom to provide physical presence as a means of communication, and leaving students with positive or neutral choices (never embarrassing them or making them afraid to lose face in front of their peers). Haylee suggested that PD should include learning about the students' community, life experiences, and other factors that create understanding of the whole child. Rianna would like to know how to promote cultural change, leading to parents and society being more interested and supportive of students' education.

Links Between PD and Classroom Experiences

One goal of this study was to learn if a link could be established between PD the teachers have had and their perceived classroom experiences. It was unclear how significantly PD impacted the experiences of classroom teachers for a number of reasons. Some of the teachers had comprehensive training on how to work with students who had

externalizing behavior prior to working in the classroom. For example, Frank had experience with minors who were incarcerated before he began working in a regular classroom setting; and Haylee worked in residential treatment before she worked in a current general education setting. Both of these teachers were rated to have a Relatively Easy Classroom Experience. By contrast, Ed also had experience with minors who were incarcerated; yet, he was rated as having Moderate Classroom Experience. It is possible that Frank is having an easier time because he has held a variety of different positions throughout his career. Also, he now works in a regular school whereas Ed has worked in a community school for approximately 17 years.

Other factors that influenced the teachers' classroom experiences were their interest and willingness to work with students who have externalizing behavior. Marsha, for example, described her interest in restorative practices and the Opportunities program that she ran on behalf of her school's students with extreme behavior. Likewise, Debbie has settled into a segregated school where she has served her school district's most difficult students for 12 consecutive years—through thick and thin, with and without the presence of an administrator, paraprofessionals, or other support staff. Marsha was rated as having a Relatively Easy Classroom Experience. She is currently working with typical students, so her background makes this especially easy. Debbie's position would make most teachers report a Relatively Difficult Classroom Experience; however, she was rated as having a Moderate Classroom Experience because she is passionate about her work despite the serious, ongoing challenges. On the other end of the continuum, Gina, Layne, and Paulette are not excited about the opportunities to work

with challenging students. They described Relatively Difficult Classroom Experience combined with a sense of dissatisfaction.

Experience and initiative were factors that lead to teachers having an easier time with their most challenging students. Wendy, for example, has taught for 38 years and described a broad repertoire of strategies for eliciting positive behavior. Zofia had the experience, creativity, and initiative to develop her own accommodations to support her students. Nancy took the initiative to seek assistance from her school psychologist and her school's Special Education teacher.

Personal characteristics of the teachers also played a part in their classroom experiences. Debbie expressed that there are personality factors that teachers have and do not receive instruction on in training, such as the ability not to take things personally. Haylee described empathy with the students' experiences and consideration of the whole child. Frank emphasized the importance of developing a relationship with each child. Betty described times of compassion towards her students, and times when the compassion was returned—a mutual respect and consideration that made her classroom experience easier than it might have otherwise been.

Of the teacher participants in this study, some taught Relatively Easy Populations (REP), as defined by students from moderate to high socioeconomic status and the teachers' perceptions of less than average externalizing behaviors; some taught Moderate Populations (MP), as defined by the teachers' perceptions sounding typical based on this study and other research; and some worked with Relatively Difficult Populations (RDP), as defined by the teachers' descriptions of extreme behavior that occurs on a regular

basis. Although the ease or difficulty of the populations served was not specifically addressed in the research questions, this information provides insight into the teachers' experiences.

Discussion of Practical Applications

This study was born of the frustration expressed by my general education colleagues when they had students with externalizing behaviors. The teachers indicated that nothing was more difficult than working with students who have EBD (Landers et al., 2008). In California, the recent recession resulted in a decrease in mental health services that exceeded all other states (Children Now, 2011; SAMHSA, 2011). Teachers have, therefore, been on the front lines with little support or training on how to recognize when emotional trouble is brewing, how to calm tense situations, and how to manage behavioral emergencies (Espelage et al., 2013). As demonstrated in this study, teachers who have knowledge and experience feel more confident (Sutherland et al., 2005). For example, Ed and Frank had experience with teenage youth in correctional settings which afforded unique confidence in the regular classroom. This is especially true in light of their years of experience.

Qualitative methodology was used in this study, since the intent was to gain a depth of understanding through exploring a new phenomenon: the teachers' perspectives of their own learning needs and their own lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Through interviews, each teacher described his or her perspective of experiences, which were understood to be influenced by the teachers' individual cultures, ideologies, and emotions (Burkitt, 2012). The research questions were asked in an open-ended

manner, which naturally led to some emerging themes that were unrelated yet very important (Babbie, 2013). For example, Betty mentioned the urgent concern about students with internalizing states, such as depression, which have led to suicides at her school. Information which the teachers provided regarding the lack of PD on externalizing behaviors, and on their specific areas of need, will be valuable in guiding the improvement of PD for pre-service teachers, novice teachers, and veteran teachers of students who have severe behavior—and/or challenging parents.

Implications for Social Change

It is hoped that the teachers who participated in this study, and those who learn of this study, will be inspired to advocate for meaningful PD that includes visual demonstrations of common scenarios followed by practice and coaching. Getting support for the teachers of students with EBD will inevitably require advocacy, since students with externalizing behaviors are not a high priority in American society (Kauffman et al., 2008). Nevertheless, community stakeholders who might be interested in this research include the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), universities, the California Department of Education, and the California Teachers' Association, school administrators in California, the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD), and the California branch of CCBD. If the universities, school districts, and principals do provide PD that is effective for teachers who are working with students who have EBD, student behavior will improve followed by increased high school graduation rates (Alliance, 2009; Mayer & Van Acker, 2009; Zablocki & Krezmien, 2012).

Recommendations for Action

The results of this study should be shared with the CCTC, since this is the organization that oversees teacher preparation programs at the university level. The CCTC is presumably aware that the most common reason for teacher attrition is student behavior (Boe et al., 2008; Chang, 2009). Nevertheless, it may be helpful for them to have research that substantiates the need for additional focus on externalizing behavior in programs for prospective general education teachers (and administrators) with specific steps to take. First, this study made it is clear that pre-service teachers need and want more than universal classroom management strategies and special education theory. Of the 19 teachers in this study, none described having RSPT and only 2 had MPT. The remaining 17 teachers had RWPT. The teachers' need for sufficient PD in the area of EBD is strongly supported by research (Epstein et al., 2008; Fixsen, 2005; Harvey et al., 2010; Jolivette et al., 2010; National Association of School Psychologists, 2010).

In addition to knowledge and experience on how to manage externalizing behaviors, this study brought another issue to light: the impact of each teacher's personality attributes. This research highlighted the wide range of teacher willingness and motivation for working with students who have externalizing behavior. Paulette, for example, had no desire to manage volatile behavior in a class of 30 impressionable first grade students who were there to learn the curriculum. By contrast, Debbie has opted to work in a segregated school for the past 12 years with her districts' most difficult elementary students despite not always having support staff or even an administrator on campus. For Paulette, there were issues that needed to be addressed beyond the scope of

this study, such as large class sizes and the need for a school that has SWPBIS. Nevertheless, there has been a good amount of research on personal characteristics that help with students who have EBD. Teachers who were adept with challenging students possessed the following: empathy, understanding, appreciation for variety, interest in students with EBD, a sense of moral purpose, flexibility, resilience, humor, long-term patience, pride in accomplishments, confidence in their effectiveness, humor, and a strong network outside of the workplace. (Austin et al., 2011; Benedict et al., 2007; Boe, 2013; Gilliam & Shabar, 2006; Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008). The CCTC should, therefore, consider how university programs can help prospective teachers foster these characteristics throughout their university training.

Both pre-service and in-service PD should include various levels of behavior management. In addition to general classroom management, teachers should have opportunities to see evidence-based practices on videos, YouTube demonstrations, and in-person scenarios followed by ongoing practice with mentoring and collaborative feedback (Bickel, 2010; Fixsen et al., 2005). The main concern expressed by teachers in this study involved student aggression and unsafe behaviors. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers have training in crisis intervention, with opportunities to practice de-escalation techniques and what to do in a behavioral emergency (Espelage et al., 2013).

Another concern that teachers had regardless of the age of their students was how to best handle situations with challenging parents. As mentioned above, teachers have been at the receiving end of aggression from parents. Nearly 10% of teachers reported

verbal or physical aggression and/or property damage at the hands of parents over a period of two school years (Mahon et al., 2013). Mahon also emphasized that parents were more likely than students to involve weapons in their attacks. This is all the more reason for teachers to be skilled with crisis intervention techniques (Espelage et al., 2013). The teachers also had more specific concerns based on the ages of their students. These topics will be addressed more specifically following the themes that were of concern for all age groups.

The teachers spoke of disruptive behavior as a major concern. At the same time, only three of the teachers have been in schools where SWPBIS were implemented; and in their opinion, it made a difference. It is recommended that CCTC, the entity that oversees programs for school administrators as well as for teachers, evaluate how their programs can better prepare prospective administrators to provide this evidence-based support for their future schools. SWPBIS is a three-tiered system wherein all students are provided with basic expectations for behavior and all staff is consistent at reinforcing positive behavior throughout the school. This first level of support is effective for approximately 80% of children. If these universal supports are not sufficient, which is the case with the next level of support (Tier 2), interventions are provided in a small group setting with more explicit instruction. Approximately 7-15% of the students at a school can be expected to need Tier 2 supports. There are also Tier 3 interventions for the students who need the most support, approximately 3-5% of the population. A student who requires this level of support will have a function-based behavioral assessment that leads to an individualized Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) which is

tailored to the unique needs of that child. Although university programs have long been focused on diversity, some of the teachers still struggle to understand cultural and socioeconomic situations that they have not experienced firsthand. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to relate to students who have very different life experiences. Other issues that were brought to light include parents impeding school attendance and making excuses for why assignments were not completed. This resulted in students' lack of motivation. In short, the teachers felt that parents who disrespected the teachers and school had children who disrespected the teachers and school.

With the exception of the above mentioned topics that applied to teachers of students across subgroups, the teachers expressed a need for PD that is relevant for the specific age/grade level of their students. For example, only preschool teachers mentioned the behavior of biting as a concern; and disrespect was only mentioned by the teachers of older students. It is recommended that teachers have PD where the topics and systems for reinforcing students' positive behavior are age appropriate. It is also recommended that teachers learn general classroom management followed by what to do with specific severe behaviors that are common for the age level they teach. Teachers should be provided with modeling on how to juggle the curriculum, the number of children which reflects a typical class size for California, and students with extreme behavior.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are a number of topics that call for further study. Some of the topics are related to the research questions on PD and classroom experiences; some of the topics are

related to themes that were mentioned less often by the teachers; and other topics are related to discrepant and nonconforming data that were not used in the study. In terms of the research focus on the teachers' perceptions of PD, there is a need for research that focuses on the perceptions that novice teachers have when it comes to their university training. Do they feel prepared to support students with EBD? Why so or why not? Have they had firsthand experience with Student Study Teams, RTI, and Child Find?

Regarding teachers' classroom experience, further research is needed on how to foster the characteristics found in teachers who are comfortable with even the most challenging students and families. For example, successful teachers of students with EBD have altruistic motivation and a strong sense of self-efficacy (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011), so how can university programs include exercise that foster these characteristics? How can pre-service and in-service trainings help teachers develop resilience and the ability to not take things personally? How can PD support teachers to embrace, prepare for, and implement restorative practices as recommended by Children Now (2014) while taking care to maintain a degree of privacy for students and families?

PBIS and restorative practices are important themes in the field of EBD (Children Now, 2014); however, these themes were discussed very little by the teachers. I had hoped that more teachers would have experienced these positive practices, since research supports school-wide programs that have positive outcomes on behavior. For example, Crooks, Scott, Ellis, and Wolfe (2011) researched teens who were at risk for violence due to family histories of abuse and found that a school-based violence prevention program resulted in decreased aggression for students in the experimental groups. Teachers who

discussed PBIS and restorative practices mentioned that their principals promoted and facilitated these broad-reaching behavioral supports. As such, it would make sense to investigate the training and experience of administrators.

This issue of parenting was a recurring theme in this study. The teachers' concerns involved (a) parents who did not send students to school, or did not send their children to school on time; (b) parents who lacked interest in education and, therefore, had unmotivated children; (c) parents who were defensive and/or belligerent; (d) children who were disrespectful toward teachers; and (e) parents who had a variety of life challenges. One life challenge that some parents struggle with is substance abuse. According to SAMHSA, approximately 11% of adults in California reported illicit drug use during 2012-2013 (SAMSHA, 2015). Given the statistics combined with the descriptions of challenging parents whom the teachers worked with, it is quite possible that some of the parents were struggling with substance abuse. Calhoun, Conner, Miller, and Messina (2015) discussed the negative impact parental substance abuse has on the physical health, mental health, and behavior of their children. The Calhoun et al. research provided preliminary findings to support parenting education as a component of drug treatment programs for individuals who have children. Parents having difficulty with substance abuse is but one possible underlying cause of parent-teacher conflict; nevertheless, this would be an excellent direction for further investigation.

The topic that came up most as discrepant data was frustration with the timely process of getting help for students who need support. Examples of delays that the teachers mentioned included (a) conducting timely Student Study Team (SST) meetings,

(b) implementing various intervention strategies, (c) assessing students to determine if they have a disability, and (d) actually getting the services—especially for children with EBD related behavior. Some teachers mentioned doing their best with their own strategies rather than going through the SST process. Two of the secondary teachers mentioned the impact that the assessment process has on students who have been overlooked for years and are now more cognizant of the evaluation process. Research should ask what teachers do for students who have EBD to shed light on how SST meetings, RTI, and assessment for special education is or is not used to address behavior.

Reflection of the Researcher's Experience With the Research Process

I felt driven to do this research based on my employment and volunteer experiences with youth in residential treatment, survivors of human trafficking, and young adults in correctional settings. I have become acutely aware of the potential long-term effects of doing a poor job with younger children. The fact that we have at-risk youngsters who are not properly cared for physically, emotionally, and educationally is a genuine concern. Many youth are eventually absorbed into one of California's "correctional and rehabilitative institutes"—consisting of 35 adult prisons, 4 DJJ facilities, 7 community correctional facilities, 44 conservation camps, and out of state prisons ("contract bed units") which are located in Arizona, Mississippi, and Oklahoma (CDCR, 2015). I am especially mindful of the possibility that students with externalizing behaviors could potentially end up incarcerated because I am currently serving on the Special Education in Correctional Settings Steering Committee. One glaring realization

of this committee is how many incarcerated youth have slipped through the Child Find cracks.

While schools cannot solve all of the problems for families and communities, schools that have comprehensive systems in place can have a substantial impact (Basch, 2011). During the interviews for this study, such systems were not discussed much. PBIS, which has been around since approximately 2000, was mentioned by only 3 of the 20 participants. Restorative justice/practices, which have also been around since the early 2000s, were only mentioned by three of the participants in this study. I was disappointed that more teachers did not mention having these effective, evidence-based systems available to support their efforts with students who have externalizing behaviors. I have some biases about this; however, the interviews were conducted with integrity in order to learn the participants' perspectives. In addition, I was so engaged in what the participants were saying that I did not realize the infrequent mention of positive practices until the data were analyzed.

One of my values is that each human being is special, regardless of mistakes that he or she may have made. I believe that it is not my job to judge other human beings, children included, since I cannot possibly know the full extent of what underlies a person's experience. I believe that we should find redeeming qualities in everyone, no matter what is going wrong, so we have a starting point from which to improve.

Concluding Statement

The findings of this study indicate that general education teachers lack sufficient training on EBD, especially in their pre-service programs. General education teachers of

students with EBD had a lot to say about the essence of their experiences with teaching students who have externalizing behavior. Most importantly, teachers of students at all age levels need training on Aggression/Unsafe Behavior, Family Issues, and Disruptive Behavior. PD on evidence-based practices for supporting students with externalizing behavior should begin at the university level and continue throughout a teacher's career. Pre-service training should include ongoing exercises to develop the personality characteristics of teachers who are successful with students who have externalizing behavior. Pre-service training should also include opportunities to observe how teachers prevent and extinguish externalizing behaviors while simultaneously conducting a class, followed by practice with supportive coaching.

In-service training should continue with the above listed strategies, while also taking into account the specific needs teachers have when dealing with the externalizing behaviors of students at different developmental levels. In addition to the three main topics that teachers need for students of all ages, the educators of Pre-school through Transitional Kindergarten students also need training on Sensory Issues. For Family Issues, the parents of students this age would benefit from general parenting education.

The teachers of Kindergarten through Second Grade students need information on what to do with Eloping behavior. For Family Issues, teachers of students in this age group mentioned the need to help parents efficiently get past denial when their children have a problem, so the matter can be addressed efficiently. The teachers also mentioned students having insufficient motivation when parents make excuses (e.g., why the homework was not completed, or why the child was repeatedly absent or late for school).

Another issue was the correlation between students who lacked respect for the adults at school and their parents who also lacked respect.

The teachers of Third Grade through Fifth Grade students expressed concerns about Disrespect, the Need for [Student] Support Beyond the School, Attendance, and the behaviors of Deception/Lying/Stealing. Teachers in this subgroup expressed concerns over Family Issues that included their students' lack of motivation which stemmed from poor attendance. There were also concerns about how to handle oppositional parents, and how to support students whose parents were unwilling, uninterested, or unable to help their children.

The teachers of Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade students emphasized a need for learning Preemptive Strategies to prevent misbehavior. They also expressed concerns about principals who were not supportive with students who have externalizing behavior. In terms of Family Issues, the teachers discussed the parents' need to understand child development as it pertains to middle school students. They also expressed concerns about students' lack of motivation that stems from parental lack of engagement. Confrontational parents were also mentioned as a concern.

The teachers of Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade students had a number of concerns: Disrespect, Off Task Behavior, and Pre-emptive Strategies that could prevent problem behavior. They mentioned Funding Issues that impede counseling and other needs of the students, a need for awareness about Gangs, concerns about students' Noncompliance, PBIS (the lack thereof), and the importance of Principals in terms of school climate and behavior. The teachers of high school students did not mention

specific concerns about Family Issues. One teacher explained that students with behavior problems at this age tend to have parents who will exacerbate the problem by coming to their child's defense rather than being supportive in a meaningful manner. This teacher explained that it is generally more effective to deal directly with the students.

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to determine the PD needs of teachers from preschool through high school. Specific areas of concern were identified, with an overarching need for PD to address Aggressive/Unsafe Behavior, Family Issues, and Disruptive Behavior. My hope is that this information will be useful to improve the professional lives of California's teachers, who often agonize over the most effective strategies to pave the road for their students' success—so their students' dreams will ultimately come true.

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Appendix A: Characteristics of Externalizing Behaviors

- Attendance problems (e.g., tardiness, truancies, excessive absences)
- Being off-task (e.g., talking, drawing, inappropriate use of electronic devices)
- Noncompliance or opposition
- Difficulty with transitions
- Disrespect to teachers or classmates
- Aggression (e.g., verbal abuse, fighting, choking, cruelty to people and/or animals)
- Classroom disruptions (e.g., tapping on things, getting out of his or her seat, interrupting, yelling)
- Not accepting responsibility for behavior
- Not accepting consequences for behavior
- Difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- Out-of-control behavior
- Not respecting the rights and property of others
- Passive resistance

(Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010; Davis, Culotta, Levine, & Rice 2011; Landers, Alter, & Servillo, 2008; Pierangelo & Giuliano, 2008; Walker, Ramsey, Gresham, 2004)

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Central Question:

What are your perceptions and experiences with pre-service and in-service training you have had regarding students with externalizing behaviors related to EBD?

Subquestion:

What are your perceptions and experiences with students in your class who have externalizing behaviors?

Appendix C: Demographic Survey

1. How many years have you taught in a general education setting?
 - 0-5 Years
 - 6-10 Years
 - 11-15 Years
 - >15 Years

2. What is the highest degree you have earned?
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate Degree

Other (please specify)

3. What type of teaching credential do you have? (Please select all that apply.)
 - Child Development Permit (Preschool)
 - Elementary Teaching Credential (Multiple Subject)
 - Secondary Teaching Credential (Single Subject)
 - Special Education Credential (Education Specialist)

Other (please specify)

4. What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Prefer not to answer

5. Have you ever taught Special Education?
 - Yes
 - No

Other (please specify)

6. What grade levels have you taught? (Please select all that apply.)
- Preschool
 - Transitional Kindergarten
 - Kindergarten
 - 1st Grade
 - 2nd Grade
 - 3rd Grade
 - 4th Grade
 - 5th Grade
 - 6th Grade
 - 7th Grade
 - 8th Grade
 - 9th Grade
 - 10th Grade
 - 11th Grade
 - 12th Grade

7. In what grades are/were your students who had externalizing behaviors?
(Please select all that apply.)

- Preschool
- Transitional Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 8th Grade
- 9th Grade
- 10th Grade
- 11th Grade
- 12th Grade

8. Has your teaching experience been in rural, suburban, and/or urban schools?

- Rural Schools
- Suburban Schools
- Urban Schools
- Two or more of the above (Please explain below.)

Other (please specify)

9. With which California school district are you currently employed? (This information will remain confidential.)

Appendix D: Demographic Coding Form

Pseudo-nyms	Years of Teaching General Education	Highest Degree; Type of Credential(s)	Rural, Suburban, Urban, Two or More/Northern CA, Southern CA	Grade Level(s) Taught in General Education	Grade Level(s) of Student(s) With Externalizing Behaviors	Gender
Betty	11-15	BA; Single Subject	Suburban Southern CA	9, 10, 11, 12	9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Cassy	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4	Female
Debbie	11-15	BA; Multiple Subject	Two or More Northern CA	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Female
Ed	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Urban Northern CA	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Male
Frank	0-5	MA; Single Subject	Two or More Northern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Male
Gina	6-10	MA; Single Subject	Suburban Northern CA	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Haylee	0-5	MA; Single Subject	Urban Southern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Julie	>15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	K, 1, 2, 5	Female
Kira	>15	AA; Early Childhood Development	Suburban Southern CA	Pre-K, K	Pre-K, K	Female
Layne	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	K, 3, 4, 5, 6	3, 4, 5, 6	Female
Marsha	>15	BA; Early Childhood Development Multiple Subject	Two or More Southern CA	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8	Female
Nancy	6-10	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	Female
Paulette	11-15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	K, 1, 2, 3, 4	K, 1	Female
Qadira	>15	BA; Early Childhood Development	Suburban Southern CA	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Pre-K, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Rianna	>15	MA; Single Subject	Suburban Southern CA	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Female
Sonia	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Rural Southern CA	K, 4	K, 4	Female
Tanya	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 3, 4	Female
Valerie	11-15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	K, 2, 6	K, 2, 6	Female
Wendy	>15	BA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	K, 1, 3, 4, 5	K, 4	Female
Zofia	>15	MA; Multiple Subject	Suburban Southern CA	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4	Female