Theses, Dissertations and Capstones

2015

Secondary Teachers' Knowledge and Attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Deanna M. Hiles
hiles1@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://mds.marshall.edu/etd

Part of the School Psychology Commons, and the Special Education and Teaching Commons

Secondary Teachers' Knowledge and Attitudes toward

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Research Paper

Submitted to the Special Education Faculty of Marshall University College of Education and

Professional Development

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts

by

Deanna M. Hiles

Marshall University

May 5, 2015

Abstract

Classroom management of student behavioral problems is a primary reason that teachers are leave the education field. As hard as teachers and students may try, some student behavior cannot be managed by discipline alone. One technique that has had a constructive impact on student behavior is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The design of PBIS is to help teachers manage students with problem behaviors in the classroom. However, teachers' attitudes toward PBIS and their knowledge of PBIS influence the effectiveness of its success or failure in the classroom.

Keywords: secondary, attitudes, PBIS, positive behavior, teachers

List of Tables

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Classroom management is one of the main reasons that teachers leave the education field. The reason behind classroom management difficulties is student behavioral problems in the classroom. Teachers have tried numerous disciplinary measures in order to better maintain order in their classroom. Unfortunately, these measures are not working.

As hard as teachers and students may try, some student behavior cannot be achieved by discipline alone. One technique that has had a constructive impact on student behavior is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS are a broad range of universal and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning results while preventing problem behavior (OSEP, 2001). The design of PBIS is to help teachers manage students with problem behaviors in the classroom.

In order for PBIS to be successful in the classroom, teachers must first be trained on the procedures of PBIS and be willing to implement PBIS. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012) discussed that if teachers would better understand PBIS, then they could better assist each other with the implementation of PBIS. According to a study by Edwards (2009), if teachers feel more comfortable with the strategies of PBIS, then they are more likely to use PBIS strategies in their classroom.

According to Myers, Simonsen, & Sugai (2011), teachers' behavior impact the students' behavior. If a teacher is unwilling to use PBIS strategies in a classroom, then the students will be reluctant to give PBIS strategies a chance to work.

Statement of the Problem

Students with behavioral problems are challenging for many teachers to manage. Sugai (2009), discussed that 20-30% of the students in any given school, will need additional

behavioral supports. Most teachers can cope with behavioral problems in the classroom, but some students have no control of their behavioral disorders without some type of support. Wheeler and Anderson's (2009) research showed that five to seven percent of students in an individual classroom have behavioral problems. With the additional strategies of PBIS, teachers can accommodate for these students in the classroom.

Over the past several years, many schools have begun using the PBIS model for adapting and modifying students' behavioral problems. PBIS is a three-tiered intervention model for students with behavioral disorders. The placement of a student on the PBIS tier would be determined by his or her behavioral needs. The tier that the student was placed will then provide the teacher with the type of interventions and supports that will assist with the management of that student's behavior in the classroom.

Once the PBIS model is implemented, it is the responsibility of the individual teacher to learn and use the PBIS strategies in their classrooms. Lack of teacher knowledge is an obstacle for PBIS strategies to be successful in the classroom. Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri (2008) discussed that one aspect that influences the success of PBIS is teachers' limited knowledge of the principles of PBIS.

Teachers' attitudes toward PBIS is a contributing factor to the success of the PBIS model. The implementation of PBIS is only as successful as the teacher who uses it in their classroom. Since the implementation of PBIS in the classroom is up to the individual teacher to use, then it is important that the teacher believes that PBIS will help with the behavioral problems in their classroom. If the teachers are unwilling to use the strategies provided by PBIS, then the teacher will not be able see the benefits of PBIS in their classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in a rural high school in Boone County, West Virginia. Secondary teachers in grades nine through twelve completed a pencil and paper survey regarding their knowledge and attitudes about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as well as their attitudes toward the model of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports that was used in their school.

A pencil and paper survey was given to the teachers for them to complete about Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports used in their school. It consisted of questions regarding their level of education, their years of experience teaching, their experience using PBIS, their comfort of using PBIS and their knowledge of PBIS.

Research Question

The purpose of the study was to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of secondary teachers toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Through the research, the following question was investigated: *What are secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management?*

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Many secondary teachers have issues with classroom management. An option for alleviating the issues of classroom management is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or PBIS. PBIS are a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for accomplishing important social and learning goals while preventing problem behavior, (OSEP, 2001). PBIS was originally designed to assist teachers in educating and controlling the behavior of children with disabilities. According to Wheeler and Anderson (2002), to change the problem behaviors of students in the classroom, the students and their teachers must be taught to use PBIS, and the schools must implement these strategies to ensure their maximum affect.

Although Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are an option for improving the difficulties of classroom management, teachers need to be knowledgeable of PBIS in order for it to be an effective tool. Unfortunately, many general education teachers do not receive adequate training in behavioral management and do not know how to handle behavioral problems or aggressive behaviors (Baker, 2005).

Once teachers have the knowledge and are aware of the procedures and strategies of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, the only deterrence to the implementation of PBIS is the teachers' attitudes toward using the PBIS strategies. Lambright and Alden (2012), found that at the college level, teachers' attitudes and beliefs of implementation and instructional advancements toward service learning does have an effect on the success of service learning.

Classroom Management

An essential part of a teacher's job is to manage the classroom. Many teachers, both new and experienced, have occasional problems in their careers with classroom management. According to Jackson, Simoncini, and Davidson (2013), a major cause of teacher stress, burnout,

and job dissatisfaction is the main reason teachers leave the education field. Classroom management means more than just managing undesirable behavior, but to create a safe and nurturing learning environment (Jackson, Simoncini, and Davidson, 2013). Disruptive behaviors can interfere with the learning of others, Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway and Launders (2007), discussed these disruptions as simple disrespect, not staying on task, and failing to follow instructions.

In addition to accommodating for students with academic or emotional disabilities, teachers have to organize small group work, and provide direct instruction, while trying to sustain some resemblance of a safe and nurturing learning environment. According to Ediger (2013), teachers can find ways to work with disruptions in the classroom due to behavioral problems. Some learn through experience, others search literature, use the internet and other sources of reference in order to gain ideas or suggestions for managing classroom behaviors. A source that may be beneficial to teachers is the ability to discuss behavioral situations with other teachers or an administrator who may have previous experience and can offer advice or suggestions.

More and more children are being diagnosed as emotionally and behaviorally disturbed. Wheeler and Anderson (2002), have shown that five to seven percent of students in the classroom have problem behaviors. These children are at a higher risk of antisocial behavior, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, violence, and school dropout. Students, parents, and teachers need to be taught different and better ways to manage behavioral problems.

According to Sayeski and Brown (2014), with every new school year teachers prepare for the management of their students' behavioral problems. They may develop new classroom procedures, specify daily tasks, or develop consequences for violation of classroom procedures. When there are classroom disruptions, valuable instructional time is lost. Teachers then begin to

10

feel inadequate and pressured to maintain an orderly classroom. The teacher realizes that something is needed to manage his or her classroom. Challenging behaviors need to be managed in a more appropriate and beneficial manner; one that is still effective for the students. Sugai (2009), discussed that approximately 20 – 30 % of a school's student body will need additional behavioral supports. These students are chronic rule breakers in the classroom.

PBIS Tiers.

According to Sugai (2009), PBIS is a three tiered framework that implements practices and systems geared towards preventing behavioral problems. Sayeski and Brown (2014) discussed a plan that incorporates three guiding questions to assist teachers in a method that will assist them the most 1)What is the current behavior expectations of the student and how is that communicated to the student? 2) What interventions or supports are in place and what are the responses to undesirable behavior? 3) What are the individualized/intensive behavioral supports used and are they used by all of the student's teachers? These questions are representative of the three tiers and depending on how the teacher identifies and evaluates his or her classroom structure, will determine which tier of intervention the student requires.

Tier I.

Tier I is the preventative classroom management tier. This is related to the first question of what is the behavior expectations of the student and how are those expectations communicated to the student. Sayeski and Brown (2014) discussed that in order to develop behavioral supports the teacher must first begin by assessing their 1) instructional practices, 2) their rules and procedures, and 3) their overall classroom environment.

With instructional practices, Sayeski and Brown (2014) learned that when students are actively engaged that they are less likely to have behavior problems. Furthermore, when teachers

create engaging lesson plans that allow the students to interact more vigorously, the students are more inclined to learn. However, when a student's behavior prevents their ability to learn, the teacher should not automatically presume that the lesson is too hard or not hard enough for the student.

Another way to prevent behavioral problems is to have rules and procedures. Sayeski and Brown (2014) discussed that thought out, and clearly defined rules and procedures help students understand what behavior is expected of them. Many secondary teachers presume that when students reach the high school level, that they should know how to behave properly in class. Some teachers, however, are aware that a few students with disabilities cannot behave properly in a classroom setting without interventions and supports. With a visible set of classroom rules and procedures, a student can self-monitor or can be reminded of the proper behavior needed during class.

Classroom climate refers to the relationship between the classroom teacher and their students. Marzano and Marzano (2003) completed a meta-analysis of more than 100 studies. What they found was that teachers who have a positive relationship with their students had up to 31% less behavioral problems or rule violations in a school year than those teachers who did not have a positive relationship with their students. This analysis does not mean that the teacher was the students' friend, but that the teacher had strong leadership in the classroom and did not have a lenient classroom environment.

Sayeski and Brown (2014) further discussed that this type of teacher communicates specific learning goals and the students should know what is expected of them and what the consequences are for violation of these goals. The teacher should also communicate with the class in a clear, calm, confident, and consistent manner; reinforcing the rules and expectations as needed.

Some of the ways for a teacher to do this is by not yelling, standing too close to the student, lecturing, arguing with the student, and/or displaying strong emotions. Sayeski and Brown (2013) continued that a teacher should reinforce the rules, redirect unwanted behavior, use proximity control, eye contact, and use the student's name or interest while directing the classroom. All of these measures can assist with creating a positive classroom climate.

Tier II.

Tier II is the first-line interventions tier. This is related to the second question, what interventions or supports are in place and what are the responses to undesirable behavior. Sayeski and Brown (2014) discussed that when behavioral problems arise that teachers should provide additional supports that supplement the classroom curriculum. First-line interventions can be broken down into two categories: 1) surface management techniques, and 2) reinforcement systems.

Surface management techniques, according to Sayeski and Brown (2014), are techniques used for the simple purpose of handling minor behavioral problems. Some of these techniques are planned ignoring, nonverbal signals, and proximity control. Planned ignoring is where the teacher ignores the attention seeking behavior of the student. Nonverbal signals are things like a ringing a bell, turning off and on the lights, or any signal to the students to change their behavior. Proximity control is when the teacher moves near the student in order to refocus that student.

According to Sayeski and Brown (2014), reinforcement systems provide constant consequences to certain behaviors in order to achieve a desired behavior. Examples of reinforcement systems are token economies, behavioral contracts, and group-contingencies. With token economies, students who display proper behavior can earn a token (i.e. stars, coins, or tally

marks) that they can then redeem for an item or preferred activity. The immediate feedback of a reward for positive behavior is the key to a token economy.

Behavior contracts set the minimum expectations and a way of recording the behavior. They include: 1) clear and concise goals for both the student and the teacher, 2) the method that the behavior will be recorded, and 3) remove the responsibility of the student's behavior from the teacher to the student in regards to recording the behavior.

Group contingency is, according to Sayeski and Brown (2014), where the class either gain a reward or lose a reward based on the behavior of one student, more than one student, or the whole class. This type of behavior management system does not work for some teachers. These teachers feel that the potential negative effects for a student who does not meet the behavioral requirement for a reward may suffer negative consequences because they have in essence knocked the whole class from a reward.

Tier III.

Tier III is the intensive, individualized interventions tier. This is related to the third question of what are the individualized/intensive behavioral supports used and are they used by all of the student's teachers. Sayeski and Brown (2014) discussed that a Tier III always begins with a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), and the purpose of the FBA is to move past Tier I and Tier II and focus on the student's individual behavioral needs. The reason for the FBA is to learn why the student behaves the way he or she does and what acceptable behavior can be taught to this student with this need.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), last reauthorized in 2004, FBAs are required for students with disabilities who display problem behaviors. After conducting a FBA, the FBA team will postulate as to why the student is

behaving inappropriately and then determine strategies to address that behavior. As opposed to Tier II strategies, Tier III strategies are more time intensive and insightful to the individual support needs of the student.

With the assistance of behavioral supports in the classroom, students who do not have the desirable behavioral skills can learn to practice and develop those skills. With the tiered-model of behavioral support students should receive suitable levels of support, if the teachers know how to implement the procedure.

Teachers' Knowledge

Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), discussed that a critical step in the success of PBIS is dependent on classroom teachers to implement PBIS in their classrooms. Unfortunately, some school systems still use reactive discipline systems instead of organizing the school's environment to prevent behavioral problems. These reactive discipline systems rely on consequences (i.e. detention, in school suspension, and out of school suspension) to limit behavioral violations. The reason that some school systems still use these methods is because of the time and effort it takes in order to make a system wide change; a change for the policy makers, administrators, and educators. If the teachers do not understand or want a change, the change will not occur easily.

Research done by Lane, et al. (2009), discussed that teacher perceptions of PBIS as well as its implementation does matter. According to Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri (2008), factors that influenced the success of PBIS were misunderstandings, skepticism that PBIS was needed, that PBIS was ineffective, and that teachers' philosophical beliefs were inconsistent with PBIS. In addition to these issues, others problems were limited knowledge of the principles of

PBIS, and difficulty collaborating with other teachers and parents. Obviously, teachers' perceptions of PBIS can matter to the implementation of PBIS.

According to Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), if educators could better understand PBIS, then they could assist each other in accepting and implementing PBIS. This would include a better understanding of teachers' concerns, how to use the data in their planning, and what strategies that they would need daily in the classroom.

In Edward's (2009) study, the data analyses showed that the more comfortable that a teacher is with PBIS, the more they were observed using PBIS strategies in class. The teachers who rated themselves as less comfortable using PBIS, were observed using few PBIS strategies in class. In order for teachers to use and implement PBIS strategies in their classroom, this study shows that the teacher must be comfortable in the knowledge they have of PBIS.

Teachers' Attitudes

In a study by Myers, Simonsen, & Sugai (2011), teachers' behavior have a clear impact on student behavior. If the teacher is stressed and unhappy then, after exposure, their students are unhappy and often stressed. According to Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), teachers remarked that the students should be held accountable for the choices they make and the consequences of those choices; that the students should already possess the skills to behave properly, but they are choosing not to behave properly. Continued in study, the teachers did stress that the choice of the behavior was the student responsibility, however, the teachers did not state in the study what caused the problem behavior, if the teachers used behavioral data, or if they taught the students an alternative behavior to the undesirable behavior (Feuerborn and Chinn, 2012).

Another issue discussed was collaboration with other teachers and parents. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), learned that as the years of experience increased, collaboration with parents and

other professionals decreased. The less experienced teachers were more likely to ask other teachers or administrators who have experience with behavioral problems for assistance. Furthermore, teachers with more teaching experience felt as if they were on their own when it came to dealing with students' behavioral problems, unless it was regarding testing or outside referrals. Feuerborn and Chinn (2012), continue that more experienced teachers have fewer discussions with parents regarding a student's behavioral problems

An issue that Taylor (2011) found was that special education teachers were expected to provide direction in developing behavioral interventions for students with behavioral problems. Within IDEIA, schools are to have either a PBIS or a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) for students with disabilities. This is why teachers in the fields of special education are required as part of their coursework to study behavior management. Most general education teachers are not required to take these courses; therefore, they do not take these courses. Thereby, giving general education teachers the belief that special education teachers will handle students' behavioral problems.

Sugai (2009), did note in an interview that the high school culture may not support a PBIS approach; that in high schools it is acceptable to let the students fail, rather than to reteach a subject. Sugai (2009), continued that some teachers do not believe that students who habitually break the rules should be approached in a preventive manner, that instead the students should be expected to comply or presume enforcement for violation of rules or procedures.

According to Johnson and Fullwood (2006), a federal legislation requires the restructuring of regular classroom settings, when possible, to include both general education students as well as students with disabilities. Under this legislation, general education teachers must now modify coursework, instruction, and test to properly accommodate the needs of all

17

students. General education teachers may be less tolerant of certain types of undesirable behavior than special education teachers, but general education teachers are more likely to spend non-classroom time assisting students with disabilities than they are to assist the rest of the class (Johnson and Fullwood, 2006). An obstacle is the general education teachers' understanding of emotional and behavioral disabilities. As shown in Johnson and Fullwood's (2006) study, this may even contribute to what type of relationship these teachers have with their students.

According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre's (2013) study, many teachers commented that the need for more punitive actions on their surveys rather than the need for more instructional supports, especially when concerning students with emotional or behavioral disabilities. These teachers felt that rewarding those students for good behavior was a bad idea, because these students should be motivated on their own to do the right thing instead of needing a reward.

Supporting PBIS

Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013) discussed that in their study 84% of the teachers surveyed had conflicting beliefs in regards to behavioral supports. These teachers often view behavioral supports as a way to make excuses for the student's behavior. Other teachers had differing opinions about school discipline, perceptions of sustainability of PBIS, or just the stress of a change in the discipline system. More reasons given for teachers being resistant to PBIS was fatigue and a lack of training, according to Feurborn, Wallace, Tyre (2013).

Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), created five key strategies to persuade teachers to invest and implement PBIS: 1) get a clear idea of what teachers' perceptions of behavior and discipline look like, 2) get secure resources, 3) provide a solid foundation for PBIS, 4) build teachers' skills and knowledge base of PBIS, and 5) assist with a shared vision and ownership of PBIS.

Step 1: Get a clear idea of what teachers' perceptions of behavior and discipline look like. According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), these perceptions can influence the change and implementation of PBIS. To better understand what teachers want, the teachers must first see what they have. They will need to evaluate the current system, and what needs changed in that system.

Step 2: Get secure resources. Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), discussed that resources such as administrative support, money, and time need to be secured for PBIS. Then the staff will know that solid resources exist, and they will feel more confident toward change. Of these resources, administrative leadership is critical. When the administration is committed to change then the staff is more likely to follow through with the change.

Step 3: Provide a solid foundation for PBIS. According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), a change to the standard is always met with resistance; both natural and to be expected. Teachers are more likely to support a change if they have already noticed that the current system needs to be changed or are unsatisfied with the current system. According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), because teachers are more likely to resist the change to PBIS; a case must be made entailing the practices, and the reasons for the change to PBIS. The teachers should be made aware that PBIS is expected to have meaningful outcomes in their school and with their students. Most teachers will like the thought of having an impact on their students' lives.

Step 4: Build teachers' skills and knowledge base of PBIS. According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), when you build teachers' confidence in their ability to implement PBIS, they are more likely to endorse PBIS. This can be done through professional development and refresher courses. The more a teacher knows about PBIS, the more likely they will use PBIS strategies in their classrooms, according to Edwards (2009).

Step 5: Assist with a shared vision and ownership of PBIS. According to Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013), each individual teacher will need to go through the process of getting information, forming an opinion of PBIS, and deciding if PBIS is something they would want to implement. The ultimate decision to use PBIS, is completely at the discretion of the teacher. A shared vision of PBIS is sharing a set of goals for the school, implementing these goals is up to the individual teacher.

Teacher responsibility of PBIS is important because it offers multiple arenas for teachers to voice their thoughts and concerns of PBIS. Feurborn, Wallace, & Tyre (2013) warn of common pitfalls with PBIS. Teacher resistance or flat out refusal to implement PBIS is the most common. They suggest not to argue with those who are resistant but to go back to Step 1 and try and determine what the issues are bothering the teacher.

Kelm, & McIntosh (2012), completed a study that showed that teachers at schools with PBIS reported significantly higher levels (d=0.80) of teacher self-efficacy than teachers at schools that do not have PBIS. Kelm & McIntosh (2012), defined self-efficacy as how a teacher perceives their ability to positively influence the outcome of a student's life, as well as a protective feature against job stress and burnout.

According to Ross and Horner (2007), positive relationships between students and teachers are important to the quality of the student's academic, social, emotional competence and overall health. But the most important aspect in the classroom is the teachers' understanding of the behaviors and emotions that their students are experiencing in the classroom. Teachers may be more accustomed to the student's behavior when they see it negatively impacting the class's learning. However, not many students know how to ask for help when facing uncontrollable behavior.

Ross and Horner (2007), continued to discuss that it is not surprisingly that students who come in to the classrooms with emotional and behavioral deficits may find it more difficult to develop and maintain positive relationship, and may even be reluctant to ask for assistance even though they know someone can help them.

Statement of the Hypothesis

Emotional and behavioral problems which cause classroom disruptions are a common cause for lack of classroom management. Behavioral problems in the classroom is the leading cause of teacher retention after five years. Many of the behavioral problems can be addressed through PBIS. With these supports in place and used, classroom disturbances have shown to decrease and teacher self-efficacy has increased.

There are still some deterrents to full implementation of PBIS. The main reason is teachers' perception and lack of knowledge of PBIS. If professional development as well as refresher courses were offered to teachers, teachers would feel more confident towards PBIS and therefore would implement PBIS strategies into their classrooms.

With PBIS, teacher stress is reduced and the teacher has more time to teach their lesson plans and to relate more to their students. With a positive educational environment, students will be more likely to come to school, behave well, and become active productive members of society. The hypothesis of this study is secondary teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management. This chapter provides a description of the methods used to examine the focus in this paper. It also includes the research question, a description of the research design, and an explanation about how the data was collected.

The research focused on the knowledge and attitudes of secondary teachers toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management and was used to investigate the following question: what are secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management? This assisted in understanding the connection between secondary teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in their classroom management capability. As previously stated, the research hypothesis for this study was secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management.

Research Design

Setting and Participants

Participants for this research project were secondary school teachers in a high school in a Mid-Atlantic state. The school was a rural high school with a total enrollment of 407 students encompassing grades 9 through 12. All students are eligible for free or reduced school lunches. The ethnic make-up of the school consists of 405 Caucasian students (99%) and 2 African American students (less than 1%). The student/teacher ratio at this school is 14 – 1. The school employs 34 full-time teachers of which four are inclusion teachers.

The principal at the secondary school which the research was conducted, was contacted in order to acquire permission to gather information from the teachers by means of a paper and pencil survey. A letter was given to the teachers explaining the research topic and asking for their assistance by completing a brief pencil and paper survey that had been developed. (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey which was completed by the participants of this study and Appendix B is a typed copy of the responses to the open-ended questions.)

Teacher Questionnaire

Teachers were asked to complete a survey containing 16 questions that were made up of Likert type questions, open-ended questions, close-ended questions, and demographic questions. The Likert questions were based on a four-point scale format. The teachers were asked questions that incorporated their confidence and readiness to teach their classes. Other questions inquire as to their knowledge of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and how confident they feel about implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The demographic section addressed categorical data; such as their age, gender, years of teaching, as well as the subjects and grades they teach.

Materials

The materials for this study consisted of an anonymous pencil/paper survey created by the co-investigator. There were three sections to complete. The first section was the demographic section. The second section was a self-rated confidence and knowledge level of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and classroom use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The third section contained two open-ended questions which inquired as to the teachers' perception of the benefits and problems with PBIS.

Procedures

The pencil/paper survey was given to the teachers in their school mailboxes. The anonymous consent form was attached as the first page to the survey and included instructions on how to complete it. Directions were also included on how to complete the survey. Each completed survey was sealed in a manila envelope and placed in a secure box in the library to guarantee the anonymity and security of the completed surveys. The secured box was collected by the co-investigator at the end of the survey window. This was done to increase the return percentage.

The data collected from the survey was evaluated, analyzed, and the results recorded. Section one of the survey, collected demographic information. While section two collected the teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as well as their overall confidence. A four-point Likert Scale was used to rank section two. The Likert number response was allotted a numerical point value that was collected for data purposes. Section three consisted of two open ended questions, inquiring the participants to list problems with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ports as well as the benefits of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Chapter 4: Results

Data Analysis Procedures

This study was designed to ascertain secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in classroom management. The teachers were given a survey that had three sections. The first section was the demographic section. The second section was a self-rated confidence and knowledge level on personal, knowledge of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and classroom use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Likert scale questions were used in this section to rate the extent to which a participant agreed or disagreed with a particular question or statement, from one for strongly disagree to four for strongly agree. The third section, consisted of two open ended questions; what the teachers believed are the problems of PBIS and what they believe are the benefits of PBIS.

Out of the 34 surveys that were given out, 23 were returned completed. This provided a 68% return rate. The first question posed to the teachers was their teaching experience. Of the returned surveys, 11 (48%) of the participants were currently co-teaching, 21 (91%) of the participants were first year teachers, and 17 (74%) of the participants were Special Education Teachers.

Demographics

In order to better understand the teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; the next questions were about the teachers' years of age and their years of teaching. Of the returned surveys, six (26%) of the participants have been teaching for more than 20 years and are 45 years of age or older. One teacher (4%) of the participants has been teaching for less than one year and is 25-29 years of age.

The last section of the demographics consisted of the subjects and grades that the teachers instruct. Of the surveys returned, eight (35%) of the participants taught 11th and 12th grade classes in History and English. Whereas two (9%) of the participants taught 9th and 10th grade classes in Basic Skills. The other subjects taught were evenly distributed among the four grades.

The second section of the survey was a Likert-type questionnaire, consisting of 16 questions. These questions were broken into four sections: Teachers Readiness to Teach; Teacher Confidence; Teachers' Knowledge of PBIS; and Teachers' Attitudes of PBIS.

Teachers Readiness to Teach

In Table 4.1, Teachers Readiness to Teach, the participants were asked to rate themselves in four areas: if they felt ready to teach their first day of class; if they were comfortable with the behavior management plan; if they were comfortable with their classroom management; and if they worked on their behavior management plan. Of the surveys returned, three (13%) of the participants strongly disagreed that they felt prepared to teach the first day of school. While nine (39%) of the participants somewhat agreed that they felt prepared to teach the first of school.

Table 4.1

Teachers' Readiness to Teach

	Respondents (N)	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q1. I felt prepared to teach the first day of school	23	3	13%	3	13%	9	39%	8	35%
Q2. I was comfortable with the plan for behavior management	23	1	4%	3	13%	7	30%	12	52%
Q3. I am comfortable in my classroom management	23	0	0%	0	0%	9	39%	14	61%
Q4. I worked on my classroom behavior management plan	23	0	0%	1	4%	5	22%	17	74%

Teacher Confidence

In Table 4.2, Teacher Confidence, the participants were asked to rate themselves in four areas: if they feel that they make a difference in their students' lives every day; if they feel like their classroom management skills are improving every day; if they are confident on how they manage student behavior in the classroom; and if they feel comfortable with the behavior of their students in the classroom. Of the surveys returned, 11 (48%) of the participants reported that they only somewhat agree that they are making a difference in their students' lives. One (4%) of

the participants reported that they strongly disagreed that they felt like they were making a

difference in their students' lives.

Figure 4.2

Teacher Confidence

	Respondents (N)	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q5. Every day I feel that I am making a difference in students' lives	23	1	4%	2	9%	11	48%	9	39%
Q6. Every day I feel like my classroom management skills are improving	23	0	0%	0	0%	13	57%	10	43%
Q7. I am confident on how to manage student behavior in my classroom	23	0	0%	1	4%	8	35%	14	61%
Q8. I feel comfortable with the behavior of my students in my classroom	23	0	0%	2	9%	9	39%	12	52%

Teachers' Knowledge of PBIS

In Table 4.3, Teachers' Knowledge of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports,

the participants were asked to rate themselves in four areas: if they know and understand what

PBIS means; if they know how PBIS are to be used in their classroom; if they are aware of the consequences for problem behaviors; and if they directly teach expected positive behaviors. Of the surveys returned, 15 (68%) of the participants somewhat agreed that they know how to use PBIS in their classroom. However, 5 (23%) of the participants somewhat disagree that they teach expected positive behaviors.

Figure 4.3

Teachers' Knowledge of PBIS

	Respondents (N)	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q9. I know and understand what PBIS means	23	0	0%	4	17%	13	57%	6	26%
Q10. I know how PBIS are to be used in my classroom	22	0	0%	3	14%	15	68%	4	18%
Q11. I am aware of the consequences for problem behaviors	22	0	0%	0	0%	13	59%	9	41%
Q12. I directly teach expected positive behaviors	22	0	0%	5	23%	11	50%	6	27%

Teachers' Attitudes toward PBIS

In Table 4.4, Teachers' Attitudes toward PBIS, the participants were asked to rate themselves in four areas: if they felt confident with the interventions and supports provided by PBIS; if they believe that PBIS is making a difference in their classroom; if they feel that they effectively use PBIS in their classroom; and if they recognize positive behaviors of their students

and students in the school. Of the surveys returned, 13 (59%) of the participants stated that they

somewhat agreed that they feel confident with the interventions and supports provided by PBIS

and that they recognize positive behaviors of their students and students in the school. However,

1 (4%) of the participants stated that they strongly disagreed that they felt confident with the

interventions and supports provided by PBIS and with recognizing positive behavior of their

students and the students in the school.

Figure 4.4

Teachers' Attitudes toward PBIS

	Respondents	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Q13. I feel confident with the interventions and supports provided by PBIS	22	0	0%	6	27%	13	59%	3	14%
Q14. I believe that PBIS is making a difference in my classroom	22	1	5%	7	32%	11	50%	3	14%
Q15. I feel I effectively use PBIS in my classroom	22	0	0%	7	32%	13	59%	2	9%
Q16. I recognize positive behaviors of my students and students in the school	22	1	5%	3	14%	7	32%	11	50%

The last section consists of two open ended questions: any problems with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and any benefits with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Of the surveys returned, three (13%) of the participants chose to answer the open ended questions. They listed the problems of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as hard to keep track, no way to really keep it individual and private, and receiving limited support from administrative. The benefits of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports were listed as PBIS allows students to become contributing members of society, that it has a positive effect on all students, and that PBIS can have a positive effect on attendance and students' attitudes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study was designed to gain perceptions of secondary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in classroom management. The results of a survey distributed to secondary teachers at a rural high school are discussed here with the study's limitations and future research suggestions. This information was gathered to add to the knowledge base on the current state of training for secondary teachers in West Virginia on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Interpretation of Results

In regards to secondary teachers' readiness to teach, most teachers felt as if they were prepared to teach the first day of school. Also, they were comfortable with their plan for behavior management. The majority of teachers who responded to the survey answered in the positive on the teacher readiness portion of the survey. This supports the concept that if a teacher has time to prepare for the first day of school, that he or she feels more comfortable in managing the behavior of students in the classroom.

In the area of secondary teachers' confidence in their teaching methods, most of the teachers replied that they only somewhat agreed that they were making a difference in their students' lives, with one reporting that he or she strongly disagreed that they are making a difference in their students' lives. Most of the teachers strongly agree that they are confident on how to manage student behavior in their classroom; however, one somewhat disagreed that he or she felt confident on the management of student behavior in their classroom. This supports the idea that the more confident that a teacher is making a difference in their students' lives the more apt the teacher is to feel confident in the management of student behavior in their classroom.

With teacher knowledge of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, the majority (57%) of the teachers answered "somewhat agreed" that they knew and understood what PBIS mean; however, 17% "somewhat disagreed" that they knew and understood what PBIS means, and 23% "somewhat disagree" that they directly teach expected positive behaviors in their classroom. This would imply that secondary teachers need more training in the area of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in order to better understand and thereby directly teach expected positive behaviors in their classroom.

Half of the teachers (50%) replied that they only "somewhat agreed" that PBIS was making a difference in their classroom, but 5% responded that they "strongly disagreed" that PBIS was making a difference in their classroom. In regards to using PBIS effectively in their classroom, 59% of the teachers "somewhat agreed" and 32% "somewhat disagreed". I found this to be interesting considering that 77% directly teach positive behavior in the classroom. This shows that not all of the teachers who use PBIS in the classroom are the ones who are seeing a positive difference in their students' behavior in the classroom.

In the section of open ended questions, only a few teachers responded. Some of the benefits they listed was that they were seeing a difference in the students' attendance and academic performance with PBIS. However, some listed disadvantage of PBIS as keeping track of individualized interventions and supports as well as lack of administrative support. This shows that PBIS can work limited at the high school level, if it is properly implemented and supported by the administration.

Limitations

There was only one rural high school surveyed. This school is small in comparison to other high schools throughout the state. West Virginia has a diverse socioeconomic and cultural

areas. However, this high school is narrow in its cultural diversity and has a low socioeconomic level. There may be different perceptions in the other counties in the state. The differences from this more rural county and other counties in the state that contain cities like Huntington, Beckley, Morgantown, Charleston, and Martinsburg could be significant as well.

Decisions based on this study is limited. Besides containing information from one rural high school, it is based on high school teachers' knowledge and attitudes only and does not include middle school teachers. Teacher opinions and other factors are important in decision making and how the teacher currently feels about the administration at the time could impact the study.

Future Research

There is a great deal of research that can be completed in the future. Many more counties should be surveyed before a decision should be made regarding PBIS at the secondary school level. Training needs to be given to all secondary school teachers with a more in-depth survey as a follow-up. A trial period needs to be allowed in order for the teachers to determine if PBIS is the best solution for their students.

The deciding factor of whether or not a school implements PBIS should be on a school to school bases. The teachers should vote and debate as to what is best for their student body. What I learned from this research, is many teachers do not properly understand Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Conclusion

Secondary teachers at this rural high school have moderately positive perspectives of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Adding this information and future information collected in this state to the main body of the information in this country will help in assessing

the effectiveness of our country's teacher training on PBIS and supports needed for the teachers who are using PBIS in their classrooms. Teachers are an important aspect of students' lives. If the teacher believes in the student and shows the student Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as opposed to punishment, the students in turn will show positive behavior instead of negative choices.

References

Baker, P.H. (2005). Managing student behavior: How ready are teachers to meet the challenge? *American Secondary Education, 33*(3), 51-64.

Ediger, M. (2013). Managing the classroom: A very salient responsibility in teaching and learning situations is classroom management. *Education, 134*(1), 15-18.

Edwards, H. G. (2009). *The effects of teacher knowledge and use of positive behavior suppor on student academic achievement.* . (Master of Education), Univeristy of North Carolina, Wilmington. Retrieved from http://dl.uncw.edu/etd/2009-1/edwardsh/hollyedwards.pdf

Feurborn, L., & Chinn, D. (2012).). Teacher Perceptions of Student Needs and Implications for Positive Behavior Supports. *Behavioral Disorders, 37*(4), 13.

Feurborn, L., Wallace, C., & Tyre, A.D. (2013). Gaining staff support for schoolwide positive behavior supports: A guide for teams. *Beyond Behavior, 22*(2), 27-34.

Jackson, C., Simoncini, K., & Davidson, M. (2013). Classroom profiling training: Increasing preservice teachers' confidence and knowledge of classroom management skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38(*8), 29-46.

Johnson, H.L., and Fullwood, H.L. (2006). Disturbing behaviors in the secondary classroom: How do general educators perceive problem behaviors? *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 33*(1), 20-39.

Kelm, J.L., & McIntosh, K. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavior support on teacher self-efficacy. *Psychology in the Schools, 49*(2), 137-147.

Lambright, K.T. and Alden, A.F. (2012). Voices from the trenches: Faculty perspective on support for sustaining service-learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 16(*2) 9-46.

Lane, K. L., Kalberg, J. R., Bruhn, A. L., Driscoll, S. A., Wehby, J. H., & Elliott, S. (2009).

Assessing social validity of school-wide positive behavior support plans: Evidence for

the reliability and structure of the Primary Intervention Rating Scale. *School Psychology

Review, 38*, 135-144.

Lohrmann, S., Forman, S., Martin, S., & Palmieri, M. (2008). Understanding school personnel's

resistance to adopting school-wide positive behavior support at a universal level of

intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 10*(4), 256-269

Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. (2003). The key to classroom management. *Educational

Leadership, 61*(1), 6–13.

Myers, D.M., Simonsen, B., & Sugai, G. (2011). Increasing teachers' use of praise with a

response-to-intervention approach. *Education & Treatment of Children, 34*(1), 35-59.

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (n.d.).

Retrieved Oct. 24, 2014, from www.pbis.org.

Ross, S.W., & Horner, R.H. (2007). Teacher outcomes of school-wide positive behavior support.

 Teaching Exceptional Children Plus, 3(6), 471-488. doi: 10.1002/pits

Scott, T.M, Park, K.L., Swain-Bradway, J., & Lunders, E. (2007). Positive behavior support in

 the classroom: Facilitating behaviorally inclusive learning environments. *International

Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy, 3*(2), 223-235.

Sayeski, K.L., & Brown, M.R. (2014). Developing a classroom management plan using a tiered

approach. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 47*(2), 119-127.

doi:10.1177/0040059914553208

Sugai, G. (2009). Beyond the Discipline Handbook. *Harvard Education Letter 75*, 37-41:

Prakken Publications.

Taylor, S. S. (2011). Behavior Basics: Quick Behavior Analysis and Implementation of

Interventions for Classroom Teachers. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational

Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 84*(5), 197-203.

Wheeler, N.S. and Anderson, A.G. (2002). Creating classrooms in rural settings that prevent

discipline problems [Speeches/Meeting Papers] Retrieved on Oct. 24, 2014.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher Survey

We would like to know a little information regarding your perspectives on teaching and positive behavioral interventions and supports. Please complete this short survey. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Are you currently employed as a special education teacher?   _____Yes   _____No

Is this your first experience teaching?   _____Yes   _____No

Are you currently co-teaching?   _____Yes   _____No

Background Information:

Your age: Years of teaching:

____20-24 yrs.   _____less than 1 year
____25-29 yrs.   _____1-3 yrs.
____30-34 yrs.   _____4-6 yrs.
____35-39 yrs.   _____7-10 yrs.
____40-44 yrs.   _____11-15 yrs.
____45 and older   _____16-20 yrs.
                                                                        _____more than 20 yrs.

Academic subjects comfortable teaching: Grade(s) assigned to teach:
(Check all that apply)   (Check all that apply)

_____English/Language Arts   _____9th
_____Math   _____10th
_____History   _____11th
_____Science   _____12th
_____Basic Skills (self-contained)
_____Other _____

TEACHERS AND PBIS

Teaching Experience: *(Please select the response that most accurately reflects your attitudes and beliefs.)*

Issue ***Readiness to Teach***	*Strongly Disagree* *1*	*Somewhat Disagree* *2*	*Somewhat Agree* *3*	*Strongly Agree* *4*
I feel like I was prepared to teach the 1st day of school.	1	2	3	4
I was comfortable with the plan for behavior management in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable in my classroom management.	1	2	3	4
I worked on my classroom behavior management plan.	1	2	3	4

Issue ***Teaching Confidence***	*Strongly Disagree* *1*	*Somewhat Disagree* *2*	*Somewhat Agree* *3*	*Strongly Agree* *4*
Every day I feel like I am making a difference in my students' lives.	1	2	3	4
Every day I feel like my classroom management skills are improving.	1	2	3	4
I am confident on how to manage student behavior in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
I feel comfortable with the behavior of my students in my classroom.	1	2	3	4

Issue ***Knowledge of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.***	*Strongly Disagree* *1*	*Somewhat Disagree* *2*	*Somewhat Agree* *3*	*Strongly Agree* *4*
I know and understand what PBIS means.	1	2	3	4
I know how Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports are to be used in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
I am aware of the consequences for problem behaviors.	1	2	3	4
I directly teach expected positive behaviors.	1	2	3	4

Issue *Attitude towards Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.*	*Strongly Disagree* *1*	*Somewhat Disagree* *2*	*Somewhat Agree* *3*	*Strongly Agree* *4*
I feel confident with the interventions and supports provided by PBIS.	1	2	3	4
I believe that PBIS is making a difference in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
I feel I effectively use PBIS in my classroom.	1	2	3	4
I recognize positive behaviors of not only my students but other students in the school.	1	2	3	4

Please list any problems that you may have with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Please list any benefits that you have seen with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Thank you for your time. We appreciate all of your input. Any additional comments are welcome. We would love to hear anything that you would like to share. Feel free to use the back of this paper.

Appendix B

Open-Ended Responses

Please list any problems that you may have with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Respondent 2: "At time, PBIS can be ineffective, and children need to be aware of negative consequences to actions that they willing engaged in. And the punishment needs to be timely and swift".

Respondent 3: "Limited support or suggestions for interventions".

Respondent 4: "I believe that Behavioral Interventions should be both positive and negative".

Please list any benefits that you have seen with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Respondent 1: "Reduces visits to office by student and parents. More respectful to students instead of harsh punishment of negative behaviors."

Respondent 2: "Positive rewards are beneficial because they provide for a better atmosphere in the classroom - kids are behaving because something good will happen, not because they are afraid of bad consequences".

Respondent 4: "Some students, as they mature, benefit from Positive Behavioral Interventions and become contributing members of their respective classes".

Respondent 5: "Positive effects on achievement and attendance".