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SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

A MASTER'S THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO FACULTY  
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY  
JULIE SODERLUND

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

DECEMBER 2017

### Abstract

Special education students with emotional and behavioral disorders have the right to receive an education that addresses their specific, individual needs. There are many challenges that accompany these students. It is beneficial for teachers to take a positive perspective of support and value collaboration with team members when working with these students. Teachers must also accept a mindset and perspective of the importance of inclusion for all students, regardless of disability or behavioral challenges. All students deserve the opportunity to access general education curriculum with their peers. This is how E/BD students will achieve future success.

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

In the United States, all children have the right and privilege to attend school and receive instruction tailored to their individual learning needs. Most students are able to access instruction in a general education classroom and find success. However, many students need additional support for a wide variety of needs, whether academic, emotional, physical, or behavioral. Special education is a way to address individual needs to ensure that all students have what they need to be educated and are able to pursue independence and success in a future career field. Every public school district in the United States must be able to serve students with special education needs.

Students who are determined eligible for services under the category of emotional and behavioral disorders are not an easily identified group. There are numerous factors that are considered, documented, observed, evaluated, and discussed amongst the IEP team prior to placing the Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (E/BD) label on a student. The factors include internal and external dynamics, teacher perceptions of the student, severity of observable and documented problematic behaviors, as well as the impact negative behaviors have on academic achievement.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, all students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), same as that of non-disabled peers, designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for future education, employment, and independent living. In order to qualify for special education services under the label of Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, this disorder has been defined as:

- (i) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:
- a. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
  - b. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
  - c. Inappropriate types of behaviors 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 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)).

Schools across the nation, in accordance with the United States Department of Education, must review factors identified by the definition and provide appropriate documentation of meeting the criteria to consider children as eligible for special education services under this category. Once identified, each E/BD student has the right to participate with their general education peers in their least restrictive environment (LRE) as determined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team.

E/BD students typically have many challenges in the classroom and often these challenges are related to factors outside of the classroom or school environment that dramatically affect the student's ability to fully attend and participate in the classroom. These factors can include family environment and relationships, as well as choice of leisure activities (Stoutjesdijk, Scholte, & Swaab, 2012, p. 95). However, challenges exist within the classroom that impact academic achievement. These challenges are negative student behaviors (externalizing and internalizing) and student academic deficits (Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004, p. 60).

Special and general education teachers often differ in perception of classroom expectations for students with E/BD. The goal of every special education teacher is to be able to provide the support and tools necessary for all students, including E/BD students, to access and be successful in general education instruction. This is often a struggle given the challenges experienced by E/BD students, but another large factor impeding student success is the attitude of the general education teacher in accepting these students into their classrooms. Several years ago, as a student teacher, I was working with a 1<sup>st</sup> grade student who newly qualified as an E/BD student. His general education teacher had ongoing frustrations with him and often sent him to the office for misbehavior. Upon qualification for special education services, this teacher would call for help in the classroom. She would say things like “Your student is acting up again” and “Come get your student”. In my teaching experience since that time, these types of comments are often the reality. General education teachers can become so frustrated with E/BD students’ behaviors that they reject responsibility for the student and pass sole responsibility to the special education teacher. These teachers believe that the student is the special education teacher’s student and it’s the special education teacher that needs to fix the situation. This is a problem. If teachers, both special educators and general educators, are unable to work collaboratively to support the unique needs of all students, including E/BD students, it will negatively impact student achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007, p. 881). Not only will E/BD students continue to struggle academically, they will also be unable to grow in their own self-concepts without the support of teachers believing in them and their abilities.

When a student’s LRE is determined to be the general education classroom, it is the job of both the general education and special education teachers to implement clear and consistent expectations in the classroom environment (Lane, Pierson, & Givner, 2003, p. 416). Inclusive teaching practices, including cooperative teaching (co-teaching), have increased since the

implementation of IDEA in 2004. Inclusion provides many benefits to students with disabilities. These benefits include: full access to general education curriculum with accommodations and modification as necessary to meet individual academic needs, increased expectations for the learning of all students, opportunity to develop academic, social, and functional skills, as well as opportunity to participate in all school activities with general education peers (Olson, Leko, & Roberts, 2016, p. 143).

Positive teaming and collaboration is essential to design and maintain effective, inclusive programs and expectations for students with E/BD. This requires a positive perspective that all students, regardless of academic or behavioral struggles, have the right to learn and it is the job of all educators to work collaboratively to ensure learning occurs. Effective collaboration consists of special and general educators working to have ongoing communication, using individual expertise, and working flexibly to design and implement individualized instruction and supports to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003, p. 315). Such collaboration will have a positive impact on the success of E/BD students in the classroom. Collaboration is an ongoing process requiring all teachers to reflect on individual teaching practices and is especially difficult for teachers who feel unprepared to teach and support E/BD students who bring the challenge of negative behavior to the classroom setting.

Many teachers, both general and special education teachers, enter their teaching career feeling ill-equipped and inadequate to meet the needs of E/BD students within their classrooms (McHatton & Parker, 2013, p. 187). These teachers have little understanding of the challenges of E/BD and lack the experience to be able to work collaboratively with others to meet the needs of the students. Lack of preparation impacts the teachers' perception and attitude toward E/BD students, typically in a negative manner. There is a need for teacher preparation programs to



include courses and growth experiences in understanding the needs of students with disabilities, but most importantly how to teach these students to ensure their LRE is implemented in the most inclusive educational setting (Zagona, Kurth, & MacFarland, 2017, p. 165).

In my opinion, the solution is a mindset shift that needs to happen for all teachers to accept and perceive that all students are deserving and able to learn given the appropriate supports. It is the job of all educators to work to collaboratively to maintain consistent inclusive classroom opportunities for all students. Thus, the guiding research question for this literature review is: How can general education teachers and special education teachers effectively collaborate to support the needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders?

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Education**

The literature for this thesis was located through searches of EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier, Elsevier, JSTOR, Proquest Education Database, and Sage Premier 2017 from articles published between 1999 and 2017. The literature presented in this thesis contains empirical studies from peer-reviewed journals addressing the educational label of E/BD and factors contributing to the success and academic achievement of E/BD students. Searches were conducted using key word phrases such as: “E/BD and academic achievement,” “inclusion of special education students,” “collaboration between general and special educators,” and “preparation for teaching E/BD students.” This chapter is a literature review addressing seven sections in this order: Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Education, Least Restrictive Environment, E/BD and Academic Achievement, Classroom Expectations, Inclusion, Teaming and Collaboration, and Teacher Preparation Programs.

Students with an educational label of emotional/behavioral disorder have a wide variety of needs that must be addressed for them to achieve success in the classroom. In support of eligibility criteria for an emotional/behavioral disorder (E/BD) established in the federal definition, Cullinan and Sabornie (2004) proposed that students with E/BD exhibit significant behavioral differences than students without E/BD, specifically related to the extent of issues exhibited regarding each of the five specific criteria areas. They conducted a study analyzing behaviors exhibited in each of the five characteristics for students with and without E/BD. The study was aimed at finding patterns across the two groups and comparisons between students

with and without E/BD as well as gender and racial/ethnic status. Participants included 815 students with E/BD and 395 students without E/BD, totaling 1,210 participants. All students were either middle school or high school level, ranging in age from 13 to 16 years old. Of the students with E/BD, 212 were African American, 556 were European American, and 47 were Hispanic. Of the students without E/BD, 70 were African American, 301 were European American, and 24 were Hispanic. In addition, of the students with E/BD, 159 were female and 656 were male. Of the students without E/BD, 202 were female and 193 were male. For this study, teachers rated their assigned students using the *Scale for Assessing Emotional Disturbance* (SAED). This scale was designed to allow teachers to rate their students in the five eligibility criteria areas for E/BD, as well as their overall competence including academic and social strengths.

Results from this study revealed that in the all five areas (inability to learn, relationship problems, inappropriate behavior, unhappiness or depression, and physical symptoms or fear) students with E/BD demonstrated each characteristic to a greater extent than students without, regardless of gender or race/ethnicity. Results did not indicate significant patterns between gender and race/ethnicity. Cullinan and Sanbornie (2004) state that students with E/BD demonstrate a need for services addressing their emotional and behavioral problems in all five areas outlined in IDEA's definition for emotional and behavioral disorder. These services are needed in order for students with E/BD to achieve the same academic success opportunities as that of their peers without E/BD.

Although IDEA designed a specific definition outlining eligibility criteria areas consisting of specific characteristics of a student with E/BD, assessment of eligibility for these students raises concern and further questions. The emotional and behavioral issues for each student are difficult to identify, as there are several factors that can alter and influence the

evaluation process. Every student presents behaviors differently, whether it is a positive or negative behavior. Behaviors are exhibited either internally or externally and in varying degrees of frequency and consistency. Behaviors occur as a response to numerous factors including environment, behavior functions and triggers, as well as emotional or physiological needs.

“Internalizing behaviors are characterized as behavior patterns directed inwardly towards oneself and include depression, social-withdrawal, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and selective mutism” (Gage, 2013, p. 128). In contrast, externalizing behaviors in students are characterized as behavior patterns of disruptive, hyperactive, and aggressive behaviors (Jianghong, 2004).

The behaviors exhibited can also depend on the perspectives of those involved in evaluation of the student. The perceptions of the evaluators are important to consider. These are the individuals responsible for determining and addressing the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of the student to be successful academically. Hecker, Young, and Caldarella (2014) conducted a study addressing the perception of educators regarding student behavior and students at-risk for emotional disturbance with the intent that educators would gain increased awareness of early identification for students at-risk. In this study, researchers organized focus groups of general education middle school and junior high teachers. Each group had between 2-7 participants. The primary researcher of this study met with each group and posed questions regarding internal and external behaviors exhibited in the classroom, as well as the special education referral process and behavior interventions utilized in the classroom. The group sessions were recorded and analyzed. Analysis of the sessions revealed six themes that arose among the educator’s responses to questions. Themes include:

- 1) E/BD students have difficulty forming positive relationships with peers
- 2) E/BD students have difficulty forming positive relationships with teachers
- 3) Many E/BD students do not get their basic needs met in their home environment

- 4) Teachers' perceive that E/BD students have parents that are less involved and communicate less frequently with the school
- 5) E/BD students frequently engage in both internalizing and externalizing behaviors
- 6) Many E/BD students display abrupt changes in negative behaviors

These themes further demonstrate the importance of objectively considering characteristics exhibited by students in coherence with IDEA's definition of emotional disturbance when determining eligibility for special education services. When determining eligibility for E/BD classification, educators need to adhere to objective evidence of disability as means for qualifying, instead of relying on personal opinions about the student and/or the behavior. In addition, it is essential to consider all internal and external factors that may be influencing a student's ability to be successful in the school environment. Educators need to consider whether or not these factors are long-term for the student or if they have possibility of alleviation prior to qualification. Once the IEP team has determined that a student is eligible for services for an emotional/behavioral disorder, the next step is to determine the most appropriate educational placement for the student where the student can receive his/her education in their least restrictive environment.

### **Least Restrictive Environment**

The most appropriate educational placement for a student is in their least restrictive environment (LRE). This decision regarding LRE is made upon IEP team review and discussion of an E/BD student's academic achievement and behavior concerns impacting his/her performance in the academic setting. For E/BD student's, once the LRE is determined there can be a transitional process out of the general education setting with the ultimate goal of the student making successful progress in order to transition back to the less restrictive setting with their general education peers.

Stoutjesdijk, Scholte, and Swaab (2012) conducted a study that reviewed characteristics of students with emotional behavioral disorders and the predictors that lead to placement in more restrictive educational settings. It was hypothesized that students with an emotional/behavioral disorder were being placed in more restrictive settings than necessary and did not accurately reflect the students' least restrictive environment.

Participants included a group of 235 students with an average age of 9 years, all of which attended a more restrictive, separate special education setting in the Netherlands. Another group of 111 students, with an average age of 10 years, were included. Conversely, these students received special education services in the general education classroom for the majority of their school day. It was determined that emotional and behavioral problems were not caused by a single factor, instead by four individual factors including: problem behavior, cognitive functioning, child and family risk factors, as well as family functioning. To gather data in each area, the following assessments were given: *Child Behavior Checklist*, *Teacher Report Forms*, *Dutch Family Home Environment Scale*, as well as each student taking the *Weschler Intelligence Scale-Revised*. The *Child Behavior Checklist* and *Teacher Report Form* were used to assess problem behaviors as observed by parents and classroom teacher. The *Dutch Family Home Environment Scale* was used to measure family functioning within the home environment. The *Weschler Intelligence Scale-Revised* was used to measure IQ, intellectual and cognitive functioning. Scores on the measures were compared between those in a center-based special education program or in an inclusive general education classroom. Results indicate strong differences between students in each academic setting.

It was found that students in the center-based programming had significantly higher scores for externalizing and internalizing behaviors and significantly lower IQ scores. These students also had much higher risk factors related to family functioning and home environment,

at much younger ages than the students placed in the general education setting. Overall, in contrast to the stated hypothesis findings suggest that students were placed in their least restrictive environments according to their emotional and behavioral needs. However researchers noted the key correlation between a student with a healthy, nurturing home environment and the effect on their emotional and behavioral outcomes in the classroom including academic setting in comparison to students lacking those outside supports and the effect that has on their least restrictive academic setting.

In special education, more restrictive settings place students in alternative educational environments, often located in a separate facility than the student's home based public school. Hoge, Liaupsin, Umbreit, and Ferro (2014) completed a study in which the least restrictive environment placement decisions were reviewed for E/BD students. The intent of the study was to examine factors related to transitioning into and out of more restrictive special education settings. Three school sites in the Southwestern United States were selected for this study and 9 teachers representing all three sites were participants in the study. Each teacher was directed to consider all student cases from the last school year as part of the study. The three schools were federal setting IV and operated in separate educational environments from general education. The first school consisted of one middle school aged classroom including one teacher, one paraprofessional, and eight students with EBD. Six of the students were male and two were female. The second school had four classrooms ranging from elementary to high school aged students, altogether 29 students. This school had four teachers and four paraprofessionals. Of the students, 27 students were male and 2 were female. The third school also had four classrooms, four teachers, and four paraprofessionals. There were 13 students, 12 of the students were male and 1 female. Overall 50 students were specifically evaluated regarding their educational history,

academic/behavioral progress, reasons for entry of setting IV program, and criteria to exit and transition out of the setting.

Each of the nine teachers participated in an interview process called the *Narrative Inquiry* process. During the interview, each teacher discussed each student in the program. Specifically, the reasoning for each student's participation in the program, how the decisions of placement were made, and what the requirements were for students to be able to transition out of this setting. Upon transcribing and reviewing the interviews, five factors were identified as contributors to the decision for placement in these restrictive settings. These factors were: aggression, defiance, running (either from class or school grounds), concerns about the student's mental health, and student performance of behavior resulting in harm to self. The severity, intensity, and frequency of any/each of these factors demonstrated by each student led IEP teams to determine these restrictive settings as most appropriate for the students in the study. The goal of the three school programs was to teach the students skills and strategies for self-regulation to transition them back to the general education setting. Among all three schools, there were twelve reasons why students were not allowed to transition out of the programs. These reasons include: failure to meet program goals as determined by a school-wide level system, parent resistance to transition, behavior regression, aggression, more evaluation time needed, program determined to be the LRE, student resistance to transition, concerns as to mental health of the student, instability in student's living situation, no available placement options for transition, defiance, and running from class or school grounds.

Results indicated that primary reasons for entering the setting IV program were aggression (86%), defiance (24%), running from class or school grounds (20%), self-injurious behavior (14%), and mental health concerns (12%). During the past school year, teacher noted that 34% of student's were considered for transition out of setting IV during their annual IEP



meetings. Overall, 7 students were able to successfully meet their program goals and transition to a less restrictive setting. The remaining students were unable to meet program goals to transition. This was due to inability to achieve the goals in the school-wide level system, which further determined that students were correctly placed in their least restrictive environment.

### **E/BD and Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement for students with E/BD is of great concern to educators and parents. Behaviors in the classroom can impact a student's ability to remain in class and access instruction at a similar rate of same aged peers. As a result, regardless of cognitive abilities, this type of student may miss core instruction and may struggle to keep up with his/her peers in class. Not only does this leave a lasting impact on students as they are always making up missing work, it also negatively influences their self-esteem and self-confidence of personal ability. This is an ongoing negative cycle for mainstreamed students with E/BD.

Hirvonen, Aunola, Alatupa, Viliaranta, & Nurmi (2013) conducted a study on how temperamental characteristics and behavior were associated with academic achievement. Temperamental characteristics were described as distractibility, negative inhibition, mood, and negative emotionality, while behavior was described as task avoidance, helplessness, and anxiety. It was hypothesized that the noted negative temperamental characteristics led to the listed behavioral responses. For example, distractibility led to task avoidance and negative inhibition led to helplessness. Participants in this study include 153 first grade students, 78 girls and 75 boys randomly selected from 63 elementary schools. The study was conducted over the course of three consecutive years. Each student's classroom teacher was also included in this study, which changed yearly, in total 166 teachers. Students were assessed twice each year during the course of the study. The assessment included academic testing for each student. For the math portion, students completed the *Knowledge of Cardinal Numbers and Basic*

*Mathematical Concepts* and *Basic Arithmetic Test*. For the reading portion, students completed the *Reading Words Test* and the *Oral Reading Fluency Test*. Prior to each test administration, the classroom teacher completed the *Temperament Assessment Battery for Children-Revised* for each of their students participating. During test administration, an assistant monitored and rated each student's behavior using the *Observer Rating Scale of Achievement Strategies*.

Results indicate positive correlations in favor of the researcher's hypothesis. Students that were rated as more easily distracted demonstrated active task avoidance during the academic test administration. The more inhibited that a student presented himself/herself as observed by the teacher, the more helplessness and anxiety was demonstrated during testing. Results show that temperamental characteristics have a large affect on student's behavior, in turn affecting their ability to successfully complete a challenging academic task. As students go through school, the rigor and difficulty of these academic tasks increase, leading to greater struggles for students dealing with temperamental characteristics, including most E/BD students.

Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith (2004) studied the types of problem behaviors for E/BD students in relation to academic achievement. Participants in this study consisted of 155 students in grades K-12. There were 126 boys and 29 girls. All participants were receiving Special Education services for E/BD in a mainstream public school setting. Each participant completed academic testing (Woodcock Johnson III Tests of Achievement WJ-III) with a test administrator. The classroom teacher of each student also completed a *Child Behavior Checklist: Teacher Report Form* outlining specific types of problem behaviors related to academic achievement. This included internalizing and externalizing behaviors as observed in the classroom. Researchers were expecting to reveal four descriptions of E/BD students: large academic achievement deficits, deficits of adolescents to be the same or worse than children in the study (adolescents identified as ages 13-18 and children identified in this study as ages 5-12), for girls

and boys to experience similar deficits, and lastly that externalizing behaviors (aggression, disruption, attention problems) would be more strongly related to academic deficits than internalizing behaviors (anxiety/depression, social problems, withdrawn, somatic complaints).

Results from this study supported all four expected outcomes. On the WJ-III, approximately 83% of students scored in the below average range across all content areas assessed (math, reading, and writing) depicting academic deficits in all content areas. The observed deficits were similar across all ages (from child to adolescent) and between both genders. There were little notable differences in these groups. Finally, academic deficits were identified as more significant among the students demonstrating externalizing behaviors rather than internalizing behaviors (Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004, p. 62-68). Externalizing behaviors have a negative influence on academic progress and classroom success for students with E/BD. These behaviors impact the student individually and their ability to sustain attention and focus toward completion of assigned tasks. This, in turn, impacts overall academic achievement more so than students with internalizing behaviors.

Mattison & Blader (2013) conducted a related study on the academic achievement of E/BD students. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between students' IQ, internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior, and the impact on academic achievement and grade point average (GPA). Participants included 196 secondary E/BD students from a region of New York City, NY. These students were all enrolled in a self-contained special education program. There were 61 middle school students and 135 high school students that participated in this study. The students ranged in age from 13-17 years old. 73% of students were male and 27% were female. In this program, there were 8 students per classroom as well as a teacher and a paraprofessional. All students were provided with academic instruction to be prepared for state

testing. The school also provided behavior and therapeutic support to students based on individual needs.

For this study, students' IQ and demographic information were reviewed at the beginning of the school year. The IQ tests used were either the WISC-4 or the WASI. Achievement testing was administered and completed 10 weeks into the school year using the WJ-III. Emotional and behavioral problems were rated for each student using the Child and Adolescent Symptom Inventory Progress Monitor (CASI-PM-T) at the same time. For the purpose of this study, six symptom categories were of interest: ADHD inattentive type, ADHD hyperactive-impulsive type, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, social phobia, and global depression. Finally, school functioning and each student's GPA was reviewed at the end of the school year. Overall, students held average IQ's and demonstrated lower academic achievement, specifically in math. Results revealed that students held higher scores for the internalizing behavior of global depression and the externalizing behavior of oppositional defiant disorder. At the end of the school year, the average GPA was in the 70-79% range. Students that demonstrated lower ADHD-related symptoms based on the CASI-PM-T, had higher math and reading achievement scores as well as verbal IQ. Lower ADHD ratings also accounted for increased GPA. Researchers found that academic functioning was initially impacted by ADHD related factors, yet it was revealed that functioning was mainly impacted by IQ and achievement variables. It was found that poor academic performance of E/BD students is more related to their learning and cognitive deficits versus emotional and behavioral variables. However, as E/BD students continue attending school and do not receive appropriate educational support in their deficit area, their internal and external behaviors may increase. Students achieve the highest success in this area when interventions are enacted to meet academic as well as behavioral needs.

Barriga, Doran, Newell, Morrison, Barbetti, & Robbins (2002) conducted a study looking at the relationship between problem behaviors and academic achievement in students, with a specific emphasis on how attention problems impact achievement. In this study, areas of problem behaviors were analyzed in cohesion with standardized measures of academic achievement to evaluate the relationship between the two. Participants in this study consist of 58 students ages 11-19. There were 41 boys and 17 girls included. These students all attended an alternative school in an urban area in a large eastern city of the United States. Measures for this study included a *Teacher's Report Form* (TRF) and a *Wide Range Achievement Test, Third Edition* (WRAT-3). The TRF is a scale that measures academic, functional skills, and problem behaviors for each student. In this study, teachers completed the academic performance scale and the eight behavior problem scales for students. These scales assessed teachers' perceptions of students' academic abilities as well as perceived problem behaviors observed in the school environment. There were eight behavior problem areas addressed and rated on this form. These areas include: withdrawal, somatic complaints, anxiety/depression, social problems, thought problems, delinquent behavior, and aggressive behavior. The WRAT-3 was given as a formal academic assessment in the areas of reading, spelling, and math. Each student's standard scores were averaged into an overall achievement score. This study occurred over the course of a full school year. The WRAT-3 was administered individually approximately 1 month into the school year.

Results reveal that five of the eight areas of problem behaviors significantly correlate with academic achievement measures. These five areas are withdrawal, somatic complaints, attention problems, delinquent behavior, and aggressive behavior. The other three areas (anxiety/depression, social problems, and thought problems) did not correlate with academic achievement measures. Attention problems were highlighted as a significant factor impacting overall achievement and academic performance. It was found that behavior does impact

classroom performance, specifically the attention related behaviors. Researchers conclude that both externalized and internalized behaviors in association with attention problems have the highest negative impact on academic success. It is important for teachers, both special education and general education teachers, to consider these factors in developing curriculum with accommodations as well as classroom expectations to further reach the needs of all students.

### **Classroom Expectations**

In a classroom of students, there is a wide range of abilities, interests, learning styles, academic/behavioral needs, and sensory needs. As a result, the general education classroom teacher must design and implement lessons first addressing academic standards, then incorporate these other factors to encourage student engagement, learning, motivation, and participation in the lesson. It is essential that teachers generate and maintain clear expectations for all students to enhance each student's learning. However, teachers also come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. They may vary in their perceptions and expectations of student behaviors and success within the classroom.

Lane, Pierson, & Givner (2003) conducted a study on teacher expectations of student behavior, specifically skills necessary for success within the classroom. The study looked at the extent that teachers expect students to demonstrate competency of social skills within the classroom, including assertion, self-control, and cooperation. Also, this study compared grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school), as well as perception of general education teacher versus special education teacher. Participants in this study consisted of 366 teachers from two school districts representing eight schools (4 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools) in southern California. One hundred twenty-six teachers taught at the elementary level, 89 teachers taught middle school, and 151 teachers taught high school. Among the 366 teachers, 304 teachers were general education and 62 were special education. Each teacher anonymously

completed the *Social Skills Rating System* questionnaire. This questionnaire allowed teachers to rate the importance of social skills given various classroom scenarios. Teachers also noted their gender, grade level taught, and if they were a general or special education teacher on the questionnaire.

Results indicated consistent patterns between elementary, middle, and high schools. Teachers rated that self-control and cooperation skills are more important for classroom success than assertion skills. More specifically, all three school levels rated five specific skills essential for classroom success under the categories of self-control and cooperation. These include: following directions, attending to instruction, controlling temper in conflict situations with peers, controlling conflict situations with adults, and responding appropriately to physical aggression from peers. In comparison between special and general education, general education teachers viewed cooperation and self-control skills as more essential for school success than special education teachers. Researchers viewed this as noteworthy because general education teachers have the responsibility to teach the wide variety of students within the classroom and deem the skills of self-control and cooperation as crucial for meeting the needs of all students.

When one or more E/BD students are in the classroom, the classroom dynamic changes. Typically, these changes are difficult for teachers to manage, as they must now further adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students. Ideally, all teachers see the benefit in designing instruction to meet the needs of all students, yet this positive perception is not always demonstrated in schools. It is important that general education teachers maintain positive perceptions towards students with E/BD and that they work towards sustaining a positive relationship with these students. According to IDEA, all students are entitled to FAPE, therefore all students must be placed in an educational setting that is their least restrictive environment. All teachers (general education and special education) must adhere to serving students in the LRE,

which may include differentiating lessons and adjusting instructional variables for all students to access instruction.

In addition to establishing clear expectations in the classroom, research supports the use of behavioral strategies and interventions to maintain a positive learning environment. Evans, Weiss, & Cullinan (2012) conducted a study of teacher perceptions and behavior strategies for E/BD students. This study looked at behavior strategies used most frequently by teachers across educational settings to support academic achievement. Participants included 94 K-12 educators from 36 schools, all of which taught students with E/BD in their classrooms. The sample population included teachers from general education settings, resource room, and separate special education settings. The instrument used consisted of a two-part survey analyzing student characteristics in alignment with teacher strategies. Teachers completed a survey, which was a 39-item rating scale addressing characteristics of students associated with each of the five criteria areas used for labeling E/BD, for one or several of their students with E/BD. Then, teachers completed the second portion of the survey, which was an inventory indicating frequency in the use of specific behavioral interventions and strategies by educators in the classroom.

Results indicated that across educational settings, students with E/BD exhibited four of the five criteria areas including: inability to learn, relationship problems, inappropriate behavior, and unhappiness or depression. It was noted that fifth criteria area, physical symptoms or fears, was more prominently displayed in the separate special educational setting. Teachers use this information to adapt their strategies, interventions, and responses to support students in these areas. The second portion of this study indicated that, across settings, verbal reinforcement and teacher proximity were the most widely used strategies in working with each set of behavioral criteria of E/BD. General education teachers reported using strategies tailored toward academic needs first, then would implement interventions targeting externalizing behaviors. The general



education teachers were unable to provide information regarding strategies and interventions used to address internalizing behavior needs. As a result, the implementation of interventions and strategies for working with E/BD students demonstrating both externalizing and internalizing behaviors fell to the special education teacher to meet those needs.

The special education teacher has the responsibility to meet ongoing behavioral needs of students with E/BD. As a result, teachers must gain knowledge of instruction and management strategies as pre-service teachers, but they also must maintain the knowledge and management competencies throughout each school year. Anderson & Hendrickson (2007) conducted a study looking at classroom practice of E/BD teachers two years after completing student teaching. Furthermore, they sought to review teachers' beliefs of classroom practices and whether or not these were implemented within the classroom. Participants included 12 E/BD teachers, 6 taught in elementary programs and 6 taught in secondary programs. Two instruments were utilized in this study, the *Teacher Competency Observation Form (TCOF)* and the *Teaching Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (TSEBD)* assessment. The TCOF was a form completed by one of the researchers when observing a participant's classroom performance and instruction. This form consisted of 36 instructional competencies, 16 items related to instruction and 20 items related to classroom management. The researchers rated each participant's demonstration of the 36 competencies. For the purposes of this study, each participant was observed three times. The TSEBD was given once and consisted of three parts. The first section gathered demographic data of the teacher. The second section consisted of 50 multiple choice questions related to teacher knowledge of explicit instruction, classroom organization, classroom management, educational research, and special education law. The third section contained 36 statements related to instruction and classroom management. Each participant rated his/her own perspectives for each statement.

Results indicate no correlation between teachers' knowledge and overall teaching performance. However, a positive correlation was noted between teacher knowledge and use of support strategies for E/BD students. On the TSEBD assessment, the 12 teachers averaged a score of 59%. The scores ranged from 34% to 78%. All 12 teachers demonstrated high scores for explicit instruction, with a mean score of 2.8 out of 3. For group instruction, teachers collectively had a mean score of 2.5 out of 3. For individual instruction, they achieved a mean score of 2.4 out of 3. Overall, the mean score for instruction, classroom management, and individualized support was 2.56. Researchers noted these as very positive results for teaching effectively applying their knowledge and implanting strategies. It was observed that participants demonstrated several competencies throughout each observation including: clear directions, positive feedback, structure for academic engagement, eye contact, and maintained active task engagement. These positive results indicate that special education teachers demonstrated accuracy in implementing their beliefs, knowledge, and expertise of how to best support students with E/BD.

In order to maintain the knowledge and expertise of working with the challenges related to E/BD students, the question of special education teacher retention and job satisfaction arises. There is a growing need for educators to go into the field of special education, yet there is a decreasing amount of teachers desiring these opportunities. Stempien & Loeb (2002) conducted a study looking at the job satisfaction between general education and special education teachers, specifically when working with students with E/BD. The purpose of the study was to answer the question of which teachers are less satisfied with their jobs and what aspects contribute to that. This study was completed in the regional area of Detroit, Michigan. Participants included 116 full time teachers, 60 were general education teachers and 46 were special education teachers. Participants were divided into groups based on their teaching assignments. The first group

contained general education teachers in general education settings. The second group contained special education teachers in special education settings with E/BD students. The third group contained special education teachers working in inclusive settings with E/BD students, both general education and special education settings. Each participant completed two surveys, the *Brayfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Index* and the *Life Satisfaction Index-A* (LSI-A). The *Brayfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Index* contained 18 statements in which teachers had to rate their opinions on a 5-point scale. Some example statements are, “I feel fairly satisfied with my present job” and “Most days, I am enthusiastic about my work”. The LSI-A was another scaled survey comprised of 20 statements related to general life satisfaction and included statements like, “My life could be happier than it is now” and “I’ve gotten pretty much what I expected out of life” (Stempien & Loeb, 2002, p. 261). Both surveys were designed to display higher scores as being higher satisfaction in the area.

Results demonstrate a significant difference in job satisfaction between general and special education teachers. A difference in mean score of 66 for group 1 compared to a mean score of 58 for group 2. Group 1 data results indicated that frustration with the job was moderately correlated with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of .38. Group 2 and 3’s results, however, demonstrated that higher frustration was correlated with lower job satisfaction, with a correlation coefficient of .69. No significant differences were noted in life satisfaction for the 3 groups of teachers. For group 2 and 3 teachers, researchers noted that the highest factor contributing to this dis-satisfaction was the challenges encountered in working with E/BD students. It was also noted that the longer a special education teacher worked in the job, the higher the job satisfaction. Overall, all teachers felt that they enjoyed working with students and their colleagues. Job satisfaction increased when they were able to witness growth and progress in students. For special education teachers, the challenges that accompany E/BD students did

have an affect on their job satisfaction initially. Yet, when teachers stayed in their career longer, their job satisfaction increased. These challenges exist in special education settings, however, special education teachers will see success when they are able to develop and maintain consistency in expectations and behavior management. This is a large factor in E/BD students achieving growth and progress.

There is a clear discrepancy between the perspectives of general education teacher and special education teacher when it comes to expectations and behavior management. Often times, the general education teacher relies on the special education teacher to support the behavioral needs of E/BD students. The expectations that a teacher sets for each learner in the classroom has an affect on the student's success and progress in the classroom. The perception a teacher has toward a student affects the way the teacher interacts with the student and alters the level of expectations for that student. For example, a teacher knows that a student with E/BD struggles with spelling grade level weekly spelling words and this task frequently leads to verbal outbursts and disruptions in class. This teacher can demonstrate low expectations for this individual E/BD student and instead of requiring the student to complete the spelling task, offers an alternative more preferred task to avoid the negative behaviors. Teachers, both general education and special education, have developed a range of behavioral expectations for students from high expectations to low expectations.

Rubie-Davies (2007) conducted a study investigating high and low expectation teachers and the resulting effect on student progress. There were 12 participant general education teachers in this study, split into three groups. The first group of teachers was to teach and maintain high expectations for students. The second group was to teach and maintain expectation of average progress for students. Lastly, the third group was to teach and maintain low expectations for students. All groups were directed to document student academic progress throughout the course

of one school year. Each teacher was observed twice throughout the school year to ensure that they were maintaining the designated level of expectations in their teaching. During the observations, teachers were observed and videotaped. Observers were looking for direct instruction given, behavior management, and specific interactions with students including positive praise and negative feedback. The high expectation and average progress teachers made clear efforts to create an effective learning environment and used scaffolded instruction methods to ensure students were learning. The low expectation teachers provided limited support in these areas. Students of the high expectation teachers were given frequent constructive feedback of their progress in the class consistently encouraging the use of higher order thinking skills, whereas the expectation of average progress teachers and low expectations teachers were scarce in this support. All teachers were observed using both positive and negative statements related to classroom behaviors, however the high expectation teachers were observed using more positive, preventative statements in response to classroom behaviors. The students of the high expectation teacher group demonstrated higher rates of academic progress. This study exemplifies the importance of teachers having high expectations for all students. High expectation teachers use positive, preventative behavior management strategies, but also respond to students in such a way that builds student up, not criticize them, increasing student learning and motivation. Low expectation teachers offer little feedback to students, are unclear in expectations of behavior or assigned task, do little to increase positive a learning environment or engagement in lessons. All teachers should strive to be high expectation teachers, supportive of student needs, and inclusive of all students placed in their classroom.

### **Inclusion**

Teachers' perspectives and their expectations of students with E/BD in the classroom are also impacted by student inclusion utilizing push in services versus pull out services. Depending

on an IEP team's determination of a student's least restrictive environment, inclusion of E/BD students in the classroom must be accepted. General education teachers must then adapt and differentiate their teaching practices to meet the needs of each E/BD student. Teachers' perspectives towards accepting E/BD students into their classrooms have an effect on overall student success.

MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013) completed a study investigating teacher's attitudes and behavior towards inclusion of E/BD students within the classroom and the effect those attitudes have on student success and behavior. The sample population included 111 elementary school teachers from 24 school districts. Of the teachers, 105 were female and 6 were male. Responses from each teacher were anonymous, therefore the demographic information of each teacher is unknown. Each teacher completed an online survey. The survey included five scaled areas that were analyzed. First, was the *Multidimensional Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale* (MATIES), which measured teachers' attitudes towards students with E/BD. Second, teachers completed the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSES), measuring teacher's perceived behavioral management and control within the classroom. The third scale was the *Teachers' Subjective Norm Scale* (a modified TSES) analyzed teachers' perception of their principal's view of inclusion of E/BD students. The fourth scale, *Teachers' Willingness to Work with Severe Disabilities Scale* (TWSD), measured teacher intent to fully include E/BD students in the classroom. Finally, the survey included the *Adaption Evaluation Instrument* (AEI) measuring the teachers' willingness to implement and adapt instruction to support students with E/BD. Upon completion of the survey, the results were calculated in each of five areas: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, and behavior. Standard scores in all areas reflected moderately positive to highly positive scores with standard deviations ranging from .01-1.39. It was also shown in 49% of the sample population that behavioral intentions

toward inclusion of E/BD students was predicted by their beliefs, feelings, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Thus, demonstrating a significant relationship between a teachers' perception of E/BD students that reflects in their teaching practices. Teachers that held more positive beliefs or attitudes towards students with E/BD held higher intentions to practice more inclusive instruction with these students. Also, principals hold an important role in encouraging a sense of community and collaboration to engage and practice inclusion of E/BD students within the classroom.

Inclusion of E/BD students into general education classrooms was researched by Heflin and Bullock (1999). The study looked at how full inclusion of E/BD students affects daily classroom activities as well as teacher perception of inclusion. Participants included 18 teachers selected from three Texas school districts. Each district selected three schools and chose two teachers, a special education and a general education teacher, to be participants. In total, there were 9 special education and 9 general education teachers. Each teacher was interviewed about their school, their years of experience, their class type, size, and perception of inclusion of special education students as well as supports provided. None of the schools could incorporate full inclusion of E/BD students due to the impact of negative behaviors in the classroom. One school had attempted full inclusion that only lasted two weeks of the semester. The remaining eight schools selected classrooms for students to participate in for instruction periods, then allowed students to complete work tasks in separate resource room special education settings. The classrooms for each student were chosen based on teacher skills, strengths, and ability to work with E/BD students.

Overall, teachers noted several common criticisms in the push for inclusion. They felt there was an insufficient amount of support, training, and collaboration between special education and general education teachers to understand and support E/BD students. They did not

feel they had proportional ratios of general education students to students with E/BD. They struggled with behavior management and finding extra time to make curriculum modification. It was reported that special education students from the smaller schools in this study were more accepted and included in daily classroom activities and routines by their peers than the larger schools. Results from this study reveal that teacher's acknowledge four themes as important for the success of inclusion within the general education classroom. First, inclusion should reflect proportions of students within the classroom based on student needs. Second, there needs to be instructional support. Third, training is essential for staff, emphasizing collaboration. Fourth, there should be careful planning and systematic implementation (Heflin and Bullock, 1999, p. 110).

Another study conducted by Olson, Leko, & Roberts (2016) analyzed inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. The purpose of the study was to review special education student's access to the general education curriculum, specifically how multiple educational staff defined and implemented access to curriculum. Ridgeview Middle School in a Midwestern State was selected for this study. This school practiced inclusion of special education students to the maximum extent possible. There were 12 participants in this study: two school administrators, six general education teachers, one inclusion support teacher, two learning strategists, and one educational assistant. Data was collected over a 5-month period during one school year. Initially, participants provided a written response of their personal definition of access to general education curriculum for special education students. Then, each participant was interviewed. Interview questions were related to who should provide access, where, and how access should be implemented for special education students. Researchers then observed participants implementing access with the intention of verifying participant responses from interviews. Researchers collected data on how access to curriculum was planned and taught



in coherence with interview responses, as well as the amount of educator collaboration in the planning process. Following observations, each participant completed a reflection form in which they offered personal feedback of the extent they provided access to special education students.

Researchers noted four themes amongst the Ridgeview educators leading to effective inclusion of special education students by providing access to the general education curriculum.

- 1) Instructional and social contexts: Special education students were observed receiving the same instructional opportunities and social opportunities as that of their general education peers. Educators placed value in all students having the same opportunities regardless of ability level.
- 2) Curriculum: The participants made observable effort to practice inclusion of students with all disabilities. The goal was to provide instruction, access to curriculum, and the necessary accommodations to ensure all students were making progress towards grade level standards.
- 3) Instruction: Classroom environments and instruction were designed to meet individual student needs, targeted state standards, as well as to encourage opportunities for peer engagement.
- 4) Collaboration: Collaboration was noted as essential to the effectiveness of providing all students access to the general education curriculum. Each educator worked cooperatively with the others to create effective teams based on personal knowledge and expertise. When teams met, the end goal was to enhance learning opportunities for all students.

Overall, researchers concluded that based on the four themes, this school had positively exemplified shared responsibility in the education of all students inclusively. The staff at

Ridgeview held a common viewpoint that general education classrooms and curriculum should be inclusive of all students.

### **Teaming and Collaboration**

In order to have effective teacher collaboration, teachers must first accept an attitude and perception of teamwork. Malone and Gallagher (2010) completed a study on teamwork, specifically how special education teachers view and value components of teamwork in the educational environment. Participants for this study included 184 elementary special education teachers, all of which participated on IEP teams throughout the school year. These teachers were 90% female and 10% male. For this study, teachers completed three surveys related to teacher attitudes and perceptions of teamwork. The first survey, the *Attitudes about Teamwork Survey* (AATS), provided a rating scale for questions related to the IEP team process in planning supports for students with disabilities. The second survey, *Team Characteristics Survey* (TCS), allowed for teachers to rate 10 characteristics of teamwork using a likert-type scale in their level of importance to enhance team performance. These characteristics include: leadership, positive communication, cooperation, balanced participation, topic clarity, role clarity, lack of frequent barriers, conflict resolution, equal power, and ability to give/receive feedback. The third survey, *Team Process Perception Survey* (TPPS), was a questionnaire related to teacher's perceptions about the team process.

Results from the AATS and TCS were calculated using summated scores. These scores revealed no significant correlation between attitudes in team planning, and team characteristics as a whole. However, individual correlations arose between surveys. Attitudes in planning supports for students were positively correlated with the characteristics of leadership, positive communication, cooperation, role clarity, lack of barriers, equal power, and ability to give/receive feedback. In addition, it was found that positive attitude of teamwork results in

better planning and support of students. Positive correlations were indicated between attitude toward teamwork and the team characteristics of positive communication, cooperation, role clarity, lack of barriers, equal power, and ability to give/receive feedback. Of the team characteristics, positive communication was deemed as most important in successful team performance. According to results from the TPPS, special education teachers found teamwork beneficial in the areas of sharing differing ideas and perspectives, problem solving, decision-making, improved programming for students, as well as general collaboration. Teachers noted perceived limitations in the teamwork process including schedule restraints and lack of commitment from staff. Teachers were supportive of opportunity to collaborate, share resources, improve student programming, and opportunity to give/receive feedback. Finally, teachers noted that in order to continue to enhance the teamwork process, there should be resolution to scheduling constraints as well as improved communication between all staff.

Teacher collaboration and its link to student achievement was researched by Goddard, Goddard & Tschannen-Moran (2007). More specifically, they researched if teacher collaboration positively impacts student achievement. It was predicted that collaboration provides valuable opportunities for teachers to gain expertise from other staff to understand and improve instruction for students. The sample population included 47 randomly selected elementary schools from a midwestern urban school district in the United States. In total, 452 teachers and 2,536 fourth-grade students participated in this study. Student achievement data was collected using 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (seventh edition). Each participant's scores in reading and math were analyzed. In addition, all 452 teachers completed a survey measuring aspects of teacher collaboration. Researchers used the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade scores as a baseline. Next, they reviewed teacher responses in coherence with 4<sup>th</sup> grade scores to determine growth in student achievement as a result of increased teacher collaboration.

Results demonstrate positive associations between teacher collaboration and the positive impact it has on student achievement. With the implementation of teacher collaboration, math scores increased by .08 standard deviations and reading scores increased by .07 standard deviations. This study further discusses the importance of collaboration as an effective component to share expertise in support of all students. Results from this study exemplify the positive impact this has on student success.

The success of programming for an E/BD student relates to the quality of cohesiveness and collaboration among the student's IEP team. This team consists of special education case manager, classroom teachers, the student's parents, a special education administrative representative, as well as related service staff (school social worker, speech/language pathologist, school psychologist, etc.), and the E/BD student. This team meets annually to discuss successes and progress on IEP goals, areas of concern that need improvement, and the appropriate programming and placement for the student in the upcoming school year. After the meeting, the case manager generates the new IEP, parents give consent, and the new plan is in process. It is crucial that all team members follow the IEP and are in collaboration with one another throughout the school year to support the student.

A study completed by Hunt, Soto, Maier, and Doering (2003) looked at collaboration practices to support special education students within the general education classroom. The purpose of the study was to look at the effectiveness of collaboration specifically between general education and special education staff. The study was completed in two elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay area. Participants included the educational teams of six special education students from the two schools. The educational team comprised the general education classroom teacher, a special education teacher, the student's parents, and a paraprofessional assigned to each classroom. The educational team developed unified Plans of Support (UPS) for

each student. This plan consisted of interventions, curricular supports, and teaching methods used with the five students specifically targeting their social development and level of engagement. The educational teams met monthly to review and refine support plans, altogether the teams met five teams during this study. The meetings were structured and organized, following the collaborative problem-solving process. This process included generating a profile for each focal student, creating supports to increase social development, collaborative implementation of the plan, and an accountability system to ensure the plan is correctly implemented. Social development was measured through observational data and the Interaction and Engagement Scale (IES) completed weekly throughout a five-month period during the academic school year. Results indicated that the collaborative process of developing and implementing the unified plans for each student was successful. Student levels of non-engagement decreased from an average of 34% to 29%. Students increased initiation of interactions with classmates and teachers from a level of 6% of the time to 24% of the time. Appropriate reciprocal interactions with others increased from a level of 6% to 43%. Upon interview of educational teams from both schools about the collaborative process used, six positive themes arose:

1. Team members felt able to share their expertise and experience with others to support students.
2. Monthly meetings allowed opportunity to gather parent input and modify student supports as necessary.
3. Team members felt supported by other team members.
4. The UPS led to academic and social progress.
5. The monthly meetings provided opportunity and time to monitor student progress.

6. The special education staff provided useful expertise to support students, used by both special and general educators.

Overall, this study encourages the use of creative and consistent collaboration among educators, staff, and parents to effectively meet the needs of students. Collaboration provides opportunity for shared expertise, review of effective interventions and student data, as well as conversation about perceived and desired student outcomes. Most importantly, collaboration is essential in supporting the unique needs of students with E/BD.

Many school districts in the United States implement collaborative teaching practices to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom. These practices often include a co-teaching model. This consists of a general education teacher and a special education teacher planning and teaching a lesson to a group of students. The general education teacher provides direct instruction to the whole group, while the special education teacher offers a differentiated approach. The intent is to be fully inclusive of all students, regardless of disability, to meet educational needs. To effectively implement this type of instructional model, teachers need to be able to assume a positive attitude of teamwork in teaching.

Damore & Murray (2009) completed a study looking at teacher perspectives of collaborative teaching practices. The purpose of the study was to investigate teacher's perceptions of what components are essential in successful collaborative teaching. Participants in this study included 119 elementary school teachers from schools in Chicago, Illinois. Of the participants, 68% held general education teaching licenses, 25% held special education teaching licenses, and 7% held other teaching licenses. Teachers completed the *Collaborative Teaching Survey*. This survey evaluated teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of collaborative teaching practices. The survey included three components. Section one asked questions related to the existence of collaborative practices within each participant's school building. Section two

provided a rating scale for teachers and included questions related to teacher's perception of inclusive school practices. Section three contained questions related to teachers' attitudes and beliefs about collaborative teaching practices. Researchers divided collaboration into three forms when analyzing results: consultation, collaborative team teaching, and team teaching.

Results revealed that collaborative teaching practices existed in 92% of the school buildings, yet only 57% of participants utilized these practices in their classrooms. Of those participants, only 3% of teachers used all three forms. Of the general education teachers, 42% answered that collaborative team teaching did not occur in their classrooms, yet 18% noted consultation was used. Of the special education teachers, 39% answered that collaborative teaching did not occur in their classrooms, but 21% experienced consultation. Teacher perception of inclusive practices was overall positive. Special education teachers demonstrated more positive perceptions of inclusion than general education teachers. When asked about attitudes and beliefs of inclusive practices, both general and special education teachers revealed four important factors. These include: professional development, accountability, shared responsibility, and communication. Researchers noted that the data collected provided a correlational view of teacher's perceptions. With this information, school administration and districts can develop and implement collaborative practices to enhance the instructional opportunities of all students, including both general and special education students.

One popular method of collaborative teaching that is implemented in many school districts nation-wide is the co-teaching model. This model allows a general education teacher and a special education teacher to deliver instruction to students as a joint effort to support the inclusion of all students. Both teachers instruct to obtain the same lesson objectives, yet the special education teacher is able to provide the differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the special education students in the classroom.

Weiss & Lloyd (2002) conducted a study that looked at collaboration through the co-teaching model. The purpose was to understand the roles and instructional practice of special education teachers in this model. This study took place during the academic school year, in a school district in the mid-Atlantic region. Participants included three special education high school teachers and three special education middle school teachers. Each teacher participated in interviews and observations. In total, each teacher was observed 9 times and was interviewed 3 times. Teachers were interviewed after their observations to allow researchers to ask questions related to specific actions and interactions observed. In addition, teachers completed a reflective journal entry about their lesson and class during each observation. The reflection included the teachers' interpretations of their perspective of co-teaching and special education.

All participant teachers spent a portion of their day teaching in a co-taught classroom. During this time, the special educator's role was to provide behavior support and to provide a segment of differentiated instruction to the entire class. Then, special educators were responsible for teaching and assessing the same content and instruction to special education students in a small group special education setting. This small group instruction consisted of breaking down instructional content into scaffolded steps, at a slower pace and individualized to meet student's academic needs. Upon observations and understanding the roles of special educators in co-taught classrooms, teacher interview results reveal four factors that influence the effectiveness of co-teaching roles. These factors include: scheduling pressures, content understanding, acceptance by general education teachers, and skills of the special education students. Altogether, special educators felt an increase in collaboration opportunities with general education teachers would enhance their ability to sustain effective instruction in a co-teaching model.

Collaboration between general and special educators is essential and many schools attempt to implement collaborative efforts to support the inclusion of special education students.



Caputo & Langher (2015) conducted a study on inclusive practices for students through collaboration between special and general education teachers. For this study, inclusive practices include utilizing the co-teaching model in which the general educator is responsible for overall classroom instruction to all students and the special educator is responsible for instruction and meeting the individualized of the special education students within that same classroom setting. Participants include 276 special education teachers working in secondary schools. There was a random sampling of teachers from low, medium, and high socio-economic schools. The sample included 224 female and 52 male teachers. All participants completed two surveys. The first survey was *The Perceived Collaboration and Support for Inclusive Teaching (CSIT) scale*. This scale measured the special educators opinion of support and collaboration in designing and implementing co-teaching within the classroom. The second survey was the *Maslach Burnout Inventory, Educators Survey (MBI-ES)*. This survey measured the special educators attitude and perception of the effectiveness of collaborating with general educators in co-teaching.

Results indicate that higher scores on the CSIT were associated with higher burnout measures. It was noted that when teachers felt supported in collaboration, this was correlated with a decreased feeling of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Teachers identified that lack of support led to greater amounts of teacher burnout. In addition, positive support and collaboration was positively correlated with a deeper sense of personal accomplishment, which led to higher feelings of acceptance, job success, and participation. This study provides a positive example of the importance of collaboration between general and special education teachers to enhance the job performance and experiences of teachers. However, more importantly this collaboration translates to greater academic success for students.

### **Teacher Preparation Programs**

In order to meet the increasing educational and behavioral needs of students, specifically students with E/BD, there needs to be an expansion of teacher preparation programs. Many teachers, both general education and special education teachers, feel inadequate in their strategies and approaches to dealing with challenging behaviors that arise in the classroom. This uncertainty and lack of confidence can negatively influence the classroom atmosphere and each student's ability to achieve academic success. Without the knowledge, understanding, willingness to be flexible, continuous learning, and personal reflection of the educator on a daily basis, the challenging student/s may take advantage of the situation leading to greater difficulties for the teacher. Although, this does not describe every teacher or classroom environment, this seems to be a common occurrence in schools. There is a need for an increase in pre-service educator programs to further educate teachers in supporting the needs of E/BD students, as well as an increase of in-service training for educators employed in school districts.

King-Sears, Carran, Dammann, & Arter (2012) conducted a study to gain understanding in the level of preparedness for pre-service teachers. Their research questions sought to understand the feelings of preparedness and skill attainment of pre-service teachers in their ability to teach students with disabilities. A total of 98 teachers pre-service participated. Of the participants, 64 were in general education programs and 34 were in special education programs. Each pre-service teacher completed the *Student Teacher Skill Survey*. This survey contained 55 skill statements divided into 6 domains: instructional strategies, learning environment, behavior, instructional practice, assessment, and professional practice. Participants rated their self-perception of their ability to demonstrate each skill. The likert-type scale ranged from 1 (not very good at performing) to 5 (excellent performance).

Special education pre-service teachers rated their skills in working with students with disabilities higher in all 6-domain areas than pre-service general education teachers. In the area

of instructional strategies pre-service special education teachers (SE) had a mean score of 3.98 compared to 3.25 of the pre-service general education teachers (GE). In the area of learning environment, there was a mean score difference of 4.31 for SE teachers compared to 3.58 of GE teachers. The behavior domain yielded a mean score of 3.84 for SE teachers, compared to 3.31 of GE teachers. For the instructional practice domain, there was a score of 4.11 for SE teachers and 3.33 for GE teachers. In the assessment domain, there was a score of 4.10 for SE teachers and 3.37 for GE teachers. Finally, for the professional practice domain, SE teachers had a mean score of 4.47 compared to GE teachers' score of 4.04. In looking at data gathered, the researchers discussed that a mean score of 3 represents a feeling of "good" in the skill area. Therefore, researchers felt little cause for concern in the results for pre-service teacher programs. However, there could be improvement. This study further demonstrates the need for pre-service teachers to have adequate training in the needs and appropriate supports for teaching students with disabilities.

In a study by Ruppap, Neeper, & Dalsen (2016), researchers focused specifically on the perception of preparedness of special education teachers in teaching students with severe disabilities. This study took place in 12 regional districts in the state of Wisconsin. Participants included 104 special education teachers. Female teacher participants outnumbered male participants with an approximate ratio of 5:1. Participant teachers completed a survey. The survey was comprised of three example special education students (Leo, Caroline, and Abigail) with severe disabilities including cognitive, physical, and behavioral issues. For each example student, 10 recommended practices for working with these students were included. To complete the survey, participants rated their perception of self-efficacy in their ability to support the various needs of each student. For example, one student on the survey named Leo was described as, "A determined young man with behavioral challenges. He communicates using picture

symbols and gestures. He often leaves the classroom and school unexpectedly. During social interactions, he attracts negative attention. He often needs to be removed from the general education classroom due to disruptive behaviors” (Ruppar, Neeper, & Dalsen, 2016, p. 277). Using this example student, recommended practices included facilitating an IEP meeting, designing and implementing an effective behavior intervention plan, teaching preventative skills and strategies, and promoting positive interactions opportunities within Leo’s school day. Participants reviewed these recommendations for each example student and rated their comfort level and level of self-efficacy in implementing such things.

Results indicated that 86% of participants felt prepared to track progress goals and collaborate with individuals on the IEP team. However, only 54% felt prepared to implement assistive technology, support medical needs, and incorporate alternative communication components into their teaching practices. In addition, 83% felt prepared to monitor progress toward behavioral goals, 80% felt prepared to create and implement behavior intervention plans, 60% felt prepared to design appropriate instruction for the needs of students, 64% felt prepared to design appropriate educational assessments, and 77% felt prepared to support positive interaction opportunities for the students. According to researchers, these results indicate that further training is needed for pre-service special education teachers to support all students, particularly the students with more extensive support needs.

A similar study was completed by Zagona, Kurth, & MacFarland (2017). The purpose of the study was to understand the preparedness and experiences of educators in their practice of inclusion and collaboration. Researchers also sought to identify factors that would improve the preparedness of teachers, including pre-service teachers. Inclusive education was defined as providing students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum. Collaboration was defined as the shared responsibility of teaching and outcomes of all students. Participants

included 33 general education teachers and 10 special education teachers across six elementary schools. The study instruments included a survey and an interview of participant teachers. The survey consisted of 15 items related to inclusive education and collaboration. The survey asked participants to rate their preparedness to demonstrate skills related to both areas. The interview consisted of 10 questions related to both inclusion and collaboration, specifically how each participant felt demonstrating the skills and the successes and challenges they had experienced.

Scores on the survey were analyzed based on a likert-type scale rating preparedness as 1 (not prepared) to 4 (very prepared). Results reveal that special education teachers and general education teachers only slightly differ in their perceived preparedness for skills in inclusive education. In this area, special education teachers had a mean score of 2.35 and general education teachers had a mean score of 2.076. However, in the area of preparedness for tasks related to collaboration, special education teachers had a higher mean score of 3.086 and general education teachers had a mean score of 2.43. This indicates that special education teachers feel more prepared to deal with tasks such as: participating in IEP meetings, sharing responsibility for inclusive instruction, sharing resources with team members, and ongoing communication with colleagues. Additionally, results indicate a significant relationship between teachers that had taken pre-service courses in inclusive education and their perceived preparedness in demonstrating skills in this area including: individualizing/pacing instruction, providing accommodations, and adapting general education content standards. Results from teacher interviews reveal that teachers valued collaboration for support to enhance student outcomes. Yet, teachers described ongoing challenges with meeting individual student needs and collaborating with colleagues that had different philosophies related to inclusive education. An overall theme was that more training and preparation was needed to work towards meeting the needs of all students.

A study was conducted by Westling (2010) to assess the perspective of teachers, both general education and special education, in relation to working with students that display challenging behaviors. The study consisted of seventy teachers, 32 were general education teachers and 38 were special education teachers. Of the special education teachers, 2 taught preschool, 16 taught elementary, and 20 were secondary teachers. Of the general education teachers, 1 taught preschool, 8 taught elementary, 13 taught secondary, 10 were specialists (e.g., music). Each volunteer participant completed a questionnaire focused on seven key areas of working with students demonstrating challenging behaviors. These areas included teachers' perceptions about the causes of challenging behavior, opinion of pre-service and in-service preparation, confidence in strategies utilized, and collaborative support. The questionnaire contained a list of statements regarding these areas. Teachers were expected to respond with their opinion on a Likert-type rating scale. Data collected from this study indicated that both special education and general education teachers rated their perspective of adequate or extensive in-service preparation in their school district low. Results from special education teachers revealed that 50% felt they had received adequate pre-service or in-service preparation, comparable to the results of general education teachers at 52% (Westling, 2010, p. 55). This study supported the notion and perception that many teachers hold regarding inadequate training and lack of confidence and support in working with students with challenging behaviors. In response to this finding, researchers suggest a need for more pre-service preparation and support for the teachers working with E/BD students.

As part of pre-service programs for special education, pre-service teachers must complete several courses in the wide variety of students in special education and how to teach to the needs of students. However, many special education teachers feel inadequate in their knowledge and effectiveness as a teacher. Buock (2005) conducted a study on teacher preparation programs for

special educators and teachers' satisfaction with their preparedness and effectiveness in this career field. Participants included 189 special education teachers from a random sample of 593 secondary schools in a Mid-western state. Of the participants, 82% were female and 18% were male. The average years of teaching experience for the participant teachers was 15 years. Each participant completed a survey consisting of four sections including background and demographic information of each teacher, curriculum and instructional environments available to teachers, teachers' perceived effectiveness and satisfaction of special education programs, as well as teacher pre-service preparation.

Upon collection of survey data, researchers focused their attention specifically on teacher pre-service preparedness and teacher satisfaction. Of the participants, 48% felt satisfied with their undergraduate program in preparing them to be a special education teacher. 19% of the teachers felt unprepared and 32% felt neutral about the subject. When asked about specific courses, only 64% of teachers had courses regarding teaching students with a variety of disability categories. Only 48% of teachers had practicum or student teaching experiences working with students in various disability categories. As far as teacher satisfaction, 68% of teachers reported satisfaction with special education services at their schools. Data indicates that only about half of pre-service teachers had experience with students with disabilities prior to their first job experience, this led to teachers feeling inadequate and less prepared to deal with the ongoing challenges of the position. This is a problem in special education as teachers' attitudes and feelings of adequacy in their abilities directly reflect the success of inclusion for students with disabilities.

In a study by McHatton & Parker (2013), researchers looked at purposeful preparation of pre-service special education and general education teachers. The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes of pre-service teachers after providing more direct training and courses

related to inclusive teaching of students with disabilities. Participants in this study included 31 elementary education majors and 25 special education majors. Teachers' perceptions of inclusion were evaluated using the *Attitudes Toward Inclusion Survey*. This survey was intended to gather an account of each pre-service teachers' perspective of what inclusion entails, the necessary adaptations required for inclusion, the impact on the classroom, and the differences for general education versus special education teachers. Teachers were expected to complete the survey three times, once at the beginning of the semester, again at the end of the semester, and finally after one year had passed to assess if their opinions, attitudes, or perspectives had changed. The survey included 28 statements related to five domain areas: teachers, students with disabilities, students without disabilities, all students together, and schools.

Researchers focused on the comparisons between the first completion of the survey at the beginning of the semester and the survey completed after one year. The intent was to see how much the perspectives of general education and special education teachers had changed. Overall, the attitude toward inclusion for students with disabilities increased over time, specifically from the perspective of the general education teacher. The first round of surveys indicated that 77% of general education teachers thought inclusion was an effective educational practice. The 3<sup>rd</sup> round of surveys indicated that this opinion had increased to 94% of teachers. During the first round, 90% of general education teachers and 96% of special education teachers rated that students with disabilities can do well in the general education environment with support. By the third round, 100% of teachers rated this as successful. At first, when considering if inclusion hinders the learning opportunities of students without disabilities, 65% of general education teachers and 96% of special education teachers rated that it did not hinder opportunities. However, the third round indicated an increased perspective of 81% of general education teachers, but a decreased perspective of 83% of special education teachers. When asked to rate if inclusion is beneficial for



all students, general education teachers' perspective increased from 55% to 88% after one year. However, special education teachers' perspectives decreased from 56% to 33% after one year. Finally, when considering the impact of inclusion on high stakes testing, general education teachers' perspective increased from 29% to 38% after one year. Special education teachers' perspective decreased from 68% to 58% after one year. After one year of increased inclusionary practices, general education teachers demonstrated increased positive attitudes and perspectives toward the practice, whereas special education teachers averaged a maintained support of the practice.

Although many teachers feel inadequate to work with E/BD students, there are proactive interventions and effective training options for pre-service teachers. An example of this is presented in a study by Gettinger, Stoiber, & Kosciak (2008). The purpose of the study was to implement and evaluate a behavior program established to teach students with challenging classroom behaviors. The specific program was called *Accommodating Challenges: Training for Inclusion-Oriented Needs* or "ACTION". This study included pre-service teachers, current licensed teachers, and targeted students with behavioral challenges. Participants included 16 pre-service teachers, 16 current teachers, and 16 targeted elementary aged students. Challenging behaviors observed by participant students included 56% externalizing and 44% internalizing behaviors. The program occurred during the course of 32 weeks during the school year in two phases. Phase one consisted of specified trainings and observational opportunities for pre-service teachers targeting four areas:

1. Characteristics and needs of students with challenging behaviors
2. Functional assessment for challenging behaviors
3. Working in interdisciplinary teams and with families
4. Consultation for Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) interventions

Phase two consisted of pre-service teachers having the opportunity to design and implement intervention plans with the participant target students. ACTION teams were established to help support this process and to reflect on practice during the 16-week implementation period. In order to measure the effectiveness of the ACTION program, five measures were used in this study. First, was the knowledge test, a test developed to assess trainee knowledge of phase one content. Second, was the skill self-rating, in which participants rated their own competency in implementation of the program. Third, was the consultation simulation task (CST), this task assessed the trainee's ability to correctly implement the ACTION program during phase two. Trainees were rated on competence in objective areas. The fourth measure was self-efficacy, which helped researcher's gain understanding of each participant's view of working with children. Finally, the fifth measure was a rating of each licensed teacher's perspective of the competence of each trainee as they completed both phases. In designing this study, researchers believed that the program would lead to gains in trainee's ability to effectively support students with challenging behaviors.

Following Phase two, results reveal a significant increase in trainee's scores in self-efficacy beliefs, skills, and perceived self-competency in the ability to support students with challenging behaviors. Additionally, licensed teachers demonstrated gains in knowledge of student needs, as well as self-efficacy scores. The increased scores of both trainee's and licensed teachers led to positive progress in student achievement. Of the 16 students included in the study, 11 of the students demonstrated measurable progress towards their individual behavior goals. These types of behavioral interventions should be implemented into pre-service teacher programs in order to enhance the skill set of teachers going into the field. This directly affects the quality of instruction and educational impact of teachers in the classroom, as well as allows

students with challenging behaviors to access more of general education classroom through inclusion.

The topic of teacher preparedness in classroom management has escalated as the push for inclusion of all students in general education classrooms rises. Consequently, all teachers need to feel adequately prepared to manage their classrooms. Reality is that students with E/BD may exhibit either internalizing (anxiety, social withdrawal) or externalizing (classroom disruptions, aggression) behaviors or both. It is the task of all educators, regardless of licensure in a general education or a special education area, to utilize appropriate methods and strategies that will support students with an emotional and behavioral disorder to be successful academically.

In a study by Oliver and Reschly (2010), pre-service special educator programs were investigated to examine the extent of training received prior to licensure, specifically in the area of classroom management for students with emotional and behavioral disorders. In order to ensure that pre-service teachers are receiving the necessary education for working in this field, researchers collected course syllabi from 26 various special education teacher preparation programs at 26 universities located in a large Mid-western state. The syllabi analyzed included descriptions of content related to classroom organization or behavior management. Each course was rated based on a rubric designed specifically for this study by the authors. The intent of the rubric was to review the content and effectiveness of coursework for the pre-service special education programs offered by the universities. Following close examination of each syllabus, the trained researchers presented each university with a final score. This score was based on the content and effectiveness of their program to provide special educators with adequate preparation to meet the significant behavioral needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Results from this study indicated a lack of adequate training for pre-service special education teachers. It was noted that only 7 of the 26 universities had courses directly teaching classroom

management techniques. This is a relatively low number. Oliver and Reschly (2010) concluded that special education teachers need to be adequately prepared to support inclusion efforts for E/BD students to be successful in general education settings.

### **Chapter III: Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **Summary**

Special education serves students in many disability categories. This literature review focused on the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD). Students with E/BD need instruction tailored to their individual needs in order for them to learn and achieve success in the academic environment. All schools must adhere to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, which states that all students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), same as that of non-disabled peers, designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for future education, employment, and independent living.

In the classroom, students with E/BD demonstrate a wide range of emotional and behavioral challenges, described as either externalizing or internalizing behaviors (Hecker, Young, & Caldarella, 2014, p. 29). The behaviors can occur in different settings throughout the school day, for various functions, at different times, and can result in considerable difficulty to attend and participate with same aged peers. Bottom line, challenges related to E/BD can significantly impact the student's ability to fully access general education instruction and opportunities. These challenges are reviewed with the student's IEP team to determine the LRE and most appropriate educational setting for each student. The intent of each educational setting is to address students' problem behaviors and teach positive and effective coping strategies to

help students return to less restrictive settings (Hoge, Liaupsin, Umbreit, & Ferro, 2014, p. 224).

There is a relationship between the challenges of E/BD and academic achievement. Although E/BD students exhibit both externalizing and internalizing behaviors, the research indicates that these students' negative behaviors have the most impact on the students' ability to participate and sustain attention in the classroom. As a result, students experience academic underachievement in comparison to peers without E/BD (Barriga et al., 2002, p. 237).

Teachers come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences that impact their perceptions and expectations of student behaviors and success within the classroom. However, all teachers with E/BD students must design and implement lessons first addressing academic standards, then incorporate these other factors to encourage student engagement, learning, motivation, and participation in the lesson. It is important that all teachers strive to develop and maintain high and clear expectations for students in an inclusive learning environment, while adhering to individual student needs (Rubie-Davies, 2007).

It is important that all teachers, both general and special education teachers, value effective teaming and collaboration. Collaboration provides opportunity for shared expertise, review of effective interventions and student data, as well as conversation about perceived and desired student outcomes. In turn, this translates to higher academic achievement for E/BD students. Most importantly, collaboration is essential in supporting the unique needs of students with E/BD in an inclusive learning environment (Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003, p. 317).

In order to best support E/BD students, all teachers need to be adequately prepared. They need to be properly trained in understanding and implementing instruction for the vast needs of E/BD students, as well as working to maintain effective collaboration with all IEP team members in support of each individual student. There is a need for an increase in pre-service educator

programs, as well as an increase of in-service training for educators employed in school districts (Oliver & Reschly, 2010, p. 189).

### **Professional Application**

In reviewing these studies, the most important thing to remember is that E/BD students are identified as such because of their vast needs. In order for these students to access and demonstrate success in the classroom, there must first be a mindset shift for all teachers to see the positive and achievable success of E/BD students. Teachers need to release their hesitancy and resistance towards the negative aspects and difficulties associated with E/BD. They must instead remember that each student, regardless of individual need/s, deserves to receive an education and to feel like a valued member in the school environment.

Next, there must be an established implementation of clear and consistent high expectations for all students, including E/BD students. This means that classroom rules and expectations are posted visually, clarified and reviewed verbally, and followed consistently. Educators need to accept the perspective that all students need consistent routine, structure, and high expectations to be successful in the classroom. The barriers of successful implementation of high expectations in the classroom are that E/BD student negative behaviors will still occur. When this happens, teachers must be adequately prepared to implement effective management strategies, redirect the student when necessary, and maintain instruction in the inclusive classroom.

Third, there must be an increased value and positive perception in effective teaming and collaboration practices between general and special education teachers. This should be ongoing and consistent to design and implement accommodations for students as well as provide inclusive learning environments in each students' least restrictive environment. This is achievable through continuous collaboration meetings with established meeting norms to have

positive and productive discussion of how to best support E/BD students. There are barriers that will arise in differing viewpoints of instruction and inclusive practices during these collaboration meetings. However, when all educators assume a positive perspective and attitude towards the value of collaboration, these barriers could be dissolved.

Finally, there must be an expansion of professional developments and pre-service teacher preparation programs to gain knowledge and increased self-efficacy in supporting the needs of E/BD students within the classroom. This includes understanding the factors of how students qualify, how to determine needs and functions of behaviors, as well as how to best support these needs. This expansion can be achievable through ongoing participation in professional developments, learning about and piloting behavior management programs and strategies, collaborating with other districts and professionals with shared expertise, as well as increasing teacher self-reflection opportunities. Barriers of this expansion include extended time and effort on each educator's behalf to attend trainings and implement new programs and strategies. However, the potential positive impact on all students, not just E/BD students, overshadows these barriers.

### **Limitations of the Research**

In completing this research, I researched E/BD as a general term. There are so many components and factors included in the educational label of E/BD. In order to demonstrate an accurate view of the reality of positive change for these students, I had to look at E/BD from a broader perspective. This broader perspective combined all components associated with E/BD, instead of focusing on specific factors. For example, rather than focusing on just internal behaviors or just external behaviors, I combined them into behaviors impacting success in the classroom. From a broader scope, I could focus on how to best support these students and what positive changes schools can make to enhance the learning opportunities for these students.

Unfortunately, there is little research into what helps E/BD students achieve success within an inclusive classroom setting. The trend in schools today seems to be that when behaviors become challenging, teachers feel inadequate in preparation and feel they lack the ability to address the challenging behavior (Westling, 2010). This does not benefit students. There needs to be increased training and support in addressing the challenges of E/BD behavior and how to best support individual needs. Another limitation in conducting this research is that it is all very subjective data. Many of the studies included surveys and interviews of teachers to gather their personal perspective, self-efficacy, or perception of E/BD students. This is helpful, yet does not provide clear and concise data for realistically meeting the vast needs of these students.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This literature review addresses current research in the following areas: the components of an educational label of E/BD, the LRE for E/BD students and the importance of placing students in the appropriate educational setting, academic achievement and classroom expectations for E/BD students, inclusion, collaboration and teacher preparation programs in supporting students with E/BD. In reviewing this literature and in my experience as a special education teacher, there is a need for future research into the specific interventions and practice that lead to success of E/BD students in the classroom.

Current research reveals that teachers feel inadequate and in-experienced in their ability to design and implement behavioral expectations and instruction to E/BD students. How can pre-service teacher preparation programs expand to provide opportunities and experiences for all teachers to increase their knowledge and confidence in supporting E/BD students? Current research also states that effective teaming and collaboration is essential to support E/BD students. With these research based results, why is teaming and collaboration between general and special educators not mandatory in schools? Research should focus on this practice. Also, is



it beneficial for special education teachers to have more opportunities to collaborate with other special educators within their district?

Of the research that I reviewed, most of the research contained studies with subjective data including surveys and questionnaires of teachers' perspectives and opinions. Could research be conducted consisting of more objective data of the effective supports available for teachers working with E/BD students? For example, objective data could be collected given trials of specific behavior intervention programs and the impact these programs have on E/BD student participation in the general education setting and the resulting academic achievement. I am optimistic of the possible opportunities that could greatly benefit teachers and E/BD students.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, E/BD students deserve to receive an opportunity to be educated in an effective manner, taking all individual needs into account. This is rarely an easy task and it requires a positive, supportive, and collaborative perspective of all team members. The guiding question for this thesis is "How can general education and special education teachers effectively collaborate to support the needs of students with emotional and behavioral disorders?" This collaboration is entirely possible in all schools with E/BD students. With collaboration in place, these students will be able to successfully access instruction with their peers and this will directly impact their future success as individuals.

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